

Midterm Exam Review

For the midterm exam, you will be asked to provide responses to six of a selection of at least eight of the following questions. Your responses should be organized, approximately one-to-three paragraphs long. Each response will be worth ten points.

1. For Locke, what do words mean? How does Locke argue for that claim?
2. What is the problem of empty reference? How does Meinong solve it?
3. How does Mill differ from Locke concerning the meanings of names? Distinguish connotative names from purely denotative names.
4. For Frege, what is a thought/proposition? How do thoughts/propositions exist in a third realm? That is, how are they distinct from both psychological objects (ideas) and physical objects?
5. What is intensionalism? Why do we call Frege an intensionalist?
6. Describe Frege's three motivations for the sense/reference distinction. For any one of the puzzles, how does the distinction between sense and reference solve the problems?
7. How does Russell solve Frege's puzzle of cognitive content without positing senses?
8. How do Frege and Russell differ in their analysis of 'the king of France is wise'? How do their analyses differ on their attributions of a truth value to that sentence?
9. What is the difference between referring and asserting or ascribing? According to Strawson, how does this difference indicate a problem with Russell's theory of definite descriptions?
10. How does 'the purple platypus on my left has no teeth' suffer from a failure of presupposition? How would Strawson's analysis of this sentence differ from that of Russell? From that of Frege?
11. Consider, "The Dean of Faculty is well-educated." Provide an attributive interpretation and a referential interpretation of that sentence. How do these interpretations relate to descriptivism and direct-reference semantics?
12. What's wrong with the simple descriptivism of Frege and Russell? Explain the Aristotle objection.
13. How are the Gödel/Schmidt and Jonah cases counter-examples to cluster descriptivism?
14. What is a rigid designator? Distinguish rigid from non-rigid designators. What does Kripke's claim that names are rigid designators mean?
15. What is externalism about meaning? How does Putnam's Twin Earth example support externalism?