PHIL5150: Seminar on Western Philosophers: Saul Kripke and Naming and Necessity

A Preliminary Course Outlines

Time: Thursday 2:30PM - 5:15PM T.C. Cheng Building
Instructor: Wong Kai Yee (wongky@cuhk.edu.hk)

Course Overview

“Saul Kripke’s Naming and Necessity is widely acknowledged as one of the most important works of twentieth century philosophy.” Timothy Williamson, blurb praise for Kripke’s Reference and Existence.

“(When) these lectures [‘Naming and Necessity’] were first published ..., they stood analytic philosophy on its ear. Everybody was either furious, or exhilarated, or thoroughly perplexed. No one was indifferent.” Richard Rorty, London Review of Books

“In the philosophy of language, Naming and Necessity is among the most important works ever, ranking with the classical work of Frege in the late nineteenth century, and of Russell and Tarski in the first half of the twentieth century.” Scott Soames, Philosophical Analysis in the Twentieth Century.

This course is a graduate seminar focusing on a set of issues generated by Naming and Necessity and some other related writings by Kripke. These issues fall in more than one area, particularly modal logic, philosophy of language, philosophical logic, metaphysics, and their intersections. The primary readings are (a) Naming and Necessity and several other works by Kripke and (2) a collection of writings representing some of the major responses to, or developments of, Kripke's ideas and arguments.

Assessment: Class presentation and participation (40%) and two essays (30% each).

Selected Bibliography:

Works by Kripke:
Oxford University Press


Other publications:


