I. Administrative

A. Mid-term Course Evaluations

B. Reading Essay #2 – grading underway

C. Readings and writings for the coming weeks

D. Next Writing Assignment:
   1. Due next Tuesday evening by 11:59 pm.
   2. Everyone who turns it in by the deadline gets a 90. (If you don’t turn it in by the deadline, you get a 0.) I reserve 10 points to dole out as I see fit, based on whether the assignment demonstrates careful thought.
   3. Assignment:
      a. 250-word abstract of your paper – an abstract should (i) announce the thesis, and (ii) provide a sketch of the argument that you will adduce for that thesis
      b. An outline of your paper – this needn’t be detailed, but the more detailed the better

E. General Questions?

II. Theorizing Meaning

A. Meta-semantics: the goal should be to analyze the basic concepts related to meaning, knitting them together into a theory that subsumes all meaningful data.
   1. E.g., meaning, reference, truth, etc.
   2. Such a ToM would be very general. A language would be subsumed, but we would know nothing in particular about one
language as opposed to another from the ToM.

3. Grice gives us this.

B. *Operational semantics*: the goal is to supply an account of the meaning of sentences of a language in terms of the meanings of their parts.

1. Thus, a ToM would focus on accounting for the compositional character of the meaning of a language.

2. This account could be axiomatic—it would show how the meanings of the whole depend on the meanings of the parts.

3. Such a ToM would be specific, focused on supplying an account of the meaning of a particular language. It could be modeled as an I/O device—sentence in, meaning out.

4. Davidson gives us this, as we will see next week.

C. Are there other options? Need these be at odds?

III. **Grice and Meta-semantics**

A. (From “Meaning Revisited”) Meaning arises in the context of three sets of interrelated correspondences—psychological/physical, linguistic/psychological, and linguistic/physical:

1. *Psychophysical*: Our thoughts and the world mesh in ways that make our actions rational. We have beliefs and desires that are related in law-like ways with the world, enabling us successfully to execute intentions.

2. *Psycholinguistic*: Grice sees this in terms of $\Psi$-transmission, where this involves moving psychological content from one “soul” to another via a regular utterance. This is underwritten by the first type of correspondence—that is what anchors the various psychological states involved in this transaction.

3. *Physicolinguistic*: Language clearly relates to the world—we use it, and things happen. This is typically via the intercession of thoughts, and Grice notes this.

4. These constitute a framework for examining claims and hypotheses concerning meaning. Think of this as a triangle with connected vertices. The context, then, is a holistic one, where we
can solve for one variable by parameterizing the others.

5. As Lycan notes, Grice's view is often characterized as a speaker meaning/sentence meaning approach, according to which all aspects of meaning are accommodated in a psychologically reductionist way. This is apt, relative to certain papers, but it does not rest comfortably with the holism expressed here.

B. *The Strategy*: Analyze speaker meaning in terms of psychological states, and then analyze sentence meaning in terms of speaker meaning. We'll focus on the former.

C. *The Method*: He adopts a bottom-up approach, collecting and then analyzing data. The analysis proceeds by looking at differences among data and attempting to identify conditions that differentiate the various types.

D. *The Data*: see worksheet

E. *The Analysis:*

1. **A Distinction: Natural and Non-natural Meaning**
   a. Grice distinguishes these uses of ‘meaning’ into *natural* and *non-natural*. Natural meaning is exhibited by (1)-(3). M_N is causal, with the effect standing for the cause by virtue of their regular, nomological connection. Non-natural meaning is exhibited by (4)-(6), and is the kind of meaning we are most interested in because linguistic meaning is a species of it. M_{NN} is intentional, with the effect being created via mediation by intentions.

   b. He offers five tests to use in distinguishing these, which can be divided into two groups with the help of our correspondences. The first is the physicolinguistic and the second psycholinguistic. The first group includes the *facticity* conditions (1) and (5), while the second group includes the *agency* conditions (2), (3), and (4).

   c. *The Bottom Line*: natural meaning is about causal connection, non-natural meaning about intentional connection.

   d. *The Test*: Could you be wrong about a meaning claim without the claim being false?
2. Analyzing Non-natural Meaning: he looks at paradigm cases, hoping to serve up an analysis that works for them.

   a. *First condition:* \( M_{NN} \) requires that the speaker intend to induce a belief in an audience, where the content of the belief is the meaning \( \text{of the utterance.} \) *Problem:* lies and deception demonstrate that this will not do for the paradigm cases—it isn’t *genuine* communication.

   b. *Second condition:* \( M_{NN} \) requires that the speaker intend to induce a belief in an audience and have the audience recognize that she intends to do this. *Problem:* this intention could be otiose, as the effect could be produced without going through the intention (e.g., John the Baptist).

   c. *Third condition:* \( M_{NN} \) requires that the recognition of the intention be causally effective in producing the intended belief.

   d. *Summary:* \( S \) means \( \text{NN} \) that \( P \) by \( U \) iff there is an \( A \) and \( S \) intends that \( A \) believe that \( P \) by recognition of this very intention. (Schifferized version)

3. Grice gets out of this an analysis of particular expression and agent meaning, as well as an analysis of timeless meaning. This is the foundation of his meta-semantic account.

F. *Problems*

1. The effect must be in the audience’s control. Is the audience really this big a player?

2. Is this too complicated? Do not be concerned about the intentions—non-linguistic behaviors are heavily intentional, and all mutual behavior involves interlocking psychological states (e.g., common knowledge, convention).

3. But what about circularity? Think here about the role of idealization in theory—what we are out to do is provide an idealized account that is handled in the workaday world with approximation and compromise.

4. This is not *conventional*, though—this is more akin to Humpty Dumpty. (Here think about the Searle counterexample.) But even so, there are optimality conditions that are relevant here to
understanding what meaning involves, and these constrain interpretation.

5. What of unspoken sentences? (The Platts objection)