I. Administrative

A. Assignment Preview: Readings and Writings.

B. Class cancelled this Thursday. The next reading response will be due next Thursday. A reading essay will be due in a couple of weeks.

C. General Questions?

II. Propositionalism Revisited

A. What: the view that the meanings of sentences are propositions expressed by those sentences; these propositions, or claims, are abstract objects that can be evaluated as true or false.

B. Why: this view helps us with various meaning facts, e.g., the principal fact (i.e., meaningfulness vs. meaninglessness), synonymy, ambiguity, inference, and the "merely" semantic.

C. Why Not: does it really explain anything, or does it rather just name the fact to be explained? That is, in saying that the meaning of a sentence is the proposition it expresses and that this satisfies the meaning facts, haven't we just said that the meaning of a sentence is its meaning?

III. Propositions as Truth Conditions

A. So long as propositions remain non-specified abstract objects, it isn't clear that they do more than just name our theoretical quarry.

B. One productive suggestion, pursued by many in the wake of Frege, is that propositions are truth conditions, i.e., the conditions under which a sentence is true.

1. Motivation: If you know the meaning of a sentence, then you know the conditions under which it is true. (This need not render the view epistemic in character, though.)

2. Substantive: To say that a proposition is a truth condition is to say something substantive and testable, as indicated by the role that truth conditions play in formal logic. This goes beyond naming our quarry--
-it gives our quarry a particular shape.

3. **Truth condition vs. Truth value:** Truth conditions are not truth values—they are the conditions under which a given sentence (or utterance) has the value *true* when it is so evaluated, and so are also the conditions that determine when it has the value *false.*

C. **Meta-Semantic Point:** On this way of thinking about it, the meaning of a sentence is its truth condition, and the meanings of sentence constituents are their contributions to the truth conditions. This is Fregean in spirit, although it goes beyond Frege in spelling out just what sense can be.

D. **Operational Semantic Point:** Following the example of formal logic, we might be able to identify truth conditions for sentences in a language, thereby satisfying the operational goal of developing a ToM that yields meanings for all significant sentences in a language.

**IV. Modeling Truth Conditions**

A. The approaches canvassed in Lycan are axiomatic in character and issue truth conditions for sentences as theorems, proven from those axioms.

   1. In this way, they are simply more complicated versions of the semantic systems developed for formal languages.

   2. The key is to identify axioms for basic elements and then rules that enable us to build up from the basic elements to more and more complex meanings, eventually leading to truth conditions for sentences.

B. **Davidson**

   1. **General Structure:** Reduce meaning theory to truth theory; reject approaches that involve hypostasizing meanings and cleave instead to an approach that generates truth conditions as theorems for each sentence of a language.

   2. **Motivation:** Davidson is inspired by the work of Tarski on truth and the power of this semantic approach in accounting for the meanings of formal languages.

   3. **A Few Details:** (More on Wednesday)

      a. The ToM is an axiomatic theory with meaning postulates and rules that enable one to prove theorems providing the starting points.

      b. It generates truth conditions in the form of "T-sentences" that
'Snow is white' is true iff snow is white.

c. The object language provides the quoted material on the left hand side of the connective, and the metalanguage provides the rest. These are the same here, but they need not be.

d. By itself, the axiomatic T-theory will only be part of the whole, with other parts required to deal with various pragmatic aspects.

4. Problems: Not all sentences have truth values; what is truth? what of context sensitivity? There are co-extensional words that do not have the same meanings, and these will be tough for the theory to distinguish; what of intensional (i.e., non-truth-functional) connectives and operators?

C. Montague/Lewis

1. General Structure: The idea behind this approach is to build intensionality into the theory from the start; the theory is cast in terms of possible worlds, with meanings being functions from possible worlds to truth values.

2. Motivation: Some of the problems that afflict other theories (e.g., Frege, Davidson) are rooted in the failure of these theories to accord proper place to modality; further, one could argue that truth conditions are essentially modal in function (if not in content).

3. A Few Details: A sentence meaning will be a function from possible worlds to truth values, and the constituent parts of a sentence will be functions that contribute to sentential functions. These are made out in terms of intensions and extensions.