I. **Administrative**

A. Read Lycan, ch. 14, and Martinich for this week

B. Questions?

II. **Nonliteral Meaning and Metaphor**

A. Hegemony of the Literal: In the philosophy of language, literal meaning is the focus, and figurative, nonliteral meaning is taken to be a departure (at best) from the literal. But is this correct?

B. There is no doubt that literal meaning is not all there is to the meanings we traffic in as communicators. Take the last sentence—do we really, literally traffic in meanings? This is one bit of evidence in support of Lycan's claim that “nonliteral usage is the rule, not the exception” (176).

C. Should a theory of linguistic meaning accommodate this fact?

   1. The ubiquity of nonliteral meaning suggests strongly that it should, but this isn't obvious.

   2. Consider Grice in "Logic and Conversation"—he supplies us with a framework for dealing with non-literality that pushes most of it over to *speaker* meaning. If a theory of linguistic meaning is a theory of *sentence* meaning, then this should not be our quarry.

D. To begin, we should ask after the relationship between nonliterality and metaphor. Is all nonliterality metaphor? The answer must be "no". Consider:

   1. *Irony*: "He's a fine friend."

   2. *Sarcasm*: "Ooh, nice shirt."

   3. *Synecdoche*: "I don't much like Coke, as I prefer coffee." ('Coke' for
'soda'—part for the whole)

4. Metonymy: "Ham sandwich hasn't paid yet." (Cause for effect, owned for owner, etc.)

III. Theories of Metaphor

A. Theoretical Strategy

1. So the meaning expressed by metaphors is a species of nonliteral meaning. Call it figurative meaning. The question before us is whether figurative meaning should be a part of the semantic theory of a language. Important questions:

   a. Is there such a thing as metaphorical meaning, and if so, what is it?
   b. By what mechanisms do we convey such meaning?

2. With respect to the second question, it would appear that in general such meaning is conveyed in language through the creation of a conceptual tension that is resolved by recognition of the relevant figurative meaning. But how do we account for this?

3. We’ll consider several theories seek to answer the two questions above.

B. Meaning I: Naïve Simile Theory

1. Metaphorical Meaning? Yes

2. Mechanism: metaphors are elliptical similes. Thus, when I say, "Josh is a bear this morning," I really mean that he is like a bear.

3. Problems:

   a. Does this do justice to the anomaly that we sense when we hear a metaphor?
   b. It is uninformative.
   c. It isn’t explanatory since the similarities themselves prove to
be metaphorical.

C. **Meaning II: Figurative Simile Theory**

1. *Metaphorical Meaning?* Yes

2. *Mechanism:* metaphors are elliptical similes used figuratively. Thus, I don't mean to use 'bear' above literally when I use it, but only figuratively. The properties I get at are associated with the figurative meaning of this term.

3. *Problems:*
   
   a. Difficulty of working this out in cases.
   
   b. Do all such figures bottom out in the sharing of genuine properties?
   
   c. Does this really explain anything?

D. **No meaning I: Davidson on Metaphor**

1. *Metaphorical Meaning?* No. Metaphor makes us attend to a likeness between two or more things. A typical way of dealing with this is to posit a special meaning—a *metaphorical* meaning—that accounts for the significance of metaphor. Davidson disagrees with this.

   a. On his view, there are two fundamental facts about metaphor:

      i. Sentences involving metaphor only have one meaning: their *literal* meaning.

      ii. Sentences involving metaphor have an impact that cannot be paraphrased, captured propositionally or in terms of cognitive content.

   b. It is relative to these principles that he attacks a variety of different accounts:

      i. *Accounts that fail to meet #1:* Extended meaning, ambiguity, pun, modified pun, figurative meaning as simile

      ii. *Accounts that fail to meet #2:* Elliptical simile,
figurative meaning as simile.

c. On Davidson's view, metaphors are typically false or are obviously true. There is no meaning on top of the literal meaning that one can evaluate differently in terms of truth.

2. Mechanism: he accounts for their impact in terms of use and not meaning: metaphors make us see the world differently. Nothing new is learned about the language, but about the world through the use of language.

   a. This is a causal theory.

   b. Is this compatible with Grice?

3. Problems:

   a. No misinterpretation.

   b. No metaphorical truth.

E. No Meaning II: Gricean Pragmatic Theory (Searle)

1. Metaphorical Meaning? No. There is no such thing as metaphorical linguistic meaning. The sentence (phrase, etc.) in question has one meaning, viz., its literal meaning. The metaphor is a part of the speaker meaning of the utterance in question.

2. Mechanism: Davidson does it in terms of causation. Searle does it by categorizing this significance as a "special case of the general problem of explaining how speaker meaning and sentence or word meaning come apart" and then applying the Gricean machinery to it in three stages:

   a. Identify that there is a problem of interpretation that can be solved through the positing of metaphor. This will be aided by the fact that the literal meaning will be obviously false (or perhaps obviously true) and so the maxim of quality will be violated. (There are also contextual ways of determining that metaphors abound.)

   b. Determine candidate metaphorical meanings. Searle has a bunch of rules for this job.
c. Determine which of these is the one intended. Again, this is a principle governed exercise. (This allows for the open-endedness of metaphor.)

3. **Problems:**
   
a. Searle’s development of the Gricean account requires that the pragmatic content be propositional, and there is reason to be dubious of this.

b. This makes metaphor a function of speaker intentions, and these do not appear to be adequate to the task of accounting for the impact of metaphor.

F. **No Meaning III: Metaphor as Analogical**
   
1. **Metaphorical Meaning?** No. All (or at least the vast majority) of words have multiple related senses, according the “infinite polysemy” thesis; metaphor is simply a phenomenon that emerges from our employment of words in different contexts.

2. **Mechanism:** Words have meanings that are parameterizable by context, and when we learn a word, we acquire this parameter set.

IV. **Thoughts?**