I. Administrative
   A. Reading essay #1 due October 1 (one week from Thursday)
   B. Questions?

II. Theory of Meaning
   A. The principal quarry: significance.
   B. One possibility: reference
      1. Consider names as the exemplar of reference: e.g., ‘Alice’
      2. The idea that reference might be all there is to meaning is on display in Swift. Does it strike you as adequate?
      3. Few deny that reference is an important part of the relationship of words to the world, but most also recognize that reference alone will not do the job of accounting for significance.

III. Desiderata for a Theory of Meaning
   A. A theory of meaning should provide a systematic characterization of meaning that explains what we take to be central facts about meaning, and makes predictions about meaning that we can test
   B. One way to get there is to think about what the desiderata for a theory of meaning should be, i.e., what do we want a theory of meaning to explain?
C. **Examples:**

1. What is the difference between meaningless marks and meaningful marks?
2. Synonymy
3. Ambiguity
4. Entailment relations
5. “Merely semantic”
6. Others?

IV. **The Lay of the Land**

A. **Meanings as Objects**

1. **Concrete**
   a. **Ideas:** On accounts of this type, meanings are in the head, specifically, as ideas (e.g., Locke), beliefs, or concepts
   b. **Intentional Contents:** This is similar to the first view, although this view puts the cognitive content into contact with action by making it part of the specification of intentions. (See Grice.)

2. **Abstract**
   a. **Propositions**
      i. Propositions are abstract objects that underwrite various meaning facts (e.g., synonymy) and are the vehicles of truth and falsity. They are also called “claims”. (See Frege.)
      ii. One can be a Platonist about these, as Frege appears to be, or one can be an instrumentalist.
      iii. One can take these to be complex constructions or the unit of analysis.
b. **Verification Conditions:**

i. Part and parcel of the Logical Positivist school, meaningfulness was understood as involving the set of experiences one could have that would verify the truth of a given sentence. (See Carnap.)

ii. This view was intended to undermine what its proponents viewed as specious metaphysics, by rendering that meaningless.

B. **Meaning as Use**

1. “For a large class of cases—though not for all—in which we employ the word ‘meaning’ it can be defined thus: the meaning of a word is its use in the language” — Wittgenstein

2. The picture is motivated by the idea that language is a complex, rule-governed form of social activity and that linguistic items derive their meanings from being embedded in this social activity.

V. **Grice, “Meaning”**

A. *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.

B. *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.

C. *The Data:* different sentences with ‘mean’ or its cognates in them – see handout