I. Administrative

A. Readings and writings

B. General Questions?

II. Where are we?

A. Our question is, “What is the meaning of language?” We assume that there is an affirmative answer to this question.

B. We have considered a number of proposals that concern the significance of language:

   1. Locke (and Chomsky?) – meaning as ideas/concepts

   2. Swift (and the early Frege?) – meaning as reference

   3. Grice (and Humpty Dumpty?) – meaning as intended change

   4. Frege – meaning as a complex of sense (i.e., descriptive information) and reference

C. In some ways, this is the overarching question of the class, and we will return to it. For now, we’ll focus in on reference, and then on truth.

III. Reference

A. This is a relation between words and the world that is epitomized by proper names.

B. We have considered it as a foundation for meaning in general, but it has disappointed:

   1. It is not necessary (e.g., ‘and’)

   2. If is not sufficient (e.g., a=b vs. a=a)
C. But that doesn’t mean that it shouldn’t at least be part of the story we tell about linguistic meaning.

D. If this is the case (and we will assume it is), then what should we say about it? We might focus in on two things in particular:

1. *Vehicle of reference:* What is it that refers? For example, what are the referring terms?

2. *Relation of reference:* What is the relation between vehicles of reference and their referents?

IV. **Vehicle of reference**

A. What are the vehicles of reference?

B. For our purposes, let’s stick with referring terms. These would appear to be:

1. Proper names
2. Demonstratives (e.g., ‘that’)
3. Indexicals (e.g., ‘I’, ‘now’)
4. Definite descriptions (e.g., ‘the tallest person in the room’)

C. To do theory here and contribute to an understanding of linguistic semantics, we need to be sure we are carving meaning at the joints. Do these form a natural semantic kind?

D. Russell’s perspective:

1. In particular, definite descriptions—once taken to be a hallmark singular referring term—do not even exist at the level of logical form! They are analyzed away into conditions that are fully general and quantificational. (E.g., …)

2. Beyond this, Russell recommends a version of what some have called the “Name Claim”, according to which the appearance/reality confusion extends to proper names. They are taken to be equivalent in meaning to definite descriptions, and so do not exist at logical form either.
3. **Russell's Argument:**

P1. If “the φ is Ψ” (S) is a S/P sentence and is significant, then ‘the φ’ must have a referent.

P2. But it is not the case that ‘the φ’ must have a referent.

3. Therefore, it is not the case that S is both a S/P sentence and is significant.

4. That is, it must either be the case that S is not a S/P sentence or that it is not significant.

P5. S is significant.

C. Therefore, S must not be a S/P sentence.

4. What results isn’t really a version of RTM, although it is clearly influenced by it. The theory as such can avoid the various problems, especially when supplemented by the Name Claim.

   a. Empty names
   
   b. Informative identities
   
   c. Non-existence claims

E. Kripke’s response

   1. Russell is right about definite descriptions; however, the Name Claim is false

   2. The description theory of proper names is mistaken – descriptive information is neither necessary for proper name reference nor sufficient

V. **Relations of reference**

A. How do referring terms work?

   1. One way to think about this: what distinguishes ‘Michael’ from ‘hcMleai’?
2. How do they function to organize our interactions and our lives?

3. More precisely: how do they refer?

B. Fregean view: referring terms refer via *sense*, which can be modeled by some sort of complex description

C. Russell distinguishes between referring and denoting
   1. Referring is a direct and unmediated relation that cannot fail to obtain.
   2. Perhaps words like ‘this’ or ‘that’ when used to refer to sense data are examples

D. Kripke doesn’t offer a theory; rather, he is interested in offering a better “picture” of reference
   1. His picture is contained here: “An initial ‘baptism’ takes place. Here the object may be named by ostension, or the reference of the name may be fixed by a description. When the name is ‘passed from link to link’, the receiver of the name must … intend when he learns it to use it with the same reference as the man from who he heard it” (63)
   2. Names are what he calls “rigid designators”
   3. His view has been developed as a *causal* theory of reference – reference is a kind of causal relationship between a referring term and a referent