San Francisco State University
Department of Philosophy
Fall 2006

Phil 830 Philosophy of Language: Seminar on Realism and Anti-Realism
Thursdays 3:35-6:20pm HUM 381

Instructor: Dr. Ásta Sveinsdóttir
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Course website: http://online.sfsu.edu/~asta/LangF06.html
Office: HUM 361; 414.338.3135
Office Hours: T and Th 6-7pm

Description: This is a seminar in the philosophy of language, focusing on the theme of realism and anti-realism. Our main aim will be to understand what a commitment to realism in its various forms involves and the ways in which one can stop short of such a commitment. In particular, we will look at expressivism, quasi-realism, projectivism, fictionalism, and quietism.

Main texts:
Simon Blackburn, Spreading the Word
Crispin Wright, Truth and Objectivity
Mark Eli Kalderon, Fictionalism in Metaphysics
Papers by Wright, Geach, Mackie, Dummett, McDowell, Hale, Rosen, Lewis, Jenkins, and others, downloadable from the web or on reserve in the library.

Requirements and Grading:
1. Active, thoughtful, class participation [25%]
2. Class presentation [20%]
3. Midterm paper, 5 pages, due October 12 [20%]
4. Final paper, 10 pages, due Dec 14 [35%] Outline due Dec 7

The midterm or the final paper may be based on your class presentation (this is encouraged). It is your responsibility to get revisions of the syllabus, assignments, etc. from the course website, if you miss class.

Plagiarism:
All work submitted for the course must be your own. Plagiarism will result in disciplinary action. For more details see: http://www.sfsu.edu/~collhum/plagiarism.html

Disability - Reasonable Accommodation:
Academic accommodation is available for students with disabilities. Please see the Disability Programs and Resource Center in the Student Services Building 110 and talk to me as soon as possible to discuss any accommodation that you may need for the course.
Class schedule (tentative):

Thur Aug 31: Introduction

Sep 7: Expressivism, early formulations
Ayer, *Language, Truth, and Logic*
Hare, from *The Language of Morals*

Sep 14: The Frege-Geach objection
Geach, “Ascriptivism”, Phil Review 1960
Secondary literature on the objection

Sep 21: Expressivism in a new garb: Projectivism or Quasi-Realism
Simon Blackburn, from *Spreading the Word*

Sep 28: Projectivism continued
Blackburn, “Morals and Modals”, on reserve in the library

Oct 5: The Frege Geach objection again
Hale, “Can there be a logic of attitudes?” and “Can Arboreal Knotwork Help Blackburn Out of Frege’s Abyss?”, Philosophy and Phenomenological Research, 2002

Oct 12: Realism: framing the debate
Wright, Ch1 and 2

Oct 19: Realist dimensions
Wright Ch 3 plus appendix, Ch4, and Ch5

Oct 26: Reframing ten years later
Wright, "Realism, Anti-Realism, Irrealism, Quasi-Realism" and "Anti-realism: the Contemporary Debate - W(h)ither Now?"

Nov 2: Truth and Projection: Wright
Wright, "Moral Values, Projection and Secondary Qualities", "Truth in Ethics", "Truth: A Traditional Debate Reviewed"

Nov 9: Truth and Projection: McDowell

Nov 16: Fictionalism
Introduction to Kalderon, Gideon Rosen, “Problems in the history of fictionalism”, Kendall Walton, “Metaphor and prop oriented make-believe”, and perhaps some others.

Nov 23: Thanksgiving. No class.

Nov 30: Fictionalism vs. quasi-realism
Lewis 'Quasi-Realism is Fictionalism', Blackburn 'Quasi-Realism is not Fictionalism', Jenkins
"Lewis and Blackburn on Quasi-Realism and Fictionalism"

Dec 7: Quietism
Wright, ch. 6, and “Comrades against Quietism"

Dec 14: Wrap-up. Final paper due