Intentionality (Upper Level Undergraduate)

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Course Description

One of the central questions in philosophy is how our representations come to be about anything. Put slightly differently, in virtue of what are we able to represent the extra-mental, non-linguistic world? Consider a few examples: my thoughts may be directed towards my upcoming hockey game, I may write an encyclopedia entry about the Pangolin, or I may utter words of concern over the recent stagnation of wages among middle-class workers. In each case there is a link between my thoughts or words and some, typically worldly, subject-matter. In the first case, I am thinking about a particular future event, in the second, a very cute scaled anteater, and in the third, a particular feature of Americas current economic situation. How these representations are linked with their subject matter has come to be called the problem of intentionality. It is at the intersection of many major areas of philosophy: the philosophy of mind, the philosophy of language, metaphysics, and epistemology.

This course will address this problem in four sections. The first deals with how it is possible for our representations to be about things that dont exist. (This is a traditional way of introducing and motivating the puzzle of intentionality.) The second presents several accounts of the nature of intentionality that attempt to solve the puzzle laid out in the first section. The third deals with the socalled propositional attitudesattitudes like belief, desire, and doubt. Finally, the last delves into the question whether people in radically different environments could believe or mean the same thing.

Course Requirements

Readings for each meeting will be posted to classes v2. The readings won't be long, but many may be difficult. You are expected to do them fully and carefully before the class for which they are listed so we can discuss them during class.

10% of your grade will be class participation. The remaining 90% will be based on the following material:

Short Papers: (60%) Three short papers (3-5 pages), 20% each, on selected topics from the course. We will provide suggestions. The papers are expected to propose and defend a particular view of an issue discussed in class or the readings.

Final Paper: (30%) The final essay (8-10 pages) can be an extension of one of your short papers. Pick a topic in the course that you found interesting and argue for the position that seems true to you, using the course readings as a guide and a resource. We will read a rough draft of the paper and provide comments before you submit the final version.

Course Structure and Readings:

Representing the Non-Existent

1. Introduction — Jan. 19
2. Quine, W. V.: "On What There Is" — Jan. 21
3. Meinong, Alexius: "The Theory of Objects" — Jan. 26
4. Russell, Bertrand: "Descriptions" — Jan. 28
5. van Inwagen, Peter: "Creatures of Fiction" — Feb. 2
6. Walton, Kendall: "Existence as Metaphor" — Feb. 4

The Nature of Intentionality

7. Husserl, Edmund: *Logical Investigations* (excerpts)
8. Brentano, Franz: *Psychology from an Empirical Standpoint* (excerpts) — Feb. 9
9. Crane, Tim: "Intentionality as the Mark of the Mental" — Feb. 11
10. Chisholm, Roderick: *Perceiving: A Philosophical Study* (excerpts) — Feb. 16
11. Anscombe, G. E. M.: "The Intentionality of Sensation..." — Feb. 18
12. Goodman, Nelson: *Languages of Art* (excerpts) — Feb. 23
13. Byrne, Alex: "Intentionalism Defended" — Feb. 25
14. Horgan, T. and J. Tienson: "The Intentionality of Phenomenology and the Phenomenology of Intentionality" — Mar. 1
15. Prinz, Jesse: *Furnishing the Mind: Concepts and their Perceptual Basis* (excerpt) — Mar. 3

Propositional Attitudes

16. Frege, Gottlob: "The Thought" — Mar. 8
17. Dennett, Daniel: "True Believers" — Mar. 10
18. Fodor, Jerry: "Propositional Attitudes" — Mar. 29
19. Churchland, Paul: "Eliminative Materialism and the Propositional Attitudes" — Mar. 31
20. Davidson, Donald: "On saying *that*" — Apr. 5
21. Russell, Bertrand: *Problems of Philosophy* (excerpts) — Apr. 7
22. Kripke, Saul: "A Puzzle About Belief" — Apr. 12

Internalism vs. Externalism

23. Kripke, Saul: *Naming and Necessity* (excerpts) — Apr. 14
24. Putnam, Hilary: "The Meaning of 'Meaning' " (excerpt) — Apr. 19
25. Chalmers, David and Andy Clark: "The Extended Mind" — Apr. 21
26. Keil, Frank: "Concepts, Kinds, and Cognitive Development" — Apr. 26
27. McKinsey, Michael: "Anti-Individualism and Privileged Access" — Apr. 28

Optional Background Readings:

- Ebbesen, Sten: "The Chimera's Diary",
- Buridan, John: *Tractatus de Consequentiis* (excerpts),

- Ockham, William (of): *Expositio super Libros Elenchorum* (excerpts)
- Searle, John: *Intentionality: A Study in the Philosophy of Mind* (excerpts)
- Sellars, Wilfrid: "The Adverbial Theory of the Objects of Perception"
- Millikan, Ruth: "Biosemantics"
- Sellars, Wilfrid: *Empiricism and the Philosophy of Mind*, excerpts
- Burge, Tyler: "Individualism and the Mental" (excerpt)
- Sartre, J.P.: *The Psychology of Imagination* (excerpts)