PY5324: PHILOSOPHY OF LOGIC:
VAGUENESS AND SEMANTIC PARADOX
SASP MLitt Programme, 2015-2016

MODULE COORDINATORS

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CLASS TIME AND PLACE

Time: Tuesdays 3-5pm

Place: Room 104, Edgecliffe.

MLITT HANDBOOK

Rules and regs can be found at: http://www.st-andrews.ac.uk/philosophy/docs/1516/mlitt.pdf

MODULE DESCRIPTION

Part One: (Patrick Greenough)

The phenomenon of vagueness is both broad and deep. Broad--because just about all of natural language is vague. Deep--because vagueness gives rise to the ancient sorites paradoxes, paradoxes which resist adequate treatment to this day. In weeks 1-6 of this module we shall be looking at various different ways of understanding vagueness, various different versions of the sorites paradox, and various proposed treatments of the sorites paradoxes. Our key questions include: What is the nature of vagueness? How much of language is vague? Is it one phenomenon or many? What is the source of vagueness? Language? The world? Or does vagueness just reflect our limited powers of discrimination? Is vagueness a defect? Does it make language incoherent? Can and should we get rid of it? If so, how should we do so? Can we model vagueness using the tools of set theory? Does vagueness call for some non-classical logic in order to block the sorites paradox? If so, which non-classical logic does best? Can we keep classical logic? Can there be minimal, theory-light solutions of the sorites paradoxes? What is higher-order vagueness and why is it such a problem? Should we be pluralists about how best to treat vagueness? Does vagueness demand that we should be pluralists about logic?

Part Two: (Aaron Cotnoir)

The semantic paradoxes are difficult puzzles that arise in natural and formal languages. They all involve semantic notions such truth or reference; such notions are foundational in our theorising about language. The puzzles are difficult since they defy adequate treatment. In weeks 7-11 of this module we will be looking at various different ways of making sense of the semantic paradoxes, with a focus on the liar paradox. Our key questions include: What is the nature of the semantic paradoxes? What are the major options in responding to them? Are the paradoxes unified, in that they all have the same underlying structure? Do they have a uniform solution? Do such paradoxes call for some non-classical logic? If so, which non-classical logic does best? Can we keep classical logic? Do the paradoxes display context sensitivity? Are natural languages inconsistent?

SET TEXTS FOR WEEKS 1-6:

Rosanna Keefe (2000): *Theories of Vagueness*, Cambridge: CUP.
Rosanna Keefe and Peter Smith (eds) (1996): *Vagueness: A Reader*, Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

STRUCTURE OF THE MODULE

There are eleven two-hour seminars. Ten of these consist of joint presentations (40 minutes total) plus discussion (approx 80 minutes).

Everybody will present TWICE: once in Part One, and once in Part Two.

In Week One, there will be no presentation--this session will be an introductory lecture on vagueness by Patrick.

Each presentation should do at least TWO THINGS:

(1) Succinctly and accurately summarise the main arguments/ideas in the set texts.
(2) Include germane questions, observations, criticisms of your own making.

Don't attempt to give a long-winded, detailed exposition of the set reading. It is your job to distill the essence of weekly reading and present it in an easily digestible format. This means you are going to have to make some hard decisions about what NOT to cover.

Feel free to (very briefly) allude to material and ideas from beyond the set reading. Indeed, you are actively encouraged to do so. However, the main focus should be the set readings.

You are expected to produce a handout - no more than 3 pages.

This handout needs to be circulated on Monday evening via email to the class.

You need to divide up the 40 minute presentation between you in a fair way. Don't leave all the hard bits to one person.

As regards the presentation, don't simply read your notes/the handout. You each need to be able to "speak to" to the various points made in the handout. Feel free to use the whiteboard to illustrate your points. You are advised to have a practice session before the class on Tuesday

Feel free to contact Patrick/Aaron if you need advice on how to best write and deliver your presentation.

SEMINAR AND PRESENTATION SCHEDULE

Part One:

Week One: Vagueness and the Sorites Paradox.

      No Presentations this week: Introductory Lecture by Patrick

Week Two: Supervaluation and Many-Valued Logics.

      Paul Conlan, Jonathan Dietrich, Chao Cloris Gao

Week Three: Epistemicism.

      Stefanos Georgallis, Harold Golborn, Madeleine Hyde

Week Four: Contextualism.

      Benjamin Marschall, Jakob Ohlhorst, Silvia Onorato

Week Five: The Observational Sorites Paradox.

      Allessandro Rizzo, Jakub Rudnicki, Bas Tönissen

Week Six: The Phenomenal Sorites Paradox.

      Xitong Wei, Andrew Williams.

Part Two:

Week Seven: Hierarchical Solutions

      Paul Conlan, Jonathan Dietrich, Chao Cloris Gao

Week Eight: Gappy Solutions

      Stefanos Georgallis, Harold Golborn, Madeleine Hyde

Week Nine: Glutty Solutions

      Benjamin Marschall, Jakob Ohlhorst, Silvia Onorato

Week Ten: Contextualist Solutions

      Allessandro Rizzo, Jakub Rudnicki, Bas Tönissen

Week Eleven: Inconsistency Theories

      Xitong Wei, Andrew Williams.

ASSESSMENT

- Assessment is by TWO 2500 word essays. The first essay is to be on one or more of the topics/ issues covered in Part One, the second essay is to be on one or more of the topics covered in Part Two.

- The Topic/Title of the Essay is chosen by the student but must be approved by the module coordinators (Patrick/Aaron). Guidance: choose a topic which relates directly to the issues covered in the module.

- In addition, you are required to submit two research plans, one for each essay, of between 500-600 words. These research plans are not assessed and must be submitted at any time up to three weeks before the essay submission deadline. You will receive feedback on your research plan within 10 days of submission.

SUBMISSION OF COURSEWORK

- All coursework is to be submitted via the Module Management System.

- Coursework should be word-processed, double-spaced with one-and-a-half inch (4cm) margins.

- Coursework is marked anonymously, and so submitted work should be identified only by your matriculation number. Do not put your name anywhere on your coursework.

- On the first page of your coursework, you should include: your matriculation number, the module name and number, your tutor's name, the word count, the title of the essay/exercise, and the following statement: 'I hereby declare that the attached piece of written work is my own work and that I have not reproduced, without acknowledgement, the work of another'.

- Please note that coursework must be in pdf format. This is to ensure that diagrams and symbols come out correctly.

- NOTE the word count for all coursework or for the dissertation should include all footnotes, endnotes, and quotes but not the bibliography. Part of your task in writing your plan/essay is writing to the specified word limit: this is important preparation for professional writing either in academic philosophy or in the wider world.

SUBMISSION DATE

Essay Plan One: Before Noon, Monday 11th April.
Essay One: Monday 2nd May, 12 Noon.

Essay Plan Two: Before Noon, Monday 11th April.
Essay Two: Monday 2nd May, 12 Noon.

SET WEEKLY READING: PART ONE

Week One: Vagueness and the Sorites Paradox.
Preliminary Reading One: Sainsbury "Concepts Without Boundaries", in set text.
Preliminary Reading One: Keefe, R. (2000): Ch. 1.
Preliminary Reading Three: Keefe, R. (2000): Ch. 2.

Week Two: Supervaluation and Many-Valued Logics.
Keefe, R. (2000): Ch. 4.
Keefe, R. (2000): Ch. 7-8.

Week Three: Epistemicism.
Williamson, T. (1992): "Vagueness and Ignorance", in Keefe and Smith (eds).
Keefe, R. (2000): Ch. 3.

Week Four: Contextualism.
Raffman, D. (1994): "Vagueness Without Paradox", *Philosophical Review*, 103, pp. 41-74.
Graff-Fara, D. (2000): " Shifting-Sands: An Interest-Relative Theory of Vagueness", *Philosophical Topics*, 28, pp.45-81.

Week Five: The Observational Sorites Paradox.
Dummett, M. (1975): "Wang's Paradox", in Keefe and Smith (eds).
Greenough, P.: "The Observational Sorites Paradox", forthcoming in O. Bueno and A. Abasnezhad (eds): *The Sorites Paradox*, special issue of *Synthese*.

Week Six: The Phenomenal Sorites Paradox.
Raffman, D (2000): "Is Perceptual Indiscriminability Nontransitive", *Philosophical Topics*, 28, pp. 153-75.
Graff, D. (now Graff-Fara) (2001): "Phenomenal Continua and the Sorites", *Mind*, 110, pp. 905-35.
Greenough, P.: "The Phenomenal Sorites Paradox", ms.

SET WEEKLY READING: PART TWO

Preliminary Reading One: Beall and Glanzberg "The Liar Paradox" *Stanford Encyclopedia*
Preliminary Reading Two: Burgess and Burgess (2001) *Truth*, ch. 8
Preliminary Reading Three: Leitgeb (2007) "What Theories of Truth Should be Like but Cannot Be" *Philosophy Compass* 2 (2):276–290.

Week Seven: Hierarchical Solutions
Tarski (1944) "Semantic Conception of Truth" *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research.*
Sher (2002) "Truth, The Liar, and Tarski's Semantics" in D. Jacquette (ed.) *A Companion to Philosophical Logic*, Blackwell.

Week Eight: Gappy Solutions
Kripke (1975) "Outline of a theory of truth" *Journal of Philosophy* 72 (19):690-716
Field (2004) "The Semantic Paradoxes and the Paradox of Vagueness" in JC Beall (ed.) *Liars and Heaps: New Essays on Paradox*. Clarendon Press.

Week Nine: Glutty Solutions
Priest (1992) *In Contradiction* ch. 4
Beall (2009) *Spandrels of Truth* chs. 1 and 2.

Week Ten: Contextualist Solutions
Parsons (1974), "The Liar paradox" *Journal of Philosophical Logic* 3 (4):381 - 412
Glanzberg (2001), "The Liar in context" *Philosophical Studies* 103 (3):217 - 251.

Week Eleven: Inconsistency Theories
Matti Eklund (2002). "Inconsistent Languages". *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 64 (2): 251-275.
Douglas Patterson (2009). "Inconsistency Theories of Semantic Paradox". *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 79 (2):387 - 422.

USEFUL MONOGRAPHS/COLLECTIONS ON VAGUENESS AND SEMANTIC PARADOX

Vagueness and Indeterminacy

Linda Burns (1991/2012): *Vagueness: An Investigation Into Natural Languages and the Sorites Paradox*, Springer.
Vann McGee (1991): *Truth, Vagueness, and Paradox*, Hackett.
Tim Williamson (1994): *Vagueness*, London: Routledge.
Rosanna Keefe and Peter Smith (eds) (1994): *Vagueness: A Reader*, MIT Press.
Stephen Read (1995): *Thinking About Logic*, Oxford: OUP.
Terence Parsons (1999): *Indeterminate Identity*, Oxford: OUP.
Scott Soames (1999): *Understanding Truth*, Oxford: OUP.
Rosanna Keefe (2000): *Theories of Vagueness*, Cambridge: CUP.
Roy Sorensen (2001): *Vagueness and Contradiction*, Oxford: OUP.

Timothy Endicott (2001): *Vagueness in Law*, Oxford: OUP.

Hartry Field (2001): *Truth and the Absence of Fact*, Oxford, OUP.

Delia Graff and Tim Williamson (eds) (2002): *Vagueness*, Aldershot: Ashgate.

JC Beall (ed.) (2003): *Liars and Heaps*, Oxford: OUP.

Stewart Shapiro (2006): *Vagueness in Context*, Oxford: OUP.

Dominic Hyde (2008): *Vagueness, Logic, and Ontology*, Aldershot: Ashgate.

R.M. Sainsbury (2009): *Paradoxes*, 3rd edition, Cambridge, CUP.

Nicholas J Smith (2009): *Vagueness and Degrees of Truth*, Oxford, OUP.

Richard Dietz and Sebastionao Moruzzi (2010): *Cuts and Clouds: Vagueness, its Nature, and Logic*, Oxford, OUP.

Paul Egre and Nathan Klinedinst (eds) (2011): *Vagueness and Language Use*, Palgrave MacMillan.

Diana Raffman (2014): *Unruly Words: A Study of Vague Language*, Oxford: OUP.

Truth and Paradox

Beall, JC. (2008): *Revenge of the Liar*, Oxford: OUP.

Beall, JC. (2008): *Spandrels of Truth*, Oxford: OUP.

Field, H. (2008): *Saving Truth from Paradox*, Oxford: OUP.

Gupta, A. and Belnap, N. (1993): *The Revision Theory of Truth*, Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Priest, G. (2006): *In Contradiction*, 2nd edition, Oxford: OUP.

Priest, G. (2006): *Doubt Truth to be a Liar*, Oxford: OUP.

Martin, R. L., ed., (1984): *Recent Essays on Truth and the Liar Paradox*, Oxford: Clarendon Press.

Maudlin, T. (2004): *Truth and Paradox: Solving the Riddles*, Oxford: OUP.

McGee, V. (1991): *Truth, Vagueness, Paradox*, Indianapolis: Hackett.

Simmons, K. (1993): *Universality and the Liar*, Cambridge: CUP.

Soames, S (1999): *Understanding Truth*, Oxford: OUP.

Philosophy of Logic

Susan Haack (1978): *Philosophy of Logic*, Cambridge, CUP.

Stephen Read (1995): *Thinking about Logic*, Oxford: OUP.

Graham Priest (2001): *Logic: A Very Short Introduction*, Oxford, OUP.

JC Beall and Greg Restall (2006): *Logical Pluralism*, Oxford: OUP.

USEFUL SURVEY ARTICLES

Dominic Hyde: 'The Sorites Paradox' *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy.*

Roy Sorensen: 'Vagueness', *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*.