

## PHI 422 STUDY GUIDE 2

On exam day, I will pick two of the following four short-essay prompts, and then you will answer **one and only one of them**. HINT: study for 3 of them and then you'll be set. All are based on the lectures. The exam will be available on Blackboard at Noon on October 2 and you'll have an hour to submit it (so it'll close and be unavailable at 1PM). Shoot for 3-5 paragraphs. Here are the prompts.

**Prompt 1:** We began the philosophy of language with a simple idea: the referential theory of meaning. (a) What is it? Explain it in your own words. (b) We then looked at three objections to it: one involving non-existent objects, one involving Bradley's Regress, and one involving non-referring nouns. Explain those objections to the referential theory of meaning.

**Prompt 2:** We've been discussing four puzzles that are supposed to be problematic for the Millian view of names (the view that the meaning of a name is just the object it refers to). (a) What are those four puzzles? Explain them in your own words and say why they are initially problematic for Mill's view of names. (b) What is Russell's theory of definite descriptions? (c) What is Russell's theory of names and how does he think it solves the four puzzles?

**Prompt 3:** John Searle takes Russell's theory of names and adds the caveat that a name is an abbreviated cluster of a bunch of descriptions (and not just one, like Russell thought). (a) Kripke has an objection to this theory involving a case about Gödel, the famous mathematician, and Schmidt, a hypothetical character in the story. How does the story go, and why does Kripke think that's a problem for the description theory of names? (b) What does it mean for something to be a rigid designator? Is "Donald Trump" a rigid designator? Is "The 45<sup>th</sup> President of the US" a rigid designator? Why? (c) How does Kripke use the idea of a rigid designator to come up with an objection to the description theory of names?

**Prompt 4:** At the end of the day, we seem to have two main views in the philosophy of language (specifically, about the meaning of names). On the one hand, we have the direct reference theory (or, Millian view of names). On the other hand, we have the description/Russellian/Searlean theory of names. (a) What does each theory have in its favor? (b) What are the main problems with each view? (c) And which view do you think is ultimately right? Defend your answer.