PHILOSOPHY 550: METASEMANTICS AND NORMATIVE LANGUAGE
WINTER 2025

Professor Eric Swanson, <ericsw@umich.edu>

Office hours in 2259 Angell Hall: Mondays 9:30–11:30 and by appointment.

No background in philosophy of language will be presupposed.

COURSE WEB SITE

https://umich.instructure.com/courses/747644

SEMINAR MEETINGS

2401 Mason Hall, Mondays 4–6:20

I will record our seminars, in the event that one of us gets sick or has to care for someone who is sick.

GRADING (FOR ENROLLED STUDENTS ONLY)

I'll be flexible and (I hope) helpful! Please talk to me about what would work best for you.

January 13	*Organizational meeting.*
January 27	*Meaning, analysis, and the analytic/synthetic distinction* Hans-Johann Glock, *What Is Analytic Philosophy,* chapter 1 (optional), chapter 2 Rudolf Carnap, "Empiricism, Semantics, and Ontology" W. V. O. Quine, "Two Dogmas of Empiricism"
February 3	*Rigid designation, natural kinds, and reference* Saul Kripke, *Naming and Necessity,* Lectures I and II, Preface (optional) Hilary Putnam, "Meaning and Reference"
February 10	*Similarity and naturalness: Pluralism, realism, pragmatism* Nelson Goodman, "Seven Strictures on Similarity" David Lewis, "New Work for a Theory of Universals" Hilary Putnam, "Aristotle after Wittgenstein"
February 17	No class (I'll be traveling) We'll make this up with an optional workshop session(/s) in April or May.
February 24	*Language, world, and disagreement* Robert Stalnaker, "Reference and Necessity" David Chalmers, "Verbal Disputes"
March 3	No class (winter break)
March 10	*Constructivism* Huw Price, "Metaphysical Pluralism" Ian Hacking, "Madness: Biological or Constructed?" Sally Haslanger, "Social Construction: The 'Debunking' Project"
March 17	*Disagreement and metalinguistic negotiation* David Plunkett and Tim Sundell, "Disagreement and the Semantics of Normative and Evaluative Terms" Amie Thomasson, "Metaphysical Disputes and Metalinguistic Negotiation" Teresa Marques, "Disagreeing in Context"
March 24	*Some limits to knowledge* David Lewis, "Ramseyan Humility" Rae Langton, "Elusive Knowledge of Things in Themselves" Timothy Williamson, "Anti-Luminosity" (chapter 4 of *Knowledge and its Limits*)
March 31	*Choosing Normative Concepts, I* Matti Eklund, *Choosing Normative Concepts,* chapters 1–3
April 7	*Choosing Normative Concepts, II* Matti Eklund, *Choosing Normative Concepts,* chapters 4–7
April 14	*Choosing Normative Concepts, III* Matti Eklund, *Choosing Normative Concepts,* chapters 8–11
April 21	*From the cutting edge* Laura Schroeter and François Schroeter, "Bad News for Ardent Normative Realists?" Shamik Dasgupta, "The Meta-Ethics of Artificial Intelligence: Are We Beholden to Normative Joints?" Sally Haslanger and Steve Yablo, "Amelioration as Course Correction"
April / May, TBD	Optional workshop session(s)