Philosophy 324A

Philosophy of Logic

2016

Note Eleven

SOME INFORMATION AND ADVICE ABOUT TEST #1

1. *Required and/or examinable readings*
 In coming days, I'll send you details about the format of the test and final instructions about coverage. For now, the rule of thumb in this latter regard is that all assigned material – chapters from B & R, online notes and other postings – are fair game. There is a **slight** difference between material you are required to read and material on which you can be examined. Here are three quick examples:

- The note on classical propositional and predicate logic is required reading but is not itself an object of detailed study. It is therefore not examinable as such. However all key aspects of it are – formal languages, the basic elements of proof theory, model theory, and metatheory, and so on.

- The note on the Lewis and Lewis-like axiom systems for modal propositional logics is required reading, but it is not examinable as such. The point to dwell on here is the fact that there are so many of them, a number of which are on their face pairwise incompatible. They exemplify the multiplicity and strife problem.

- The paper on my webpage "Does changing the subject from A to B …?" is required reading, but most of it isn't examinable. The idea here is to extract from it what you find to be directly helpful for what we are doing in the course.

2. *Getting ready*
 The first and most basic thing to do is to get your head around the course's design. You should be able to snap off crisp answers to questions like the following:

- What is the point of the course? Where does its interest lie? What motivates the interest? Why are we even talking about formal representation, and why did we start with it rather than, say, pluralism?

Here are some sketches of how these questions could profitably be answered.

- The point of the course is to answer (or try to) problems of philosophical interest that arise from engaging the mathematical methods and ideas of modern logic for the resolution of antecedently existing philosophical uncertainties about e.g. the relation of logical consequence, and the concept of truth in natural language contexts.

- There are prior uncertainties about matters we'd like a better and clearer understanding of. The course is interesting to the extent that these prior philosophical uncertainties also are and the methods of their formal clarification are fruitful.

- We started with formal representability because such considerations permeate modern discussions of the course's other two topics and, to some extent, occlude a clearer vision of them. For example, the B & R treatment of the multiplicity and strife problem by means of the pluralism option simply *assumes* that the target concepts as instantiated in English (say) are in no fit shape to do the work of their philosophical clarification. They need to be tidied up a bit before applying for gainful theoretical employment. It is further assumed (without comment or attribution) that the way to get the intuitive concepts of logical consequence, truth and logical consistency in workable shape is to do for them (but, centrally, for intuitive consequence) what Tarski did for the intuitive concept of truth. That is, they *start* their treatment of logical-consequence pluralism having assumed a prior rational reconstruction of it in the manner that we've already reviewed in notes 8, 9 and (to some extent) 10.

- The absolutely central focus so far is on the workings of a formal semantics, whereby the rational reconstruction of a concept is effected, and in the light of which the theory in question proceeds further to meet its targets – in the B & R case, to lay down a convincing case for pluralism.

- Again, the core idea that at some point along the CC line – the concept in its intuitive form or in its analyzed form or its explicated form – the formal semantics maps the stipulated concepts of model theory to counterpart concepts at the selected point on the CC line. The matching is achieved by a one-to-one correspondence underlain by the formal representation of a concept on the CC line by a concept from the model theory in question. Once we have the concept of initial interest in a suitably reconstructed shape, we can proceed to an even larger understanding of it by reflecting on how the representative model theory provides a larger model theoretic understanding of its own concepts.

- This way of dealing with philosophical problems in the analytic tradition – the way of formal semantics – is pervasive, and its practitioners are sometimes more confident than they are reflective. A case in point: One-to-one mappings are much more easily effected than formal representability relations are established. Notable by their absence in formal philosophy in general – that is, philosophy done in the manner of formal semantics – are formal representability proofs.

- You should be able to name three examples in which such proofs are provided.

Here are some other things to brush up on:

- What is Tarski's tort? What did John Burgess mean in calling it that?

- How extensive or wide-ranging are torts of that kind?

- How damaging, if at all, are such torts overall, and what is to be done to avoid them or at least bring them some mitigation?

3. *Things to avoid like the plague*

- Don't freak out.

- Don't try to catch up too late. (No all-nighters, please.)

- Don't think that there's no advantage in starting to get ready now, I mean in a systematic and serious way.

- Don't try to memorize everything in B & R.

- Don't try to memorize everything in "Does changing the subject from A to B …?". Just pick out what you understand and can apply directly to some aspect or other of the matters we discuss in class and in the online notes.

- Don't leave any questions unasked or confusions undispelled.

- Don't let questions and confusions pile up.

HAPPY THANSGIVING!