

Intercollegiate Logic and Metaphysics Lectures 2001–2002, Term 1, Weeks 1–5

Truth

Lecturer: Keith Hossack Time: Fridays, 6–7pm Location: Birkbeck Main Building, MB1075.
(These lectures are duplicated on Mondays, 11am–12noon, in King’s College Main Bldg., the Strand, Rm 2C.)

The lectures will sketch a taxonomy of theories of truth. The classical theories assume that 'true' picks out a substantive property, but disagree over whether the property is mind-independent. Some more recent theories question whether truth is a genuine property at all; others, responding to the paradox of the Liar, have suggested that truth has a nature that is essentially incompletable or even contradictory.

Reading: see the Study Guide. A useful overview, if a bit old-fashioned, is Chapter 7 of S. Haack Philosophy of Logics [AL(Haa)]. The following references are relevant to individual lectures. Birkbeck Library shelfmarks are given on this list in square brackets. NB: All items carrying a shelfmark are in the short loan collection.

Lecture 1: truthbearers

Quine, W.V.O., Philosophy of Logic, Chapter 1 [ALA(Qui)]

Lemmon, E.J., ‘Sentences, Statements and propositions’ in B. Williams and A. Montefiore, eds, British Analytical Philosophy [ADe(Wil)]

Grandy ‘What do “Q” and “R” stand for anyway?’, in R.I.G. Hughes, A Philosophical Companion to First-Order Logic (Indianapolis, Hackett, 1993), pp. 50–61 [160HUG]

Lecture 2 :- (psychologistic nature) -- coherentism, pragmatism, verificationism, intuitionism;

Russell, B., ‘Pragmatism’, in his Philosophical Essays [AE, R95(Rus)].

_____ ‘The Monistic Theory of Truth’, as last.

Dummett, M.A.E., ‘The Philosophical Basis of Intuitionistic Logic’ in Truth and Other Enigmas [AE,D88(Dum)]. NB You need read only the first few pages.

_____ Preface to Truth and Other Enigmas, pp. xxii-xxiii. (Reference as last.)

Lecture 3:- (factual nature) correspondence theory, semantic theory;

Russell, B. ‘On the nature of Truth’, in Philosophical Essays (op.cit.).

Wittgenstein, L., Tractatus 2.1 - 2.15, 2.21 - 3, 3.1 - 3.12. [AE,W75(Wit)]

Austin, J.L., ‘Truth’, in his Philosophical Papers [AE, A8(Aus)]

Davidson, D., ‘True to the Facts’ in his Inquiries into Truth and Interpretation (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1984) [401DAV] (also copies at WAL(Dav) on main shelves)/

Tarski, A., ‘The semantic conception of truth’, Philosophy and Phenomenological Research, 4, 1944, pp. 341–75; reprinted in Readings in Philosophical Analysis, H. Feigl and W. Sellars, eds (New York, Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1947), pp. 52–84; also in Semantics and the Philosophy of Language, L. Linsky, ed. (Urbana, University of Illinois Press, 1952), pp. 13–47. Feigl and Sellars at [AL7(Fei)]

Lecture 4:- (no nature) redundancy, performative, disquotational;

Ramsey, F.P. 'Facts and Propositions' in his Philosophical Papers [AE,R21/0(Ram)]

Horwich, P., 'Theories of truth', in R.I.G. Hughes, ed., op.cit., pp. 62–75.

Lecture 5: (incomplete/inconsistent nature) hierarchic, dialethic theories.

Sainsbury, M.R., chapter 5 of Paradoxes, 2nd edition (Cambridge University Press, 1995), pp. 107–134.

McGee, V., Truth, Vagueness and Paradox Introduction only [AHT(Mac)]

Priest, G., Beyond the Limits of Thought (references to truth)