Course Description

Referential opacity is exhibited by a linguistic environment if the substitution of coreferring terms inside that environment can bring about a change in truth value. For example, while it is *a priori* knowable that Hesperus is Hesperus, it seems not to be *a priori* knowable that Phosphorus is Hesperus, so ‘it is *a priori* knowable that’ creates an opaque environment. On the face of it, opacity looks like it gives rise to failures of Leibniz’s Law, since e.g. Hesperus and Phosphorus are one and the same, but seem not to share the property of being *a priori* knowable to be identical to Hesperus. And Quine argued that quantifying into opaque environments is incoherent, and that quantified modal logic should be rejected. In this seminar, we will look at issues to do with opacity, Leibniz’s Law, and quantifying-in in different contexts, focusing on attitude reports and epistemic modals. We will begin by working through some of the classic literature by philosophers like Frege, Quine, and Kaplan, and then move on to more recent engagements with the topic.

In preparation for the first seminar meeting, please read Frege’s ‘On Sense and Reference’. (Available on Blackboard.)

Contact Information

Michael Rieppel
Email: morieppe@syr.edu
Office Hours: TBD

Course Requirements

The following is required of all seminar participants:

- Attendance, preparation, and participation in class discussions
• One question or critical comment posted to the discussion forum one day before the seminar.

Those enrolled for credit are also required to write a term paper of around 20 pages, due on the last day of class (with an outline due one month prior to that). Come speak with me within the first two weeks of the semester if you would prefer to write two shorter papers (minimally 10 pages each).

Schedule

**Week of Jan 13:**

**Week of Jan 20:**
*MLK Day, No Class*

**Week Jan 27:**

**Week of Feb 3:**

**Week of Feb 10:**

**Week of Feb 17:**

**Week of Feb 24:**
*Metaphysics Search Day, No Class*

**Week of Mar 2:**

**Week of Mar 9:**

**Week of Mar 16:**
*Spring Break*
Week of Mar 23:

Week of Mar 30:

Week of Apr 6:

Week of Apr 13:

Week of Apr 20:

Week of Apr 27:
Rabern, B. (2018). Binding Bound Variables in Epistemic Contexts. *Inquiry*