Philosophy 250
Vagueness

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Syllabus
(Definitely subject to change)

September 13  Introductory meeting

September 20  The Problem
  Michael Dummett, “Wang’s Paradox”, in his Truth and Other Enigmas (Harvard
  Crispin Wright, “Language Mastery and the Sorities Paradox”, in G. Evans and

September 27  Some Options
  Christopher Peacocke, “Are Vague Predicates Incoherent?”, Synthese 46 (1981),
  pp. 121-41.
  Hans Kamp, “Two Theories about Adjectives”, in E.L. Keenan, ed., Formal
  Semantics of Natural Language (Cambridge University Press, 1975),
  pp. 123-55.

October 4  Some Remarks on the Nature of Semantic Theory
  Michael Dummett, “Truth”, in Truth and Other Enigmas, pp. 1-24; Michael
  Glanzberg, “Against Truth-Value Gaps”, manuscript
  I intend during this session to sketch a conception of semantic theory which will inform my criticisms
  of various of the options discussed. My own views are deeply informed by the writings of Michael
  Dummett. For those who do not know his work, some useful first papers are “What is a Theory of
  Meaning?”, “Language and Truth”, and “Truth and Meaning”, all reprinted in his Seas of
  Language (Oxford University Press, 1993). His own conception can be illuminated by
  comparison with that of Donald Davidson, for which see his “Truth and Meaning”, in his
  Inquiries into Truth and Interpretation (Oxford University Press, 1984), pp. 17-36.

October 11  Degrees of Truth
  5 (1976), pp. 47-78.
  David Sanford, “Borderline Logic”, American Philosophical Quarterly 12
  For an introduction to the technical aspects of ‘fuzzy logic’, see J.A. Gougen. “The Logic of Inexact
  Concepts”, Synthese 19 (1968-69), pp. 325-73. The classic paper on the topic is L.A. Zadeh,

October 18  Degrees of Truth: Objections
  Crispin Wright, “Further Reflections on the Sorities Paradox”, Philosophical
  Timothy Williamson, Vagueness, Ch. 4.
  33-48.
October 25  Supervaluations

November 1  Supervaluations: Some Objections
Timothy Williamson, Vagueness, Ch. 5.
Jamie Tappenden, “The Liar and Sorities Paradoxes: Toward a Unified
David Sanford, “Competing Semantics for Vagueness”, Synthese 33 (1976),
pp. 251-72; R.A. Sorensen, “Precisification by Means of Vague Predicates”, Notre Dame Journal

November 8  Supervaluations: Higher-order Vagueness
Crispin Wright, “Further Reflections on the Sorites Paradox”, Philosophical
Mark Sainsbury, “Is There Higher-order Vagueness?”, Philosophical Quarterly
Crispin Wright, “Is Higher-order Vagueness Coherent?”, Analysis 52 (1992),
Richard Heck, “A Note on the Logic of (Higher-order) Vagueness”, Analysis

November 15  The Epistemic View
Timothy Williamson, Vagueness, Chs. 7-8.

November 29  The Epistemic View: Objections
Peter Simons, “Vagueness and Ignorance”, Aristotelian Society sup. vol. 66
(1992), pp. 163-77.
Crispin Wright, “The Epistemic Conception of Vagueness”, The Southern Journal
Timothy Williamson, “Definiteness and Knowability”, The Southern Journal of

December 6  Contextualism
Delia Graff, “Phenomenal Continua and the Sorites”, forthcoming in Mind 110

December 13  Anti-realism