Topics in Philosophy in Epistemology and Metaphysics
Seminar Topic: Philosophy of Saul Kripke

Professor Berger                           email: berger@brandeis.edu

TENTATIVE SYLLABUS

Requirements- One Exam and a Term Paper

Readings- Saul Kripke, Naming And Necessity, copies of articles, including some papers on Kripke

Sections I will be a very quick review of around one week of classes:

I. Historical background: Frege and Russell on proper names and definite descriptions

II. Introduction-The New Theory of Direct Reference: Rigid Designation and Anti-Descriptivism
   a. Reference Fixing vs. giving the meaning of a term
   a. Proper names
   b. Natural Kind Terms, readings from Kripke and Putnam

III. Kripke on Contingent A Priori and Necessary A Posteriori Truths

IV. Propositions and the Philosophical Foundations of Possible Worlds and Necessity

V. The Puzzle about Belief, reading from Kripke and some responses

VI. The Problem of Vacuous Names, fictional entities and "Referring" to Nothing

VI. Philosophical Issues about Identity

VII Kripke on the Identity Thesis and the Mind/Body Problem

We will not have enough time to cover all these topics. What exactly we cover will depend upon the interest of the class. There may be some other topics added as well.