Description/Objective:

The Semantics of Descriptions: We will learn about debates on the semantics of definite and indefinite descriptions—determiner phrases (or noun phrases) beginning with the definite or indefinite articles ‘the’ or ‘a’. A centerpiece of the seminar will be a reading of Stephen Neale’s book *Descriptions*. This book provides both an excellent introduction to the 20th-century history of the debate and an excellent steppingstone to current discussions. Other readings will include those by Frege, Russell, Strawson, Geach, Evans, Donnellan, Kripke, and Sharvy on definite descriptions. We will then progress to more recent debates about donkey anaphora, situation semantics, and predicative versus referential descriptions.