

College of Arts – Online Course Outline Template

Course Code: PHIL6200/4270	Section:	Semester: F12
Course Title: Recent Philosophical Issues		
Instructor: Mark McCullagh		
Brief course Synopsis: At present I intend this course to focus on the central philosophical issue of reference. We will work through a recent, somewhat linguistics-y book on this topic, <i>Reference</i> by Barbara Abbott, taking up relevant secondary works as needs arise. The book's preface gives the gist rather well: "In this book, Barbara Abbott explains the major lines of thought about reference, confronting what is arguably the most basic question of all for semantic and pragmatic theory: what is the link between words and the world? We routinely use language to convey information about the world to each other; however, the exact mechanisms by which words and phrases come to be 'about' things in the world remain mysterious. Over the course of the past century, many significant advances in our overall understanding of natural language meaning have followed from advances in our understanding and conception of the reference relation. In this book, Professor Abbott provides us with an accessible, comprehensive, and enjoyable guide to the intellectual and empirical landscape of reference, which we expect to stimulate new lines of inquiry on this central question of meaning, even as it explains and elucidates old ones." Textbook(s): <i>Reference</i> , by Barbara Abbott ISBN-13: 9780199203451 Course requirements / evaluation: TBA		