MIDTERM EXAMINATION
Due Monday, May 13

1 (40 points). (i) Explain Quine’s distinction between three grades of modal involvement. (Give a gloss of each grade.) Consider Section III of Quine’s article. What are his worries about third grade sentences?

(ii) Consider pages 39–49 of Kripke’s Naming and Necessity. What is Kripke’s response to Quine regarding the meaningfulness of third grade modal involvement? You may formulate here more than a single response.

(iii) Is Kripke’s response convincing? Could Quine rebut it by complaining that Kripke presupposes just what Quine finds controversial? How so?

2 (30 points). Explain how Kripke projects necessities from actual non modal facts. While you do this, draw, following Kripke, the distinction between a necessary truth and an apriori truth. (Gloss the notions and explain why they seem, as notions, independent.) Consider now a specific such non-modal fact, e.g., Salt = NaCl. Generate for it Kripke’s problem of “illusory contingency.” How does Kripke defuse the illusion? Elect one of the possible interpretations we discussed, dissect it and assess whether, according to you, it really defuses the contingency-threat.

3 (30 points). Consider David Lewis’ chapter (“A Philosopher’s Paradise”) about possible worlds. Explain what kind of entities Lewis takes possible worlds to be. Give one central example for why he thinks possible worlds are effective in explaining notions that occur in ordinary discourse or philosophical analysis. Also give one example for why he thinks “boxes and diamonds” don’t allow one to express everything that can be expressed in terms of possible worlds.