

PHILOSOPHY 761
TOPICS IN THE PHILOSOPHY OF LANGUAGE

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I think it was Geach who said that Locke's *Essay* is like a mail order catalogue – you only buy from it what you want. Brandom's *Making It Explicit* (Harvard, 1994) is like the data plan for your cell phone – it is all but impossible to know what buying it has committed you to. There are multitudinous components tied together in cunningly-designed package-deals and unadvertized options protected by obscure caveats and complex preclusions, the whole bundled in an immense document of carefully written, but almost impenetrable, prose. Nonetheless, when it comes to the really fundamental questions about intentionality Brandom's may just be the best data-plan on the market. The purpose of the course is to make clear what it involves and to suggest ways to make it better.

We will make a detailed, critical study of *Making It Explicit*, working through it systematically at the rate of one chapter a week. While *Making It Explicit* will be the required text for the course, it will also be useful to have access to Brandom's introduction to inferentialism, *Articulating Reasons* (Harvard, 2000) and his subsequent elaboration of it, *Between Saying and Doing: Towards an Analytic Pragmatism* (Oxford, 2008), as well as the critical essays (and Brandom's extensive replies) in Bernhard Weiss and Jeremy Wanderer (eds.) *Reading Brandom: On Making It Explicit* (Routledge, 2010). Students will be expected each week to present material from the week's reading for classroom discussion. Assessment will be by a final research paper of about 6,000-8,000 words to be handed in at the final class.