University of Kansas, Fall 2006 Philosophy 148: Reason and Argument Ben Eggleston—eggleston@ku.edu Wednesday, August 30, 2006

## vagueness versus ambiguity

A lot of the time, people use the terms 'vague' and 'ambiguous' interchangeably. But the two concepts are different.

- A term is <u>vague</u> if it has one possible meaning, but this meaning is hazy or fuzzy or indefinite.
  - o examples: 'bald', 'strong', 'successful', 'a little'
- A term is <u>ambiguous</u> if it has more than one possible meaning—though each of the two or more possible meanings may be perfectly clear and precise.
  - o example of semantic ambiguity: 'bank'
  - o ex. of syntactic ambiguity: 'ate the cheese in the fridge'