Course Description: Metaphysics studies philosophical theories about the nature of reality, including such topics as what is real, change, the nature of universals, and such views as monism, materialism, realism, and idealism. This course will look at several historically significant metaphysical issues and systems. In the first half of the semester, we will examine the treatments of these issues given by four philosophers of the modern period: R. Descartes, G. W. Leibniz, D. Hume and I. Kant. The remaining half of the course will focus on the work of two seminal early twentieth-century philosophers: G. Frege and L. Wittgenstein, followed by a look at some contemporary analyses of causation. The course will emphasize major themes and continuities that emerge in the early modern period and extend into the contemporary debate.

Course Prerequisites:
PHL 240, PHL 245, and PHL 321

Course Goals and Objectives:
1. Development of improved critical reading, reasoning, and writing skills.
2. Development of an increased knowledge and appreciation of the recent Western intellectual tradition and its historical development.
3. Exposure to stimulating and provocative issues in a major area of philosophy.

Course Format:
This course is taught as a traditional lecture course, which means that we meet in class for 15 contact hours per credit hour (45 contact hours total).

Course Materials
i. Modern Philosophy: An Anthology of Primary Sources. R. Ariew and E. Watkins, eds.

ii. Required Reserve readings. These are available at three locations:
   1. Online at http://library.southalabama.edu/  Note that you need to have Acrobat Reader to look at or print the document online.
      a. Click on "Course Reserve"
      b. From the pull-down menus pick "Loomis" (Instructor) and "461: PHL"
         (Course). Then click "Search".
      c. Click on the title you want.
      d. Click on the link (you must be logged-in) to get the document.
   2. Library reserve. You can read or photocopy the documents in the library when it is open.
   3. Philosophy Department main office (HUMB 124). There is a copy available for overnight checkout for photocopying (this is legal as long as you make only one copy for yourself for your use in our class).

iii. Please obtain a copy of the Ogden translation of Ludwig Wittgenstein's Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus. Used copies are widely available; Amazon has used copies starting at $6, and new copies for $10.
Examinations: One mid-term and one final essay exam

Make Up Examinations: I am willing to re-schedule assignments for individuals who have a legitimate reason for doing so. If you know you are going to miss an exam date, you must notify me at least two days in advance in order to receive a make-up. Unless you have made a prior arrangement with me, missed exams may be made up only in case of a documented emergency.

Course Assignments:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Weight</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mid-term exam</td>
<td>14%</td>
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<tr>
<td>3 written assignments</td>
<td>20%</td>
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*Important: I need the papers submitted in electronic form as a Word (or similar) document. Please talk to me if this is a problem for you.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Weight</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Final exam</td>
<td>16%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Class attendance</td>
<td>10%</td>
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</table>

- The exams will consist of essay questions.
- The written assignments will be *ty*epwrit*ten, double-spaced, and 6-10 pages in length. They will be in answer to questions I will provide.

*Please submit the papers in electronic form to my email above, as Word documents or similar (Wordperfect, Open Office, etc.). Please notify me if you have an issue with this.*

- Your class attendance score is determined as follows:
  - 2 or fewer unexcused absences: 10/10
  - 3 unexcused absences: 8/10
  - 4 unexcused absences: 6/10
  - 5-6 unexcused absences: 4/10
  - More than 6 unexcused absences: 0%

Regular classroom participation can increase your attendance score, but not above 10.

The number of unexcused absences is determined at the end of the semester by counting the number of times your name is missing from the sign-in sheet that I pass through the class most days.

Syllabus: This syllabus is subject to change; we may add or delete readings according to interest and time. Any changes will be announced in advance in class. *R* = required reserve reading. Page numbers refer to *Modern Philosophy.*

**Week of:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topics, Assignments, and Readings</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1/11</td>
<td>Aristotle, selections from <em>Metaphysics Z.</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>1/25</td>
<td>Descartes, cont.</td>
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<tr>
<td>2/1</td>
<td>Leibniz, <em>Discourse on Metaphysics</em>. p. 184-207 (You may skip lightly through the last sections about Plato and Jesus).</td>
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</table>
Black, "Identity of Indiscernibles" R.
- **Written Assignment #1 Handed Out 2/11 (Due 2/18).** Please submit all papers electronically to my email address above as an MS Word or similar document.

2/16 Mardi Gras holiday: NO CLASS


3/1. Hume, cont.
- **Mid-Term Exam, Tuesday 3/2**


3/15 SPRING BREAK

- **Course Drop Deadline 3/26**
- **Written Assignment #2 handed out 3/23 (Due 3/30)**


4/5. Frege, "On Sense and Meaning" R.

4/12. Wittgenstein, *Tractatus*. (Please just start reading through the whole thing; we'll go back and forth in it).

- **Written Assignment #3 handed out 4/22 (Due 4/29)**

- **Final Exam: 10:30-12:30 Tuesday, May 4.**

**Course Policies and Procedures:**
*Attendance:* Attendance is taken, and attendance in lectures is expected. Since testable material is regularly introduced in lectures, it is impossible to miss class frequently and still do well in the course.

*Academic Disruption Policy.* Disruptive academic behavior is defined as individual or group conduct that interrupts or interferes with any educational activity or environment, infringes upon the rights and privileges of others, results in or threatens the destruction of property and/or is otherwise prejudicial to the maintenance of order in an academic environment. Incidents of academic disruption will be dealt with as they occur as per the policies and procedures set out in the *Lowdown*, USA Policies, Academic Disruption Policies.
Late Papers: Assignments must be submitted at the beginning of the class period in which they are due for full credit. Late papers must be turned in by the start of the next class meeting; after that they will not be accepted. All accepted late papers are penalized a flat 10%.

Student Academic Conduct Policy: Academic dishonesty includes cheating on tests and homework as well as plagiarism. If you engage in academic dishonesty, I will notify you that you will receive an ‘F’ in the course. Upon being notified, you have five days to submit a written request to the department chairperson for a hearing on the matter, if you wish to have one. If no hearing request is made, or if the decision from the hearing goes against you, you will receive a course grade of ‘F’. Please see the Student Academic Conduct Policy of the University for details.

Students With Disabilities: If you have a specific disability that qualifies you for academic accommodations, please notify the instructors and provide certification from Disability Services (Office of Special Students Services). The Office of Special Students Services is located in the Student Center, Room 270, Phone 460-7212.

Written Assignment Guide
Here are some suggestions and grading criteria for the short assignments. Remember that they are to be typewritten, double-spaced, and 6-10 pages long. Please use normal font size (10-12 point), and normal margins. Please submit these papers electronically as Word or similar documents to my email address above by the deadline.

General Suggestions
i. Get straight to the point. Don't bother with lengthy introductory or concluding paragraphs. One or two sentences to introduce your topic is usually sufficient.
ii. Articulate your thesis or position clearly. The reader cannot understand what you are arguing for if you do not make this clear. Although this is not difficult to do, failure to clearly state a thesis is probably the single most common problem with philosophy papers.
iii. Be concise. Most or all of what you say should be articulating or defending your thesis, or illustrating the links in your reasoning. Avoid lengthy sentence constructions wherever possible.
iv. Stay on track. It's easy and often tempting to wander into areas that don't directly relate to the question. Don't.

Grading Criteria.
A number of factors are considered in determining your grade. Since these factors interrelate in various ways, it is senseless to try to assign a percentage value to each. Let's just say that an ‘A’ paper does well in every area, lower grades have trouble in one or more areas.

1. Accuracy of content. Obviously, if you present another's position, you need to get it right.
2. Thesis coherently stated (if applicable). If a question asks you to take a position, what position you are taking must be made clear.
3. Primary claims supported with evidence. You must back up your major claims with some evidence, be it textual, argumentative, empirical, etc. I realize that the degree to which you are able to do this on short assignments is limited, but some support is usually possible.
4. Paper coherently structured. It should be clear how each paragraph relates to the overall paper, and how each sentence works within each paragraph.
5. Grammar and spelling correct. Be sure to proofread your papers.

Comment Key. I use a few abbreviations in grading your papers. Here’s what they mean.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mark</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Awk.</td>
<td>Phrasing or construction is awkward.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cit.</td>
<td>Give a citation indicating where you’re getting a quotation or other information.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thesis?</td>
<td>The thesis of your paper is unclear or missing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unc.</td>
<td>What you are saying is unclear or confusing in some way. I can’t understand it.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Vag. What you’re saying is vague; I can understand it but it’s too general or abstract.

Exp. Explain further what you are saying. Usually indicates a need for either a definition of some expression, an illustration of some point, or a justification for a claim.

E.g.? Exempli gratia means for example. Give an example.

Dev. Develop some point or claim. This differs from Exp. in that what you’ve said here is justified but needs to be explored. Dev. is often applied to good points that are passed-over too quickly. Slow down and develop the consequences of what you’ve said.

I.e.? or Pt? Id est means that is. I’m having trouble seeing the point of what you’re saying. Often indicates that the marked passage isn’t really relevant to the paper.

Con.? I don’t see the connection between the indicated remarks.

Non-s. Non sequitur means does not follow. What you’ve said doesn’t follow from the argument or reasons you’ve given.

Inc. s Incomplete sentence.

w/c Word choice is wrong or questionable.

¶ Begin a new paragraph here.

? Indicates a general puzzlement on the reader’s part.

✓ Indicates a good point or argument.