

<b>Course:</b>	PHIL 4370	<b>Meeting Times:</b>	Fridays, 11:30 – 2:20
<b>Term:</b>	Fall 2015	<b>Location:</b>	CRSC 101
<b>Instructor:</b>	Casey Ford	<b>Prerequisites:</b>	Background in the history of philosophy
<b>Email:</b>	fordc@uoguelph.ca		
<b>Office Hours:</b>	Thursday, 1:00 – 2:00 & By Appointment		
<b>Office:</b>	MACK 325		

## Metaphysics

There is a central question of metaphysics that remains at the core of philosophical inquiry: What is Being? We will pursue this question in the history of philosophy by devoting a close study to three major works that have asked after the ultimate nature of reality: Aristotle's seminal *Metaphysics*, G. W. Leibniz's *Philosophical Essays*, and G. W. F. Hegel's challenging *The Science of Logic*. We will see how this basic question about being leads to number of other metaphysical problems involved in explaining the terms of the world in which we live and think: What is existence? What can be said to "be" in a world of becoming? Can limited human knowledge arrive at the ultimate nature of reality? How does an individual entity get its definition? We will begin our study in Ancient Greece with Aristotle's definition of the project of metaphysics as the pursuit of "being qua being," and distinguish it from seeking "being" in the world of determined entities ("beings"). We will devote a number of weeks to the study of Aristotle's account of "substance" and his argument for the priority of "actuality" over "potentiality." Following from Aristotle's notions of possibility and the actualization of forms, we will study Leibniz's innovative and compelling metaphysical system from modern philosophy. Here we will focus on Leibniz's arguments for how individual things are constituted in an infinite world. This will require critically appraising Leibniz's use of subject-predicate logic, the relation between finite things and infinity, the notion of possibility, and what Leibniz argues is the necessary existence of God. Our course will conclude with an extended study of Hegel's attempt in *The Science of Logic* to restart the project of metaphysics on a true and "presuppositionless" starting point, from the notion of "pure being." We will work through his unique method of deducing the metaphysical categories of quality, finitude, the infinite, and quantity from the initial attempt to think "being" in its purity. In taking up the long and complicated history of metaphysics, we will attempt to see how the seemingly abstract question about being is rooted in and elucidates the real ways that human existence attempts to make sense of itself and the categories that form its understanding of the world.

### Course Goals

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As an advanced seminar in philosophy, the goals of this course will be: (1) to do close textual analyses of some of the most important and influential texts in the history of metaphysics, (2) to write clear and sophisticated explanatory essays on the central ideas and arguments, (3) to identify and articulate philosophical problems to begin individual research, and (4) to conduct research around this problem in order to compose a developed research paper. Fitting the level of the course, the reading load each week will be substantial and challenging.

Writing is a significant component of this course. Students will be asked to write between 22-25 pages throughout the semester. Extensive feedback will be provided to assist you in improving your writing, and I am happy to work closely with each of you inside and outside of the classroom.

## Required Texts

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- Aristotle, *Metaphysics* Trans. Joe Sachs / 978-188800903-3
- Leibniz, *Philosophical Essays* Trans. Ariew & Harber / 978-0-87220-062-3
- Hegel, *Science of Logic* Trans. Di Giovanni / 978-1107499638

## Seminar Format

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This course will be a combination of lectures, group discussion, and occasional student-directed activities. Each meeting will be devoted to a portion of text specified in the reading schedule below. Together we will work through the problems and questions motivating each work, explain their important ideas, critically assess their arguments, and think about the significance of these ideas and arguments in the context of the history of philosophy.

## Assignments

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### **Participation (10%)**

The study of philosophy is an essentially collaborative practice. It requires one to encounter the ideas of another and to develop responses that are personal, critical, and charitable. Active participation in the classroom, in relation both to the texts being studied and your colleagues, will be a significant portion of your assessment. This is especially true of an advanced seminar in philosophy where you will be responsible for actively developing individual interpretations and research projects. Serious philosophical participation at this level will involve making these interpretations known, and in working with others to challenge them. It is your responsibility as a student to determine the level and quality of your participation, and to communicate regularly with the instructor about the required work to receive the grade you desire. Students will be expected to attend *all* class sessions. Moreover, you will be expected to come to class having read the assigned material, with careful notes and critical questions from your readings. If you have concerns about the level of your participation during class discussion for personal reason, you are encouraged to speak to the instructor regularly to potentially arrange alternative forms of contribution so that you receive the participation grade you desire.

### **Explication Essays (4 Essays: 50% total)**

To “explicate” something literally means to unfold it. In the first half of the course, these short writing assignments will be exercises in *explanation*. You will be given short passages or complicated ideas that you must unpack in a clear, nuanced, and sophisticated explanations. You will be asked not to consult or reference secondary scholarship and to focus on the primary text as something to interpret on your own. These explications will be assigned prior to discussing this material in seminar, allowing you to come to seminar with an already developed interpretation. The first two papers should be exactly 1 page single-spaced (worth 10% each), and are devoted to simply explaining single concepts or arguments. The second two papers should be 2 pages single-spaced (worth 15% each) and require you to both explicate an idea and pose a critical challenge to it.

**Research Proposal (10%)**

The goal of this assignment is to set out a research idea and to delineate the steps necessary to complete this project. A list of possible paper topics and problems will be made available to you to choose from. You will be required to isolate a question or problem, to explain why it is important, and to consider possible challenges to answering this question. In short, you should think of your task as not only outlining your paper, but of justifying the importance of writing on this topic. This proposal should also include a brief consideration of some secondary scholarly work that you think will be resourceful to supplement your own interpretation and argument. You are encouraged to find material that will both challenge and support your position. Feedback will be provided to assist you in developing your project. The proposal should not be longer than 1.5 pages, single-spaced.

**Final Research Essay (30%)**

This paper is an opportunity for you to exercise your skills in the explanation of specific philosophical ideas and arguments, and to develop a brief but specialized interpretation and research program around it. A substantial portion of the paper should be devoted to explicating these ideas and arguments about it in your own words. The second portion of the paper should be devoted to analyzing these ideas, critically assessing them, and considering scholarship that speaks to this problem. Your final paper should thus be an expansion and realization of your proposal. You are encouraged to use and further develop the analyses done in one of more of your explications. The length of the paper will be determined by the scope of your project and the necessary steps to complete your proposal effectively; however, the final paper should be roughly 10 pages double-spaced.

**Course Policies**

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Regular attendance and active participation are mandatory requirements for this course because they are essential components of a rich and rewarding classroom experience. To this same end, students are expected to engage respectfully with their colleagues in philosophical discussion. Computers are permitted only for note-taking purposes and should not be used to the distraction of the class. Any student disrupting the attention and work of the class will be asked to leave.

If you require any special assistance as a student, I will make my best effort to help you in any way I can to succeed and find the classroom to be an accessible and rewarding space. Please contact me with any information that would assist me in this.

## Reading Schedule

Reading schedule is subject to modification by instructor based on the needs, interests, and course of discussion in the class. Check CourseLink regularly for updated reading schedule. It is necessary to complete the assigned reading *prior to* the class for which it is assigned. “Focus” sections designate important portions of larger readings to which you should devote extra attention.

<b>Week</b>	<b>Texts / Assignments</b>	<b>Assignments</b>
<b>BEING AND THE TASK OF FIRST PHILOSOPHY</b>		
<b>1</b> 9/11	Aristotle, <i>Metaphysics</i> : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Book 1, Chs. 1-3 [pp. 1-9]</li> <li>• Book 2 (all)</li> <li>• Book 4 (all) [Focus: Chs. 1-2]</li> <li>• Book 6, Ch. 1 [pp. 109-111]</li> </ul>	
<b>THINGHOOD</b>		
<b>2</b> 9/18	Aristotle, <i>Metaphysics</i> : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Book 6 (all)</li> <li>• Book 7 (all)</li> </ul>	
<b>POTENCY AND ACTUALIZATION</b>		
<b>3</b> 9/25	Aristotle, <i>Metaphysics</i> : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Book 8 (all)</li> <li>• Book 9 (all)</li> </ul>	<b>Explication 1 Due</b>
<b>CREATION AND SINGULAR SUBSTANCES</b>		
<b>4</b> 10/2	Leibniz, from <i>Philosophical Essays</i> : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Discourse on Metaphysics” (all)</li> </ul>	
<b>INDIVIDUALITY AND NATURE</b>		
<b>5</b> 10/9	Leibniz, from <i>Philosophical Essays</i> : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Principles of Nature and Grace” [pp. 206-213]</li> <li>• “Toward a New System of Nature” [pp. 138-145]</li> <li>• “On the Ultimate Origination of Things” [149-55]</li> </ul>	<b>Explication 2 Due</b>
<b>PERCEPTIONS OF INFINITY</b>		
<b>6</b> 10/16	Leibniz, from <i>Philosophical Essays</i> : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “The Monadology” [pp. 213-225]</li> </ul>	

	<b>BEING AND BECOMING</b>	
<b>7</b> 10/23	<i>The Science of Logic, Doctrine of Being I:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “With What Must a Science Begin?” [pp. 45-57]</li> <li>• Ch. 1, “Being” [pp. 58-60 &amp; 80-2]</li> <li>• Recommended: Ch. 1, Remarks 1-4 [pp. 60-80]</li> </ul>	
	<b>FINITUDE AND THE INFINITE(S)</b>	
<b>8</b> 10/30	<i>Science of Logic, Doctrine of Being I:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ch. 2, “Existence” [pp. 83-125]</li> </ul>	<b>Explication 3 Due</b>
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<b>9</b> 11/6	<i>Science of Logic, Doctrine of Being I:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ch. 3, “Being-For-Itself” [pp. 126-8, 132-45]</li> </ul> <i>Doctrine of Being II:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ch. 1, “Quantity” [pp. 154-5, 165-7]</li> <li>• Ch. 2, “Quantum” [pp. 168-70, 182-6, 189-92]</li> </ul>	
	<b>ESSENCE AND REFLECTION</b>	
<b>10</b> 11/13	<i>Science of Logic, Doctrine of Essence I:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Reflection” (selections)</li> </ul>	<b>Explication 4 Due</b>
	<b>APPEARANCE</b>	
<b>11</b> 11/20	<i>Science of Logic, Doctrine of Essence II:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Appearance” (selections)</li> </ul>	<b>Research Proposal Due</b>
	<b>ACTUALITY</b>	
<b>12</b> 11/27	<i>Science of Logic, Doctrine of Essence III:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Actuality” (selections)</li> </ul>	
<b>TBD</b>		<b>Final Paper Due</b>

## 8 Standard Statements of the College of Arts

### Fall 2015

#### E-mail Communication

As per University regulations, all students are required to check their **uoguelph.ca** e-mail account regularly: e-mail is the official route of communication between the university and its students.

#### When You Cannot Meet a Course Requirement

When you find yourself unable to meet an in-course requirement because of illness or compassionate reasons, please advise the course instructor (or designated person, such as a teaching assistant) in writing, with your name, ID#, and e-mail contact. See the Undergraduate Calendar for information on regulations and procedures for Academic Consideration:

<http://www.uoguelph.ca/registrar/calendars/undergraduate/current/c08/c08-ac.shtml>

#### Drop Date

The last date to drop one-semester **Fall 2015** courses, without academic penalty, is **November 6, 2015**. For regulations and procedures for Dropping Courses, see the Undergraduate Calendar:

<http://www.uoguelph.ca/registrar/calendars/undergraduate/current/c08/c08-drop.shtml>

#### Copies of out-of-class assignments

Keep paper and/or other reliable back-up copies of all out-of-class assignments: you may be asked to resubmit work at any time.

#### Student Rights and Responsibilities

Each student at the University of Guelph has rights which carry commensurate responsibilities which, broadly, being a civil and respectful member of the University community. The Rights and Responsibilities are detailed in the Undergraduate Calendar:

<http://www.uoguelph.ca/registrar/calendars/undergraduate/current/c14/c14-strightsrespon.shtml>

#### Academic Misconduct

The University of Guelph is committed to upholding the highest standards of academic integrity and enjoins all members of the University community – faculty, staff, and students – to be aware of what constitutes academic misconduct and to do as much as possible to prevent academic offences from occurring. The Academic Misconduct Policy is detailed in the Undergraduate Calendar:

<http://www.uoguelph.ca/registrar/calendars/undergraduate/current/c08/c08-amisconduct.shtml>

#### Recording of Materials

Presentations which are made in relation to course work—including lectures—cannot be recorded in any electronic media without the permission of the presenter, whether the instructor, a classmate or guest lecturer.

#### Resources

The Undergraduate Calendar is the source of information about the University of Guelph's procedures, policies and regulations which apply to undergraduate programs. It can be found at:

<http://www.uoguelph.ca/registrar/calendars/undergraduate/current/>

If you find yourself in difficulty, contact the undergraduate advisor in your program, or the BA Counseling Office: <http://www.uoguelph.ca/baco/contact.shtml>