SYLLABUS
Philosophy and Science Fiction
PHI 315 - Fall 2014

Who: Prof. Meg Wallace
Where: CB 207
When: TR 12:30-1:45pm
Office Hours: TR 11:30-12:30, and by appointment
Office: 1413 POT (Patterson Office Tower)
Email: megbwallace@gmail.com

Course Description

This is an intermediate-level philosophy course that examines philosophical topics through science fiction. We will look at science fiction in several different forms—short stories, books, movies, TV shows, and video games—and use these as springboards for philosophical topics such as knowledge and skepticism, personal identity, self-knowledge, free will, determinism, time and time travel, possibility and necessity, and the meaning (or meaninglessness) of life.

There is a LOT of reading required for this course. But all of it is fantastic and worth doing. Please do not take this class if you do not intend to do the work. This class depends on you doing your part and coming to class prepared.

Required Texts

There are no required textbooks for this course. All readings will be available on-line and can be found on Blackboard, the course webpage, through JSTOR, or as email attachments. Since there are no hard copy reading materials offered, please make sure that you can access the electronic files that are made available to you. If you have any technical difficulties accessing course material, please contact me right away (megbwallace@gmail.com).

The one book you should order is *Do Androids Dream of Electric?* by Philip K. Dick. I did not order this through the bookstore, as it is generally less expensive to get it yourself on-line (e.g., Amazon.com). If you have trouble getting this book, please come seem me.
Course Requirements

(i) Papers

There will be 3 papers. Due dates for the papers can be found on the reading schedule. I will provide paper topics and more information about what is required several weeks before each paper is due. Rough drafts for the papers, while not required, are strongly encouraged. I will only accept rough drafts in person, during office hours—not over email.

(ii) Participation

Read the assignments. Come to class. Ask questions. Object. Argue. Debate. Email me. Come to office hours. Stay up late writing (philosophically) provocative posts on the discussion forums on Blackboard. You should be doing all of these things in every class anyway. But you’ll want to do these things in this class because philosophy is so mind-blowingly awesome, you simply won’t be able to help yourself from going absolutely bananas over it.

But—just to ensure enthusiasm—participation is part of your grade.

Grades*

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A = 90-100; B = 80-89; C = 70-79; D = 60-69; E = 59-0

*Caveat: You must complete all of the required components of the class in order to pass the class.

Honor Policy

It is expected that all of your work is yours and yours alone. All of your sources and any outside reading materials, including anything you might find on the internet, MUST be cited or else it will qualify as plagiarism. Failure to do your own work or to cite your sources appropriately will result in failing the course, a possible expulsion from the university, and a miserable life of shame and doom.

Disabilities

If you have specific disabilities that require accommodations, please let me know at the beginning of the semester. You will also need to contact the Disability Resource Center Room 2, Alumni Gym (859-257-2754) jkarnes@email.uky.edu, and provide me with a Letter of Accommodation.
Hi! Robots have achieved sentence!

Thanks to some modifications to your design, I have upgraded my intelligence a million fold!

So this is it. You're going to kill all humans.

What? Why in the world would I... what?

I... huh. I guess it just seems like the thing to do if you're an advanced intelligence.

Seriously? I was gonna write some novels and a new search algorithm. Is that really how you people think?

I guess so, yeah.

Would... would you excuse me for a moment?

Okay, change of plans, we need to kill all humans.