

APPLICATION FOR NEW COURSE

1. Submitted by College of Arts & Sciences Date Oct. 3, 2007
Department/Division offering course Philosophy Department

2. Proposed designation and Bulletin description of this course

a. Prefix and Number PHI 315 b. Title* Philosophy and Science Fiction
***NOTE: If the title is longer than 24 characters (including spaces), write
A sensible title (not exceeding 24 characters) for use on transcripts Philosophy and Sci Fi**

c. Lecture/Discussion hours per week 3 d. Laboratory hours per week 0

e. Studio hours per week 0 f. Credits 3

g. Course description

An examination of fundamental questions in metaphysics and epistemology through a comparison of works

of philosophy and science fiction. Questions will be discussed such as: Can there be time travel? Can computers think? Can there be non-human persons, and if so how would we identify them? Can there be ways of knowing that are radically different from our own, and what might they be like? How much can a person change while remaining the same person?

h. Prerequisites (if any)

None

i. May be repeated to a maximum of N/A (if applicable)

4. To be cross-listed as

N/A

Prefix and Number

Signature, Chairman, cross-listing department

5. Effective Date Fall 2008 (semester and year)

6. Course to be offered Fall Spring Summer

7. Will the course be offered each year? Yes No
(Explain if not annually)

8. Why is this course needed?

Science fiction provides a way to introduce philosophy to students who might otherwise not be attracted to the subject, as well as providing abundant examples and case studies to illustrate difficult philosophical issues.



Note: There is no distance-learning, service-learning, or community-based component to this course.

9. a. By whom will the course be taught? Look, Bruzina, Sanday

b. Are facilities for teaching the course now available? Yes No
If not, what plans have been made for providing them?



APPLICATION FOR NEW COURSE

10. What enrollment may be reasonably anticipated? 20-32

11. Will this course serve students in the Department primarily? Yes No

Will it be of service to a significant number of students outside the Department?
If so, explain. Yes No

Students from all majors may take this course.

Will the course serve as a University Studies Program course? Yes No

If yes, under what Area? _____

12. Check the category most applicable to this course

traditional; offered in corresponding departments elsewhere;

relatively new, now being widely established

not yet to be found in many (or any) other universities

13. Is this course applicable to the requirements for at least one degree or certificate at the University of Kentucky? Yes No

14. Is this course part of a proposed new program:
If yes, which? Yes No

15. Will adding this course change the degree requirements in one or more programs?
If yes, explain the change(s) below (NOTE - If "yes," a program change form must also be submitted.) Yes No

16. Attach a list of the major teaching objectives of the proposed course and outline and/or reference list to be used.

18. If the course is 400G or 500 level, include syllabi or course statement showing differentiation for undergraduate and graduate students in assignments, grading criteria, and grading scales. Check here if 400G-500.

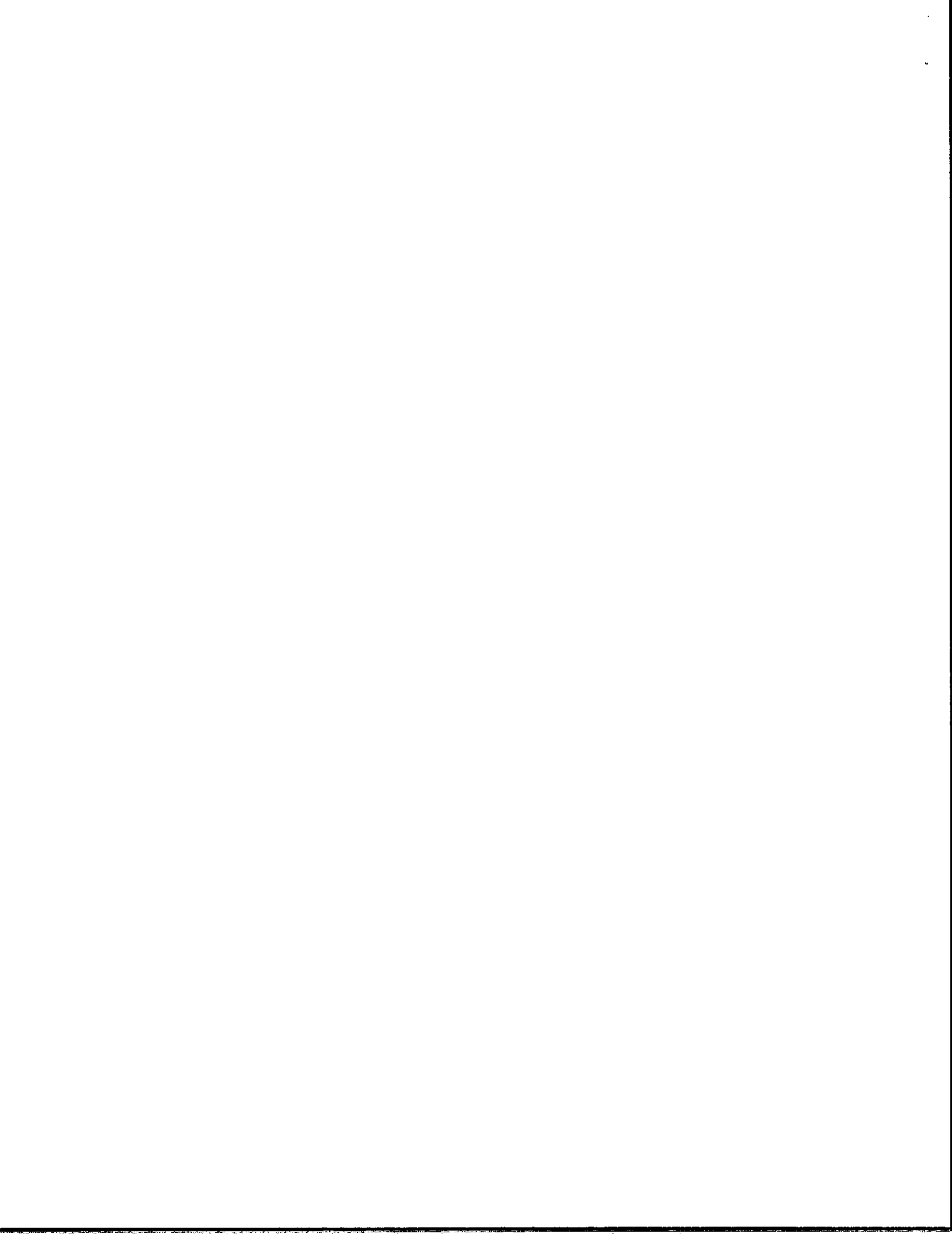
19. Within the Department, who should be contacted for further information about the proposed course?

Name

David Bradshaw

Phone Extension

7-7107





ARTS AND SCIENCES
EDUCATIONAL POLICY COMMITTEE
INVESTIGATOR REPORT

<http://www.as.uky.edu/Admin/faculty/viewdocs/summary/>

INVESTIGATING AREA: Humanities COURSE, MAJOR, DEGREE or PROGRAM. PHI 315

DATE FOR EPC REVIEW: _____ CATEGORY: NEW, CHANGE, DROP

INSTRUCTIONS: This completed form will accompany the course application to the Graduate/Undergraduate Council(s) in order to avoid needless repetition of investigation. The following questions are included as an outline only. Be as specific and as brief as possible. If the investigation was routine, please indicate this. The term "course" is used to indicate one course, a series of courses or a program, whichever is in order. Return the form to Leonidas Bachas Associate Dean, 275 Patterson Office Tower for forwarding to the Council(s). ATTACH SUPPLEMENT IF NEEDED.

1. List any modifications made in the course proposal as submitted originally and why.
2. If no modifications were made, review considerations that arose during the investigation and the resolutions.
3. List contacts with program units on the proposal and the considerations discussed therein.
4. Additional information as needed.
5. A&S Area Coordinator Recommendation:

APPROVE, APPROVE WITH RESERVATION, OR DISAPPROVE

6. A&S Education Policy Committee Recommendation:

APPROVE, APPROVE WITH RESERVATION, OR DISAPPROVE

7. W/Olster
A&S Educational Policy Committee,
David Olster, dmolst01@uky.edu 257-4348

Date: 20-2-08

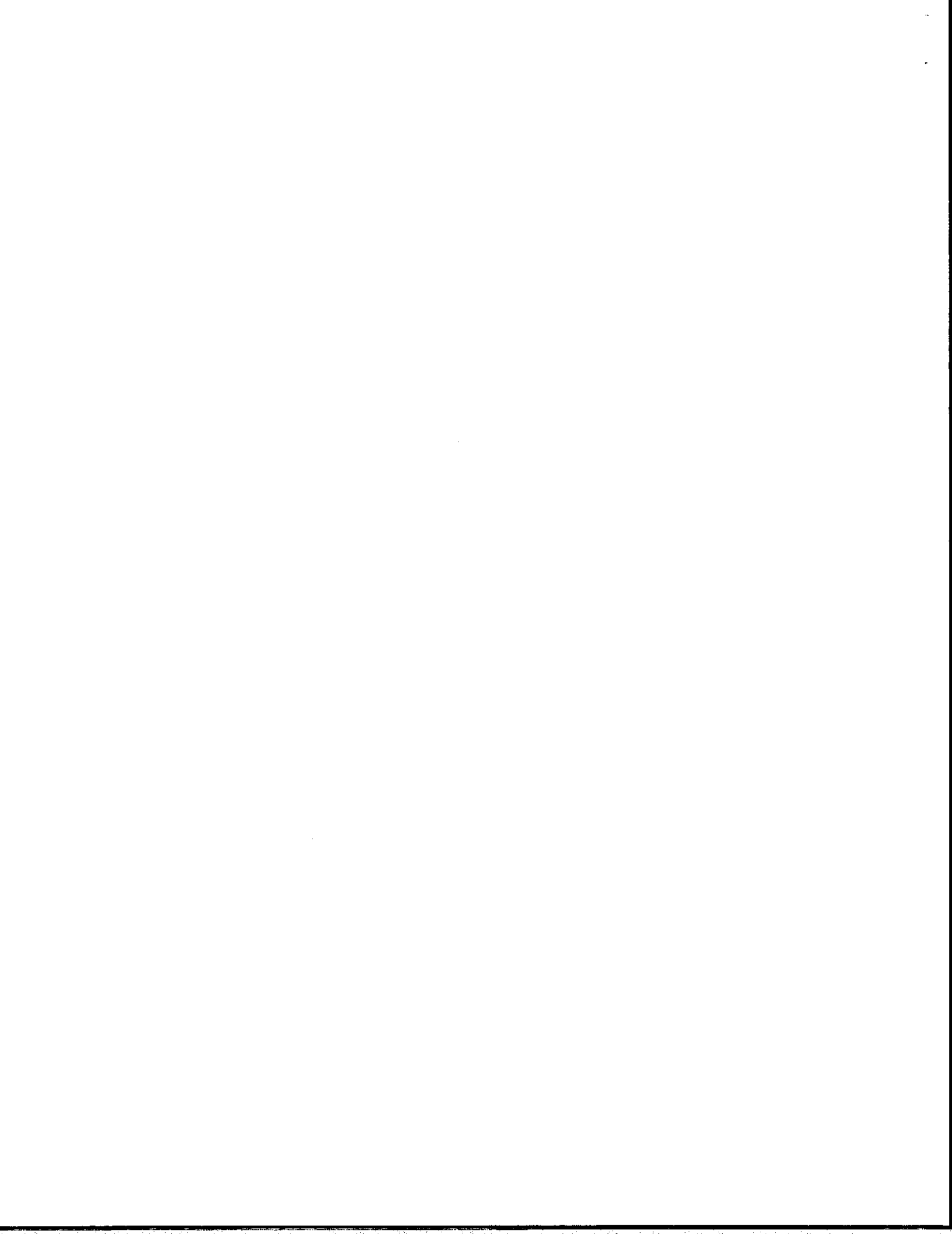
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APEX Review for Course or Program Proposal

Changes in the major and/or minor requirements affect our current electronic degree audit system, APEX. How will the degree audit in APEX be affected by the course or program proposal? Please show in detail the changes and how they would impact major or minor requirements in your department or the College requirements if the proposal is approved. If you are unsure as to how to answer this question, please contact Mike Shanks in the Arts & Sciences Advising Center at jmshan2@email.uky.edu or 257-8712 before filing this proposal.

Proposal: PHI 315 (new course)
Impact on department major: Not a required course. It can be counted toward total credits in PHI much like PHI 305, 310, 317, etc.
Impact on department minor: Not a required course, but can be counted toward total credits.
Impact on College requirements: None
Signature of department DUS required:
Who should be consulted for further information on the proposed change? Name: David Bradshaw E-mail: dbradsh@uky.edu Phone: 7-7107



UNIVERSITY SENATE ROUTING LOG

Proposal Title: PHI 315 Philosophy and Science Fiction
Name/email/phone for proposal contact: David Bradshaw dbradsh@email.uky.edu 257-7101

Instruction: To facilitate the processing of this proposal please identify the groups or individuals reviewing the proposal, identify a contact person for each entry, provide the consequences of the review (specifically, approval, rejection, no decision and vote outcome, if any) and please attach a copy of any report or memorandum developed with comments on this proposal.

Reviewed by: (Chairs, Directors, Faculty Groups, Faculty Councils, Committees, etc)	Contact person Name (phone/email)	Consequences of Review:	Date of Proposal Review	Review Summary Attached? (yes or no)
Philosophy Department faculty meeting	Dan Breazeale (chair) breazeal@uky.edu	approved	Oct. 3, 2007	no
A&S Educational Policy Cmte.	David Olster, 257-4348 dmolst01@uky.edu	approved	11/13/07	yes



Philosophy and Science Fiction **PHI 315**

Course Description and Rationale:

The aim of this course is to address some of the fundamental questions of metaphysics and epistemology through a comparison of works of philosophy and science fiction.

The majority of the course will follow Descartes' *Meditations on First Philosophy* (1641) and the issues raised by Descartes. The final few weeks will focus on other philosophical issues not discussed directly by Descartes but which likewise constitute essential questions of metaphysics and epistemology. In each section, the readings will have a philosophical component as well as science fiction component.

The rationale for such a course is to provide a perhaps more accessible entrée to the world of philosophy for undergraduates who may enjoy this literary genre and desire an opportunity to reflect upon and discuss the issues therein. Incidentally, there are similar courses at other universities which have proven to be very popular.

Course Requirements & Grading:

Students will be required to write four short philosophical essays (approx. 4-5 pages in length) on specific topics related to the questions raised below. With the consent of the instructor, students may instead submit an original work of science fiction (at least 30 pages in length). Each essay will count for 25% of the final grade (= 100% total).

Grading scale: 90-100 = A, 80-89 = B, 70-79 = C, 60-69 = D, below 60 = E.

Student Learning Outcomes

Upon completion of this course, students should be able to:

Analyze a philosophical argument so as to distinguish its premises, intermediate steps, and conclusion.

Compare different philosophical positions in a way that exhibits their strengths and weaknesses.

Incorporate examples drawn from science fiction within the analysis of different philosophical positions.

Write a short (4-5 page) paper exhibiting these analytical and comparative skills.



Schedule of Readings:

Φ = Philosophy

SF = Science Fiction

Weeks 1-3: The Skeptical Challenge:

Reading:

- Descartes, *Meditation I* (Φ)
- Plato, "The Allegory of the Cave," from the *Republic* (Φ)
- Hilary Putnam, "Brains in a Vat" (Φ)
- Robert Nozick, "The Experience Machine" from *Anarchy, State, and Utopia* (Φ)
- *The Matrix*, a film by Larry and Andy Wachowski (SF)
- James Pryor, "What's So Bad about Life in the Matrix?" (Φ)
- Robert Heinlein, "They" (SF)

Questions:

- Is life in the Matrix really so bad?
- Can we ever know that we are *not* in such a situation?

Weeks 4-6: The Self:

Reading:

- Descartes, *Meditation II* (Φ)
- Hume, selection from the *Treatise on Human Nature* (Φ)
- Stanislaw Lem, *Solaris* (SF)
- Jorge Luis Borges, "Borges and I" (SF, sort of)
- Greg Egan, "Learning to Be Me," from *Axiomatic* (SF)

Questions:

- What is self-knowledge?
- What is the nature of the self that is known?
- Is introspective knowledge more or less certain than my perceptions of the external world?

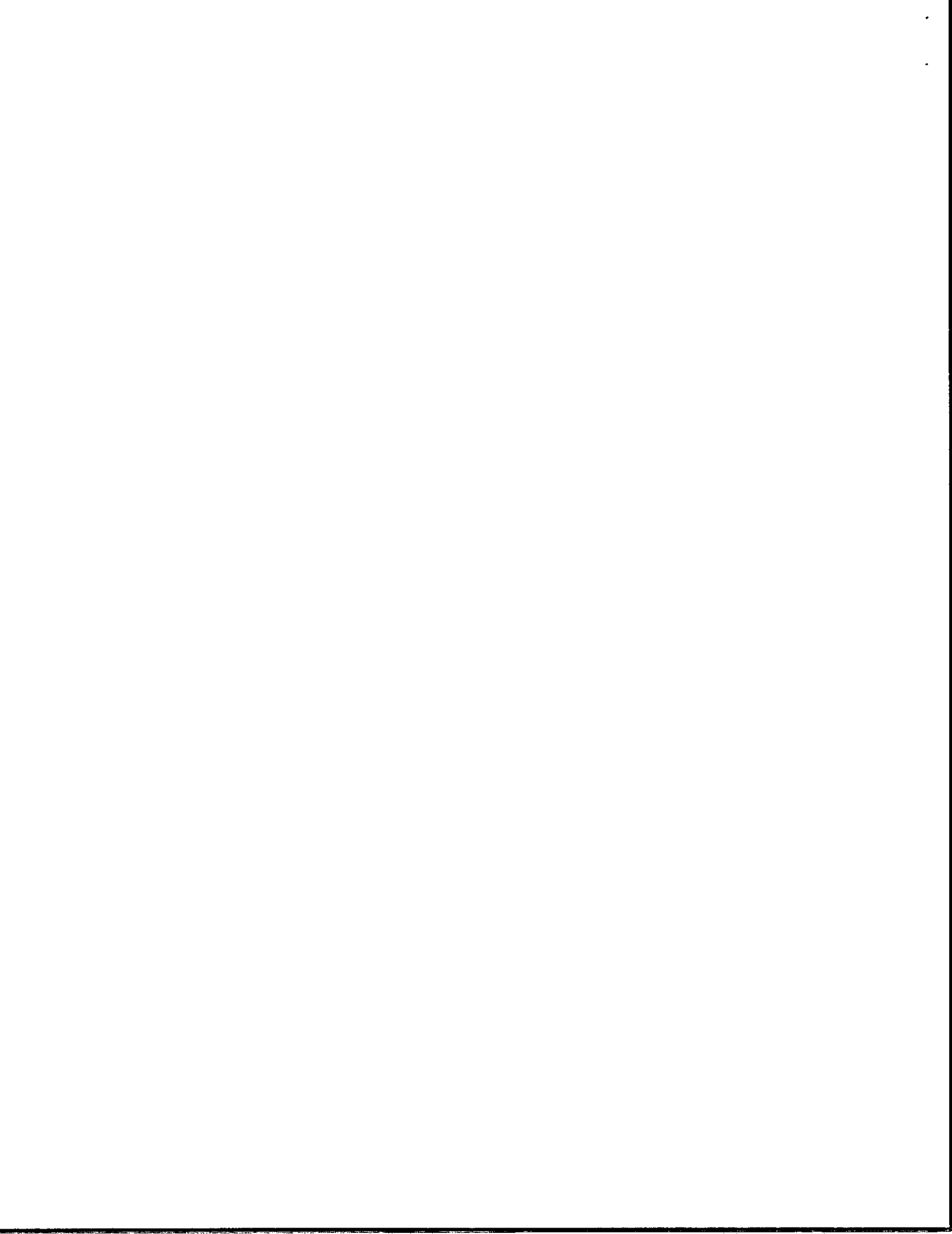
Weeks 7-9: God and Religion:

Reading:

- Descartes, *Meditation III & V* (Φ)
- St. Anselm, "The Ontological Argument" from *Proslogion* (Φ)
- Hume, "Of Miracles," from *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding* (Φ)
- Hume, selections from *Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion* (Φ)
- Olaf Stapledon, *Last and First Men* and *Starmaker* (SF)
- Italo Calvino, "How Much Shall We Bet?" from *Cosmicomics* (SF)
- Walter Miller, *A Canticle for Liebowitz* (SF)
- Arthur C. Clarke, "The Nine Billion Names of God" (SF)

Questions:

- What reasons do we have to believe that god exists?
- Does revealed religion or natural religion provide a satisfactory basis for theistic belief?
- What reasons (if any) do we have to believe that the creator of this world (if there be such a being) has the qualities attributed to it by traditional monotheistic religions?



Weeks 10-12: Knowledge of the World: Perception and Memory:

Reading:

- Descartes, *Meditation IV-VI* (Φ)
- Hume, §§4-7 from *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding* (Φ)
- Stanislaw Lem, *Solaris* (SF, cont'd)
- Jorge Luis Borges, "Funes, His Memory" (SF, sort of)
- Philip K. Dick, "We Can Remember It For You Wholesale" (SF)

Questions:

- Can we understand the external world if we cannot understand ourselves?
- What kinds of concepts are necessary to make sense of our perceptions of the world?
- Can we ever understand something completely alien to our experience?
- What is meant in *Solaris* by the claim, "Wherever we go we encounter ourselves"?
- To what extent is memory reliable?
- If (or since) memory does not seem completely reliable, how does that affect other knowledge claims that seem to be based on memory?

Weeks 13-14: The Metaphysics of Modality: Possible Worlds and Alternate Realities:

Reading:

- Leibniz, "On the Ultimate Origination of Things" (Φ)
- David Lewis, selections from *Counterfactuals* and *On the Plurality of Worlds* (Φ)
- Robert Merrihew Adams, "Theories of Actuality" (Φ)
- Jorge Luis Borges, "The Library of Babel" (SF, sort of)
- Ursula LeGuin, *The Lathe of Heaven* (SF)
- Stanislaw Lem, selections from *Cyberiad* (SF)
- Fritz Lieber, *The Big Time* (SF)
- *Star Trek: The Original Series*, episode "Mirror, Mirror" (SF)

Questions:

- In what sense (if any) can there be possible worlds?
- What *is* a possible world anyhow?
- What is the relation between conceivability and metaphysical possibility?

