PHI 171 – PROBLEMS OF PHILOSOPHY – FALL 2014

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ASSIGNMENT #4 – DUE NOV 23

Write a **first draft** (5-7 pages) of your final paper <u>or</u> an **outline** (1-2 pages) on a topic of your choice. The decision is yours. Keep in mind that on the basis of my comments on the draft or the outline, you will write a final 5-7 page paper. The draft/outline should contain:

(a) Clear and precise statement of the thesis you want to defend

(b) The arguments/reasons why your thesis holds true

(c) The objections to your thesis and your arguments

(d) Replies to the objections

Please be rigorous, clear and precise. Rigorous argumentation, clarity of exposition and precision of language are essential ingredients for a good philosophy paper.

You are encouraged to write about a topic that interests you and that is related to the course readings. Feel free to talk to me if you want to brainstorm ideas. I hold office hours on Mondays and Wednesdays, 2–3PM. If you are looking for suggestions, read below:

God: We considered two arguments for the existence of God. Do you think any of these arguments is defensible or not? Pick one argument and discuss it carefully. In particular, argue either that the argument can be defended or that it cannot.

Free will/determinism: Some philosophers—known as incompatibilists—hold that a deterministic world is one in which free will cannot exist, but others—known as compatibilists—disagree. Argue for the compatibilist or incompatibilist position.

Mind/body: The philosopher Frank Jackson offers an argument against physicalism. Evaluate Jackson's argument carefully. What objection can Patricia Churchland formulate? Defend either Jackson or Churchland.

Time: Einstein's theory of restricted relativity shows that simultaneity is relative and that moving clocks run slower than non-moving clocks. One might say that these are mere subjective perceptions. Instead, argue that the relativity of simultaneity and the slowing of moving cloaks are "real" physical phenomena.