INSTRUCTOR AND OFFICE INFORMATION: Stefan Sencerz, Ph.D. Office: FC 261; 825-2392; hours: MW 4:45-6:30; M 9:30-10 p.m. T 2:15-3:15 and by appointment. E-mail: stefan.sencerz@tamucc.edu; web: http://falcon.tamucc.edu/~sencerz/intro_to_philosophy.htm

COURSE DESCRIPTION: We will begin by studying methods of philosophical analysis that will be applied to analyze some of the classical metaphysical problems:

- What are the basic ingredients of reality? What is their ultimate nature?
- Could reality have been different? Indeed, why does reality contain anything at all?
- Where do human beings fit into reality?
- What makes me the same person I was as a child?
- Is everything fated to be exactly as it is? If our actions are caused by things science can predict and control, how can we have free will?
- Does time flow? How fast does it flow, and can one travel back in time, against the current?

REQUIRED TEXTS

M Peter Van Inwagen, Metaphysics (Westview Press, 1993)
H additional handouts (if necessary)

If you miss a class, make sure that you have copies of all additional handouts distributed in the class. Notice that handouts are intended primarily as aids to the understanding of the lectures and readings. They do not cover all of the material on which you may be tested, and they do not contain complete accounts of the topics they do cover. Merely memorizing the handouts will not enable you to pass the course.

COURSE ORGANIZATION: Class meetings will consist of both lectures and discussions. Questions, discussions, disagreement and argument is expected and strongly encouraged at any time. The amount and quality of your participation will contribute to your grade. Emphasis will be placed on rational procedures for evaluating controversies, both within philosophy and elsewhere. Your grade will not depend on any particular view you may adopt. Rather it will depend on the understanding of these views and the quality of the arguments you present in support of your views.

OBJECTIVES:
* Content: You should acquire some level of understanding of a variety of philosophical issues, and arguments that can be used in support of various philosophical positions.
* Skill: The course should develop a degree of proficiency in recognizing, evaluating and constructing arguments on more than one side of a philosophical issue.
* Motivation: The instructor hopes that you will acquire and take with you an interest in philosophical thought and problems, which will lead you to develop your own views on a variety of philosophical questions.

REQUIREMENTS: Complete the assigned readings before the class for which they are assigned; complete all graded assignments on time.

GRADED WORK: Two essay tests and a research paper (25% + 25% + 25% = 75%). A number of short assignments that may include take home and in-class quizzes, reading summaries, homework, etc. -- 25%. Grading will be on the standard 90-100% = A, 80-89% = B, etc.

ATTENDANCE POLICY: Unless it is a case of demonstrable emergency, attend every class, arrive to class on time and remain in class until it is over. You can miss 3 classes with no penalty. You do not have to excuse those classes. Missing each additional class without excuse will result in a deduction of 4 points from your final grade. Coming to class significantly late, or leaving early, counts as 2 of missed class.

PLAGIARISM: Representing someone else's work as your own is known as plagiarism. Whether it is done intentionally (e.g. cheating) or innocently (e.g. failing to place proper quotation marks and citations) plagiarism is a serious offense. All such cases will be handled in according wit the University policies.
MAKE-UP TESTS AND INCOMPLETES: Students who miss a test for a good reason will have a chance to take a make-up during the week after the original test at a time arranged with the instructor. An incomplete for the course is possible only in cases where course work is nearly complete and the student has a good excuse for not completing the course work by the end of the semester.

ADVISEMENT: Academic advisors are available to assist students with course selection, degree plans, and other academic matters. Each college has an academic advising center, staffed by full-time professionals. In the College of Liberal Arts the undergraduate advisor is Natasha Crawford (825-3466; Natasha.crawford@tamucc.edu). The graduate advisor is Rachelle Stanley (825-5896; Rachelle.stanley@tamucc.edu). Both are located on the second floor of Driftwood.

AMERICANS WITH DISABILITY ACT (ADA) is a federal ant-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil right protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodations of their disabilities. If you believe you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please contact Disability Service Office at 825-5816 or visit their office in Driftwood 101.

GRADE APPEALS PROCESS: Students who feel that they have not been held to appropriate academic standards as outlined in this class syllabus, equitable evaluation procedures, or appropriate grading, may appeal the final grade given in the course. A student with a complaint about a grade is encouraged to first discuss the matter with the instructor. For complete details on the process of submitting a formal grade appeal, please visit the College of Liberal Arts website, cla.tamucc.edu/students/studentinfo.html. For assistance and/or guidance in the grade appeal process, students may contact the Associate Dean.

TENTATIVE SCHEDULE (Unless specified otherwise, all readings from ARE@]

W1 01/27 Organization and general introduction.
The Way The World Is [H]
W2-3 02/03 Individuality and Externality (M, Chs. 2-3)
W4 02/17 Objectivity
W5-6 02/24 Why the World Is (Ontological and Cosmological Arguments for the Existence of God (M, 5-7, RE 4)
W7 03/03 The First Test
March 10-14 – Spring Break
W8-9 03/17 Rational Beings (M, Chs 7-8)
W10 03/31 The Nature of Rational Beings: Dualism and Physicalism [M, 9]
W11-12 04/07 Personal Identity [RE 1, M 10]
Paper is due
W13-14 04/21 Freedom of Will [M 11]
W15 05/0 TBA
The Final Test