Course Description: This course will be an introduction to metaphysics, that is, the philosophical inquiry into the universality of being and its ultimate causes. We will study the philosophical science of being as being. We will study various ways of knowing being, the primacy of metaphysical knowledge, the fundamental character of being, the distinction between essence and existence, the categories, the transcendental truths, goodness, and beauty, and the demonstrations for the existence and attributes of God as the first cause of all being.

Course Goals:
- Students will consider philosophy and its relation to meaning and nihilism.
- In a writing assignment, students will correctly identify and explain the premises and conclusions within a complex argument (one in which a claim functions both as a conclusion and a premise for a further conclusion) imbedded in a text.
- Display an understanding of the nature and role of metaphysics, as well as the meaning and divisions of being.
- Recognize the meaning and distinction between essence and existence, substance and accident, and act and potency.
- Be capable of describing being as a transcendental as well as the transcendental properties of being.
- Offer arguments for the existence of God as well as certain Divine attributes.

Required Texts:

Recommended Texts:

Classroom Expectations:
This course will be a combination of lecture and seminar. Class participation through questions and discussion is vital to one’s understanding of the philosophical material. Classroom attendance is mandatory; all prudent exceptions will be absolved on a case-by-case basis. At the beginning of each class, there will also be a short quiz worth 3 points over the reading for that day. You will have the first five minutes of class to complete the quiz. If you are late or absent, you will receive a 0 for the quiz. You must attend class in order to get credit for the quiz. You may not take the quiz and then leave class. At the end of the semester, two zeros will be dropped. Essentially, you will be able to miss 2 quizzes (tardy or absence) without any affect to your grade. At the beginning of each class, I will play a piece of music. If you can identify either the name of the piece, the performer, or the composer, write it on the top of the quiz sheet and if correct you will receive 1 point of extra credit on that quiz (maximum 10pts). No food is allowed in class. Water, coffee, and bottled drinks are permitted.
Students should expect that the material found on their quizzes and exams will come from lectures, discussions had during class, and reading assignments. **Computers, text messaging, and all other forms of disruptive digital multimedia are prohibited, unless there is a documented need.** Exceptions will be granted to students willing to sign a note prior to each class stating they will only use computers for the purposes of note taking. Noncompliance with any of the aforementioned policies without permission or prudential exceptions will adversely affect one’s grade.

**Requirements/Course Evaluations, Approximate Point Totals:**
- Midterm, 100pts (30%)
- Final, 150pts (35%)
- Papers, 75pts (15%)
- Quizzes, 81pts (20%)

Due Dates for Papers:
- Paper #1- 9/16/15 (15pts)
- Paper #2- 11/4/15 (30pts)
- Paper #3- 12/7/15 (30pts)

The final grade is determined by accumulation of points out of approximately 400pts total for the semester. There are two exams: a midterm and a final (the final is cumulative). Three papers are assigned for the semester. Papers consist of a single question that you must answer, with an essay of at least words. Each paper is worth 10 points. Daily quizzes are 3pts each.

A = 100-93%; A– = 92-90%; B+ = 89-88%; B = 87-83%; B– = 82-80%; C+ = 79-78%; C = 77-73%; C– = 72-70%; D+ = 69-68%; D = 67-60%; F = 59%-BELOW

**Policy on Academic Dishonesty:**
See pages 9-11 of the UST Student Handbook
(http://www.stthom.edu/Campus_Student_Life/Policies_Procedures/Student_Handbook.aqf)

Excerpt:
“Every offense against academic honesty seriously undermines the teaching-learning process for which the University exists, and such offenses will be dealt with expeditiously according to the following criteria.

**Definition**
Academic dishonesty includes but is not limited to:
1. Cheating on an examination or test, for example, by copying from another’s paper or by using unauthorized materials before or during the test;
2. Plagiarism, which represents as one’s own the work of another, whether published or not, without acknowledging the precise source;
3. Knowing participation in the academic dishonesty of another student even though one's own work is not directly affected;
4. Any conduct which reasonable persons would recognize as dishonest in an academic setting.”

**Penalty**
The penalty for an incident of academic dishonesty is, at the discretion of the faculty member, either a mark of zero for the work in question or the grade of ‘F’ for the course.” Any instances of plagiarism will be documented and put on file with the university.

**Communication:**
At times during the course the professor may contact the entire class by e-mail. This will be done through the UST Blackboard website and messages will be sent to the UST e-mail addresses of the students. Required handouts will be either posted on Blackboard or given in class.

**Students with Disabilities:**
Any student with a disability requiring accommodation in this course is encouraged to contact Counseling and Disability Services in Crocker Center. Their offices can be reached at (713) 525-6953 or 2169. Class policies are subject to adjustment for individual disability and need.
Outline of Topics and Readings:

- Why Philosophy? (Kreeft, “Why Study Philosophy and Theology?”)
- Nihilism (Bauerlein, “My Failed Atheism”; Bernens, “Realism in an Age of Relativism”; O’Connor, “A Good Man is Hard to Find”)
- What is Metaphysics? (Clarke, *The One and the Many*, 5-14; Aquinas, *An Introduction*, 1-13)
- The Place of Metaphysics (Clarke, *The One and the Many*, 14-23; Aquinas, *An Introduction*, 13-16)
- The Divisions of Being (Clarke, *The One and the Many*, 29-40; Aquinas, *An Introduction*, Aquinas, 24-28)
- Univocity, Equivocity, and Analogy (Clarke, *The One and the Many*, 42-50; Aquinas, “De Principiis Naturae,” c.6)
- Analogy of Being (Clarke, *The One and the Many*, 51-58; Aquinas, *An Introduction*, 36-40, 43-44)
- Materialism and Being (Clarke, *The One and the Many*, 60-71)
- Essence and Existence (Clarke, *The One and the Many*, 72-91; Aquinas, *An Introduction*, 31-35)
- Matter and Form (Clarke, *The One and the Many*, 92-108; Aquinas, “De Principiis Naturae,” c.2)
- Substance and Accident (Clarke, *The One and the Many*, 123-137; Aquinas, “De Principiis Naturae,” c.1)
- Substantial Change (Clarke, *The One and the Many*, 139-149; Chandler/Stanley, “A Conversation with Death”)
- MIDTERM
- Transcendentals: Good, Beautiful (Clarke, *The One and the Many*, 297-302; Aquinas, *An Introduction*, 72-81, 88-98)
- Divine Simplicity (Clarke, *The One and the Many*, 235-243; Aquinas, *Divine Nature*, 24-38)
- Divine Immutability and Eternity (Aquinas, *Divine Nature*, 76-92)
- Unity of God (Aquinas, *Divine Nature*, 92-100)

Final Exam: TBA

This syllabus is subject to modification at the instructor’s discretion. Students will receive adequate notification of any significant changes.