PHIL 440 ADVANCED SEMINAR:
platonism with a lower-case 'p'

General Information:
- Instructor: Dr. Deke Gould
- Meeting Times and Location:
    - MWF 2:15pm - 3:30pm in OM 223
- Office Hours: MW 3:30pm - 4:00pm or by appointment in OM 224
- email: dekegould@augustana.edu

Required Texts:
- All required texts are available on Moodle: you must print all assigned readings (be sure to make them double-spaced!) and have them with you for all class meetings.
- Occasionally, additional optional materials will be made available on Moodle.

Course Description:
This seminar will survey some of the most influential recent articles in the scholarly literature on the metaphysics and epistemology of abstract objects. The seminar begins with two significant ancient texts on the problems of abstract objects: Plato's *Parmenides* and Aristotle's *Metaphysics*. From there, the course focuses solely on some metaphysical papers by the important German philosopher and logician Gottlob Frege and the work of the genius Kurt Gödel. All of the following readings will be sourced from significant scholarly research on arguments for and against platonism in the 20th and 21st centuries up to the present day. The metaphysics and epistemology from the mid-twentieth century through the present. Students will aim to write a scholarly article that defends a novel position on one of the topics covered in class.

Course Objectives:
The primary objective of this class is *to do* as much philosophy as possible. In this 400-level seminar, we will go beyond a mere introductory-level survey of puzzles about knowledge and reality. Rather, we will aim to hone our abilities as dedicated students of philosophy, by mastering the use of relevant technical terms of art, appreciation of important conceptual distinctions, and grasping the subtleties of classic scholarly arguments. Through this study, we will improve the quality of our own thinking on these difficult topics, and aim to produce a modest but insightful contribution to the literature.

Grading:
This is the breakdown by weight for the overall grade:
- In-class Discussion Participation: 15%
- Reading Quizzes: 15%
- Writing Exercises: 10%
- Research topic proposal: 10%

- Research project outline: 10%
- Research project first draft: 15%
- Research project presentation: 5%
- Research project final draft: 20%

Each portion is explained in more detail below.
In general, grades in this class reflect the following scale:
- 100-98%: A+, 97-93%: A, 92-90%: A-
- 89-87%: B+, 86-83%: B, 82-80%: B-
- 79-77%: C+, 76-73%: C, 72-70%: C-
- 69-60%: D
- 59-0%: F

General NO GADGETS Policy:
The only technology you are permitted to use (with some rare exceptions; see below) are physical books, physical paper, and a physical writing utensil. We will use each meeting in this class as an opportunity to exercise and strengthen our attention and focus; both of these are skills that are desperately needed in our world today, and can help to improve the quality of our lives. I have much, much more to say about this, but for now, you are aware that no electronic devices should be used in class. Thus, all of your texts need to be physical print copies, and you will need to print all documents I share on Moodle and bring them with you to class. Students who violate this policy will be ejected from the classroom, and will earn no participation credit for that day.

In-Class Participation:
Classroom participation and discussion are essential to the proper function of any decent philosophy course. Thus, everyone in the class is responsible for all class meetings and students will be graded on their classroom participation. For most class meetings, I will record a point score for each student, ranging from zero to two points. If a student misses a class meeting (for any reason), the student will receive zero (out of two) points for that day. If the student attends a class meeting but contributes nothing to the discussion, the student will receive one (out of two) points for the day. If the student attends and positively contributes to class discussion, the student will receive two (out of two) points for that day.

Mature and respectful dialogue is crucial for any philosophy course to be successful. Thus, any student who engages in disrespectful behavior will be ejected from the classroom and will earn zero points for that day. To be clear, talking while others are talking, texting in class, or habitual tardiness (more than twice) count as disrespectful behavior.

Attendance:
You shouldn't miss class, since a significant portion of your grade depends on your active daily contributions to the dialogue. For more details regarding attendance, please consult the official attendance policy and guidelines for Augustana College here:
https://www.augustana.edu/information-students/attendance-guidance .

Reading Quizzes:
You are expected to complete the readings at least once ***before*** the first meeting, and then re-visit and re-read the texts throughout the rest of the week before the Wednesday and Friday meetings. The proper function of each class meeting will presuppose this regular preparation. In order to help you hold yourself accountable to this responsibility, I will administer a brief reading quiz about some central concepts from the readings assigned that week. Each quiz will be "open book/open note", but students will only have a very short (about 5 minute) amount of time to complete their answer. Each quiz will be worth 5 potential points: a complete demonstration of proper preparation will earn 5 points, an adequate but incomplete demonstration will earn 4 points, and inadequate demonstrations will earn either 3, 2, or 1 point. Late or missing quizzes will not be accepted for credit.

Writing Exercises:
Throughout the semester, there will be frequent, spontaneous in-class writing assignments. Some assignments will involve summarizing core arguments from assigned readings; other assignments will concern brainstorming and drafting your own unique arguments. Almost all assignments will involve mastery of the core concepts of logic covered in the Week 1 lecture. Each assignment will be graded on a scale from 0 to 10 potential points: an excellent piece will earn 9 or 10 points, a good one will earn 8 points, a satisfactory one will earn 7 points, and an unsatisfactory piece will earn 6 or fewer points. More details will be given in class.

Research Project:
Much of your work in this class will be directed toward the development of a new scholarly piece. Ideally, this project should be developed with an eye toward submission for consideration in a regional undergraduate conference or publication in an undergraduate journal. These projects take time, patience, hard work, and commitment. The assignments in this class and their due dates are set up to help you in this regard.

- Topic proposal: early in the term, you will submit a brief written proposal with a tentative bibliography, and you will meet with me during office hours to defend your proposal in person. The proposal will be graded on both the written and oral defense.
- Outline: after refining your initial project ideas on the basis of feedback and reflection, you will sketch an outline of your project, with skeletal reconstructions of relevant arguments from the scholarly literature and a skeletal reconstruction of your own core argument.
- First draft: after more refining, you will submit a short, roughly 10-page (3,000 word) draft of your project.
- Presentation: you will present your work to your colleagues in the class, receiving more feedback on your work-in-progress. Presentations will be about 8 minutes each, with an additional 7 minutes for Q&A.
- Final draft: After receiving feedback from your colleagues and me, you will revise the essay again and submit an improved draft, roughly 12- to 15-pages in length.

It will be common and expected that the project will undergo many substantial changes at each stage of the revision process. Don't be discouraged: this is the nature of the genuine academic pursuit of truth: our views change to reflect our growth and improved understanding. Nevertheless, the aim is to produce work that you will proudly share and develop even after the class is over.

<u>Statement on Academic Dishonesty:</u>
Everyone is expected to be familiar with the college's policy on academic dishonesty. I have no tolerance for cheating in my classes: **if someone is caught cheating in my class, that student will receive an F for the course, and a message will be sent to the Honor Council.**

Generic statement on the use of AI in this class: unless your instructor notes otherwise, all written work submitted in your classes is assumed to be your work, and not the product of an AI system. Suspicious cases will result in a one-on-one meeting between the student and the instructor, in which the student will demonstrate their understanding of the content or an explanation of the generation of the work. Cases of blatant use of AI in order to pass off its products as one's own **will count as plagiarism**, and the penalties listed above will apply. Further details will be discussed in class.

<u>Statement on Accommodations:</u>
If you have any need for any accommodations, please let me know by the end of the first week of the semester. Below is a common syllabus statement provided by the Office of Disability Services:

> If you are a student who has a documented disability, or had academic accommodations in high school or at another institution of higher learning, you may be eligible for services. Services are coordinated through the ODS (office of disability services). Augustana College in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is committed to equity, access, and inclusion for all students. Please visit the ODS website https://www.augustana.edu/student-life/residential-life/disability-services for more information.

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PHIL 440 COURSE SCHEDULE
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All readings scheduled below are required for the week listed, so students are expected to read the assigned texts before we meet, preferably more than once. Please note that for general background, the *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* is always highly recommended, especially the following entries:

- Balaguer. (2024) "Platonism in Metaphysics." Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy. Zalta, ed. URL: https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/platonism/
- Bueno. (2013) "Nominalism in the Philosophy of Mathematics." Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy. Zalta, ed. URL: https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/nominalism-mathematics/
- Colyvan. (2023) "Indispensibility Arguments in the Philosophy of Mathematics." Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy. Zalta, ed. URL: https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/mathphil-indis/

- Cowling and Giberman. (2025) "Nominalism in Metaphysics." Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy. Zalta, ed. URL: https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/nominalism-metaphysics/
- Falguera, Martínez-Vidal, and Rosen. (2025) "Abstract Objects." Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy. Zalta, ed. URL: https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/abstract-objects/
- Linnebo. (2023) "Platonism in the Philosophy of Mathematics." Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy. Zalta, ed. URL: https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/platonism-mathematics/

Week 1: *(3, 5 September) [No Class Mon 1 Sep, Labor Day]*
Platonism with a capital 'P'
- Plato (360BCE/1997) *Parmenides*. in *Plato: Complete Works*. Cooper, ed. Hackett. 359-397.
- Aristotle. (350BCE/1985) "Book II." *Metaphysics*. in *The Complete Works of Aristotle, Volume II*. Princeton UP.

Week 2: *(8, 10, 12 September)*
Frege and platonism at the origins of analytic philosophy
- Frege. (1884/1980) "Views of Certain Writers on the Concept of Number." *Foundations of Arithmetic*. Austin, trans. Basil Blackwell. 24-38.
- Frege. (1892/1960) "On Sense and Reference." *Translations from the Philosophical Writings of Gottlob Frege*. Geach and Black, eds. Basil Blackwell. 56-78.
- Frege. (1918/1956) "The Thought." *Mind*. 65.259: 289-311.

Week 3: *(15, 17, 19 September)*
Gödel and Quine into the 20th Century
- Gödel. (1947/1990) "What is Cantor's Continuum Problem?" in *Kurt Gödel Collected Works Volume II: Publications 1938-1974*. Feferman, ed. Oxford UP. 176-188.
- Goodman and Quine. (1947) "Steps Toward a Constructive Nominalism." *Journal of Symbolic Logic*. 12: 105–22.
- Quine. (1948) "On What There Is." *Review of Metaphysics*. 2.5: 21-38.
  - Written Proposals Due Friday by 5:00pm
  - (Oral proposals will be heard during office hours of Week 4)

Week 4: *(22, 24, 26 September)*
Quine and Carnap on Ontological Relativity
- Quine. (1968) "Ontological Relativity." *Journal of Philosophy*. 65.7: 185-212.
- Carnap. (1950) "Empiricism, Semantics, and Ontology." *Revue Internationale de Philosophie*. 4.11: 20-40.
- Quine. (1969) "Existence and Quantification." *Fact and Existence*. Margolis, ed. U of Toronto P. 1-17.

Week 5: *(29 September, 1, 3 October)*
Benacerraf, Putnam, and Popper
- Benacerraf. (1973) "Mathematical Truth." *Journal of Philosophy.* 70.19:661-79.
- Putnam. (1977) "Realism and Reason" *Proceedings and Addresses of the American Philosophical Association.* 50.6: 483-498.
- Popper. (1978) "Three Worlds." *Tanner Lectures on Human Values.* 143-67.

Week 6: *(6, 10 October) [No Class Wed 8 Oct: Symposium Day]*
Platonism vs. Nominalism in the 1970s and '80s
- Haack. (1978) "Platonism Versus Nominalism: Carnap and Goodman." *Monist* 61.3: 483-494.
- Zalta, Edward. (1983) "Chapter II: Applications of the Elementary Theory." *Abstract Objects: An Introduction to Axiomatic Metaphysics.* D. Reidel. 40-58.
- Lewis. (1986) "A Philosopher's Paradise: 1.7 Concreteness - 1.9 Actuality." *On the Plurality of Worlds.* Blackwell. 81-95.
    - Outlines Due Friday by 5:00pm

Week 7: *(13, 15 October; No class Fri 17 Oct: Fall Break)*
Lewis vs. Armstrong, also Bealer
- Lewis. (1986) "Against Structural Universals." *Australasian Journal of Philosophy.* 64.1: 25-46.
- Armstrong. (1986) "In Defense of Structural Univerals." *Australasian Journal of Philosophy.* 64.1: 85-88.
- Bealer. (1993) "Universals." *Journal of Philosophy.* 90. 5-31.

Week 8: *(22, 24 October) [No Class Mon 20 Oct: Reading Day]*
"Full-Blooded" platonism, the return of concrete modal realism, and logic
- Balaguer. (1998) *Platonism and Anti-Platonism in Mathematics.* Oxford UP.
- McGrath. (1998) "The Concrete Modal Realist Challenge to Platonism." *Aus J of Phil* 76.4: 587-610.
- Beall. (2001) "Existential Claims and Platonism." *Philosophia Mathematica.* 9.3: 80-86.
    - First Drafts Due Wednesday,

Week 9: *(27, 29, 31 October)*
Epistemology of platonism and also musical entities
- McEvoy. (2005) "Mathematical Apriorism and Warrant: A Reliabilist-Platonist Account." *The Philosophical Forum.* 36.4: 399-417.
- Fine. (2006) "Our Knowledge of Mathematical Objects" *Oxford Studies in Epistemology.* 1: 89–110.
- Dodd. (2007) "Types II: Platonism." *Works of Music.* Oxford UP. 58-81.
    - *nota bene:* no class on Monday, 5 April (Easter Recess)

Week 10: *(3, 5 November)*
Causal relations and conceivability
- Azzouni. (2008) "A Cause for Concern: Standard Abstracta and Causation." *Philosophia Mathematica (III)*. 16: 397-401.
- Cresswell. (2010) "Abstract Entities in the Causal Order." *Theoria* 76: 249-65.
- Callard. (2007) "The Conceivability of Platonism." *Philosophia Mathematica* 15.3: 347-56
  - Student presentations begin Wednesdays and Fridays for the remainder of the term

Week 11: *(10, 12, 14 November)*
Types, reliability, and external questions revisited
- Wetzel. (2009) "Types Exist." *Types and Tokens: On Abstract Objects*. MIT P. 23-52.
- Schechter. (2010) "The Reliability Challenge and the Epistemology of Logic." *Phil Persp* 24: 437-64.
- Chalmers. (2012) "Hard Cases." *Constructing the World*. Oxford UP. 259-300.

Week 12: *(17, 19, 21 November)*
Causal efficacy revisited
- Park. (2018) "Can Mathematical Objects Be Causally Efficacious?" *Inquiry*.
- Juvshik. (2018) "Abstract Objects, Causal Efficacy, and Causal Exclusion." *Erkenntnis*. 83: 805-27.

Week 13: *(24 November) [No Class Wed 26 & Fri 28 Nov: Thanksgiving Break]*
Semantics revisited, and causal efficacy revisited again
- Clarke-Doane. (2022) "Platonism, Nominalism, and Semantic Appearances." Logique & Analyse. 259: 235-251.
- Callard. (2023) "Can Math Move Matter?" *Inquiry*. 62.3: 247-255.
- Park. (2024) "Math can't Move Matter." *Metaphysica*. 25.1: 1-14.

Week 14: *(1, 3, 5 December)*
Semantics and external questions revisited again
- Thomasson (2025) "Reverse Engineering: Unraveling Metaphysical Problems." *Rethinking Metaphysics*. Oxford UP. 163-198.
  - final draft of the research project due Friday,

Week 15 (Finals Week)
- Final Draft Due:
- Please double-check the registrar's final exam schedule page to make sure this is accurate.