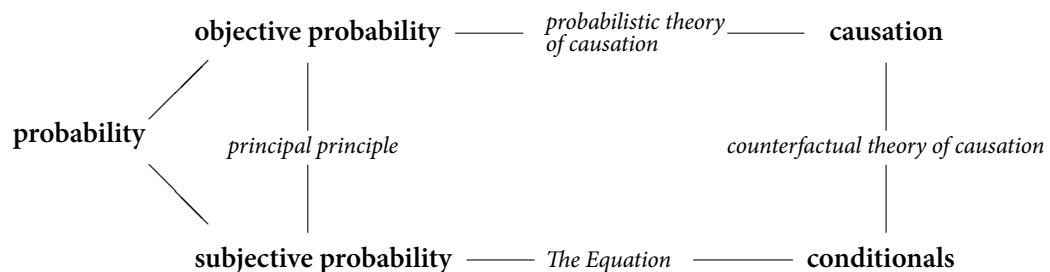|	
COURSE	TOPICS IN METAPHYSICS & EPISTEMOLOGY (PHIL-UA 103)
INSTRUCTOR	J. Dmitri Gallow ✉: jdmitrig@umich.edu
MEETING TIMES	Tuesdays and Thursdays, 9:30–10:45 Room 301, 5 Washington Place
OFFICE HOURS	Mondays, 13:00–15:00, and by appointment 5 Washington Place, Room 409
DESCRIPTION	This course will focus on conditionals, probability, causation, and what relationships might exist between them. We will begin by considering conditionals—claims of the form ⌜if A, C⌝. We'll study one influential theory of these conditionals—what's known as the *variably strict* analysis. We will then move on to consider probability. We will learn about the mathematical theory of probability and ask philosophical questions about how to interpret that mathematical theory. This will lead us to postulate two importantly different kinds of probability statements: *objective* probability statements and *subjective* probability statements. We'll consider a popular claim about the normative relationship between these two kinds of probability statements known as the *principal principle*. The principal principle says, very roughly, that, if you know the objective probabilities, then you ought to set your subjective probabilities equal to them. From there, we will consider a proposed relationship between subjective probability and conditionals known as *The Equation*. The Equation says, again very roughly, that your subjective probability in a claim of the form ⌜if A, C⌝ should be equal to the probability that you would give C, were you to accept A. This thesis is very plausible, but we'll see that there are powerful reasons to doubt it. Finally, we'll consider what relationship causation might bear to conditionals and objective probability. We'll begin with a theory according to which a kind of conditional holds the key to understanding causal relations, and we'll then consider a theory according to which causal claims are just claims about objective probabilities. Diagramatically, the structure of the course is as shown below.

EVAULATION   Your final grade in this course will be determined by 4 components:

Problem Sets	30%
Class Presentation	20%
Paper(s)	30%
Participation	20%

You will be given four problem sets over the course of the semester. These problem sets will make up 30% of your final grade in the course.

You will be asked to give a presentation to the class on one of the theories from the readings. We'll firm this up during the first few weeks of class. We'll meet up before your presentation to discuss the view you'll be presenting and how to best present it to the class.

You may either 1) write an extended (10 page or so) paper on one of the topics from the course, or 2) submit four short (2–3 page) summaries/discussions of the readings. If you choose the former option, you should meet with me to discuss your paper idea by 4/21; and your papers will be due in class on 5/7. If you choose the latter option, your summaries are due in class on the day that the reading is assigned. (You may not write a summary/discussion of the reading that you are presenting on.) Your summaries should explain what the author is attempting to accomplish in the assigned reading and raise some questions or concerns about this project.

You will additionally receive points for class participation. To get these points, you should 1) do the assigned reading before coming to class; 2) contribute to class discussion; and 3) be respectful of and courteous to your fellow students.

SCHEDULE

Course overview and an introduction to conditionals

1/29 BENNETT (2003, §1–5)

Background: Set Theory & Possible Worlds

2/3 ZABBAL (ms)
2/10 BENNETT (2003, chapter 10 §63 & 64)

Conditionals: the variably strict analysis of subjunctives

2/12 STALNAKER (1968)
2/17 LEWIS (1973, §§1.1–1.4)
2/17 **set theory & possible worlds problem set due**

Conditionals: the variably strict analysis, internecine disputes

2/19 BENNETT (2003, chapter 11)
2/24 LEWIS (1973, §3.4), STALNAKER (1980)

Conditionals: a problem for the variably strict analysis of subjunctives

2/26 WASSERMAN (2006), BENNETT (2003, chapter 12)

ACADEMIC
INTEGRITY

Cheating and Plagiarism will not be tolerated. If you are found cheating on any assignment, you will automatically receive a failing grade for the course.

BENNETT, JONATHAN. 2003. *A Philosophical Guide to Conditionals.* Clarendon Press, Oxford.

CARTWRIGHT, NANCY. 1979. "Causal Laws and Effective Strategies." *Noûs*, vol. 13 (4): 419–437.

COLLINS, JOHN, NED HALL & L. A. PAUL, editors. 2004. *Causation and Counterfactuals.* The MIT Press, Cambridge, MA.

HITCHCOCK, CHRISTOPHER. 2010. "Probabilistic Causation." *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy.* URL http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/causation-probabilistic/.

LEWIS, DAVID K. 1973. *Counterfactuals.* Blackwell Publishers, Malden, MA.

—. 1976. "Probability of Conditionals and Conditional Probablities." *Philosophical Review*, vol. 85: 297–315.

—. 1980. "A Subjectivist's Guide to Objective Chance." In *Studies in Inductive Logic and Probability*, RICHARD C. JEFFREY, editor, vol. II, 263–293. University of California Press, Berkeley.

—. 1986. "Causation." In *Philosophical Papers*, vol. II. Oxford University Press, New York.

—. 2000. "Causation as Influence." *The Journal of Philosophy*, vol. 97 (4): 182–197. Reprinted in COLLINS et al. (2004, pp. 75–106).

SCHAFFER, JONATHAN. 2004. "Trumping Preemption." In COLLINS et al. (2004), chap. 2, 59–75.

STALNAKER, ROBERT C. 1968. "A Theory of Conditionals." In *Studies in Logical Theory*, N. RESCHER, editor, chap. 4, 98–112. Oxford University Press, Oxford.

—. 1975. "Indicative Conditionals." *Philosophia*, vol. 5 (3): 269–286.

—. 1980. "A Defense of Conditional Excluded Middle." In *Ifs*, W. L. HARPER, R. STALNAKER & G. PEARCE, editors, 87–104. D. Reidel, Dordrecht.

STREVENS, MICHAEL. 2003. "Against Lewis's New Theory of Causation: A Story with Three Morals." *Pacific Philosophical Quarterly*, vol. 84 (4): 398–412.

—. 2006. "Probability and Chance." In *Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, D. M. BORCHERT, editor. Macmillan.

TITELBAUM, MICHAEL G. ms. *Fundamentals of Bayesian Epistemology.* Oxford University Press (under contract), Oxford.

WASSERMAN, RYAN. 2006. "The Future Similarity Objection Revisited." *Synthese*, vol. 150 (1): 57–67.

ZABBAL, YOURI. ms. "Basic Set Theory." http://www.bu.edu/linguistics/UG/course/lx502/_docs/lx502-basic%20set%20theory.pdf.