Here are a few topics that you can use for your reading essay due in class on Thursday, 9/25, if you’d like. Please select your own if you’d prefer—that is generally the better course of action. The topics below are not written in a way that lines up with the structure of the essays I want. These statements are meant to get you thinking—simply answering the questions in order will not result in an adequate essay.

1. What is Heil’s view of the relationship between philosophy and science? Is this view sustainable, given that he believes that “metaphysics, like philosophy generally, is itself continuous with science” (6)?

2. How can one use the commitment to a causally closed universe to criticize Cartesian dualism? Can the Cartesian respond to this criticism?

3. What is Wittgenstein’s “Beetle in the Box” analogy? How might one use it to criticize dualism and/or support behaviorism? Do you find the argument you reconstruct persuasive? How might a dualist respond?

4. What is the “phenomenological fallacy”? How is this used by identity theorists in response to the Leibniz critique? Do fans of Leibniz have any rejoinder available to them?

5. Reconstruct how a functionalist might use Lewis’s total functional description idea to rebut the charge that functionalism is circular. Do you think that this response works?