

HISTORY OF MODERN PHILOSOPHY PHIL 311

Winter 2015
10:00 – 11:20pm Tuesday & Thursday
Location: 129 McKenzie

Instructor: Professor Beata Stawarska
Office Hours: Thursday 1–2:50 pm
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Course Description:

This course is the second of a three-course introduction to the history of western philosophy. We will examine the history of western philosophy in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, and the importance and relevance of philosophical debates in the modern era for us today. The course will focus on three key subjects relevant to the history of philosophy in this period. Primarily, we will engage with readings from canonical figures in the modern traditions of Rationalism (selections from Descartes, Spinoza, and Leibniz) and Empiricism (selections from Locke, Berkeley, and Hume); we will discuss modern perspectives on central philosophical questions regarding being, the self, and knowledge. Additionally, we will consider works by early modern women philosophers (Princess Elisabeth, Mary Astell, Anne Conway) who are not usually included in the canon but who played a central role in the development of these philosophical traditions. A third focus of the course concerns the relation between modern philosophy and contemporary conversations both in philosophy and in the sciences. This focus will help the students to appreciate the continued relevance of the problems and questions raised by the empiricists and rationalists in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries to present intellectual debates.

Textbook: the main textbook for this course is *Modern Philosophy: an Anthology of Primary Sources* (Second Edition), ed. R. Ariew and E. Watkins, 2009, Hackett. New and used copies are available at the UO Bookstore. The older (first) edition is acceptable but pagination is different. An EBook edition is available here: <http://www.hackettpublishing.com/modern-philosophy-1>. There is also a selection of additional required readings posted on Blackboard (under ‘Course Documents’).

Additional materials: a copy of the syllabus, lecture slides, study sheets for midterm exams, final paper guidelines and questions, and other relevant materials, can all be accessed on Blackboard.

Schedule of Readings:

WEEK 1 (Jan. 5 – Jan. 11)

- T: Introductory Meeting. What is ‘Modern’ Philosophy? Learning expectations in this course.
- Th: Descartes, *Discourse I, II. Modern Philosophy*, pp. 25-33. *Meditations on First Philosophy*. Meditation I, II. *Modern Philosophy*, pp. 40-47.

WEEK 2 (Jan. 12 – Jan. 18)

- T: Descartes, Meditation II (contd), III, IV. *Modern Philosophy*, pp. 47-58.
- Th: Descartes, Meditations V and VI. *Modern Philosophy*, pp. 58-68.

WEEK 3 (Jan. 19 – Jan. 25)

- T: Elisabeth of Bohemia, Selection from Correspondence with Descartes (Blackboard); Selection from Descartes' *The Passions of the Soul* (Blackboard).
- Th: Mary Astell, Selections from *A Serious Proposal to the Ladies*, and from *Reflections upon Marriage* (Blackboard).

WEEK 4 (Jan. 26 – Feb. 1)

- T: **In class Exam 1.**
- Th: Hobbes' Objections and Descartes' Replies; Hobbes's *Leviathan* –Chapters 1-5. *Modern Philosophy*, pp. 76-79; 114-129. Selection from Locke's *The Second Treatise of Government* (Blackboard).

WEEK 5 (Feb. 2 – Feb. 8)

- T: Spinoza, *Ethics*, p. I (without Prop. 22-23). *Modern Philosophy*, pp. 144-154, 155-164.
- Th: Spinoza, *Ethics*, p. II (without Prop. 17-19, 21-25, 29-31, 36-40). *Modern Philosophy*, pp. 164-187. *Ethics* p. V. 188-195.

WEEK 6 (Feb. 9 – Feb. 15)

- T: Anne Conway, Selections from *The Principles of the Most Ancient and Modern Philosophy* (Blackboard).
- Th: Leibniz, *A New System*. *Modern Philosophy*, pp. 269-274. *Monadology*. *Modern Philosophy*, pp. 275-283.

WEEK 7 (Feb. 16 – Feb. 22)

- T: **In class Exam 2.**
- Th: Locke, *Essay*, Book I, chapter 2, Book II, chapters 1-8. *Modern Philosophy*, pp. 318-337.

WEEK 8 (Feb. 23 – March 1)

- T: Locke, *Essay*, Book II, chapter 27. *Modern Philosophy*, pp. 367-377.
- Th: Berkeley, First Dialogue. *Modern Philosophy*, pp. 454-474.

WEEK 9 (March 2 – March 8)

- T: Berkeley, Second Dialogue. *Modern Philosophy*, pp. 475-484; *Treatise*. *Modern Philosophy*, pp. 438-453. In-class screening of *The Film* (1965) by Samuel Beckett with Buster Keaton.
- Th: Hume, *Inquiry* II, III, IV, and V. *Modern Philosophy*, pp. 538-555.

WEEK 10 (March 9 – March 15)

- T: Hume, *Inquiry* VIII. *Modern Philosophy*, pp. 564-575. *Treatise* VI. *Modern Philosophy*, pp. 525-532.
- Th: Review of class material; discussion of final essay prompts.

The reading schedule is subject to change. All the changes will be announced in advance in class and online.

Course Information:

Readings: readings are due on the date they are scheduled. It is crucial that you keep up with all the readings in this class. Please plan your time schedule so that you are able to read and REREAD the text at two levels:

1. Comprehension of the text: what is the author saying, what is the argument being defended?
2. Critical analysis of the text: what reasons does the author have for defending this argument? Are they good reasons? Are there any problems with the argument? Is the argument contingent on making certain assumptions that the author may not have clarified? Is it relevant to contemporary concerns? And any other reflections that you may bring to the reading.

Discussion section: You are required to attend **the minimum of 8 out of the 10 discussion sections** in order to receive the grade C- or higher. Intellectual discussion is an important element of learning and practicing philosophy, and so you need to be able to actively participate in the meetings with your Graduate Teaching Fellow (GTF).

Apart from the first and last week of class, you are required to prepare a question to what you consider to be a key passage in the text assigned for that week (no longer than a paragraph). Both the question and the citation must be typewritten; please submit your question to your discussion section leader over email on Thursday prior to the meeting, and be prepared to discuss this passage during the meeting.

Exams: there will be 2 in-class examinations, and one final paper in this class. The in-class exams consist of short essay questions asking you to explain key concepts and arguments from the readings. You will also be asked to comment on short selected passages from the required readings. Study sheets will be provided in advance of the exams to assist you and your discussion section leaders with the review of class material.

The final take-home paper will be a longer essay written in response to a prompt selected from a list provided in advance. Your essay should be 6-8 pages long (double spaced); detailed guidelines will be provided in advance. Prompts will draw on the assigned readings, lectures and materials from your discussion.

The final paper is based on the entire course material, the two midterm exams on the material covered prior to the exam.

Grade components:

Participation: 10%

2 exams: 30% per exam, 60% in total

Final paper: 40%

Total: 100%

Grading

What kind of paper deserves an “A,” “B,” etc.? The following rubric reflects the general standards of the Philosophy Department at the University of Oregon.

A = excellent. No mistakes, well-written, and distinctive in some way or other.

B = good. No significant mistakes, well-written, but not distinctive in any way.

C = OK. Some errors, but a basic grasp of the material.

D = poor. Several errors. A tenuous grasp of the material.

F = failing. Problematic on all fronts indicating either no real grasp of the material or a complete lack of effort.

Please note: what counts as “excellent” or “OK,” for example, depends in part upon the nature and level of the class in question.

Exam/Paper Grading:

92% or above	A	73-76%	C
90-92%	A-	70-72%	C-
87-89%	B+	67-69%	D+
83-86%	B	63-66%	D
80-82%	B-	60-62%	D-
77-79%	C+	0-59%	F

Late paper policy: the overall grade for the paper will be reduced by 0.3 grade per the number of days the paper is late, if no extension has been granted by the GTF in advance. In other words, you need to seek an extension before the paper is due.

Plagiarism: a failure to cite your sources and give credit to others for their work is a violation of academic honesty, and can result in an F grade for the class.

Rules of thumb for citing:

- Accurately quote the original author's words.
- Enclose the quotation within quotation marks.
- Follow the quotation with an in-text citation (author's name, title, page no.)
- Introduce the quotation with a phrase that includes the author's name (e.g., Descartes argues that...)
- Provide a full bibliography with a list of cited works at the end of the paper.

....and paraphrasing:

- Paraphrasing or summarizing doesn't mean just changing a couple of words from the original work.
- Acknowledge the source through in-text citations immediately following the paraphrase.

You can find more information about how to cite and paraphrase in an academic paper at:

<http://libweb.uoregon.edu/guides/plagiarism/students/>

Final Paper due at noon on Thursday, March 19, in the Philosophy Department main office, SC Hall 211.

Class etiquette:

It is standard expectation that you always arrive in class on time, and wait for the class meeting to be adjourned before getting ready to leave. Cell phones need to be silenced and cannot be used during class period. Laptop computers and tablets can be used for class related tasks only, such as taking notes, and accessing class related material posted on Blackboard.

For more information about academic and social standards at the UO please refer to the Office of Student Conduct and Community Standards:

<http://uodos.uoregon.edu/StudentConductandCommunityStandards/tabid/68/Default.aspx>