

Philosophy 203: History of Modern Western Philosophy
Spring 2010
Tuesdays, Thursdays: 9am - 10:15am
Benedict 207

Hamilton College
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Syllabus

Course Description and Overview:

The modern era in western philosophy spans the sixteenth through the eighteenth centuries. Spurred mainly by advances in science, but also by criticisms of Church dogma, philosophers attempted to accommodate new learning with a broad view of human abilities, and to construct systematic understandings of the world. This course mainly surveys, chronologically, the work of seven philosophers of the modern era: Descartes, Spinoza, Leibniz, Locke, Berkeley, Hume, and Kant. In combination with Philosophy 201: History of Ancient Western Philosophy, this course will provide students a broad background in the history of western philosophy, preparing you for both advanced work in the history of philosophy and contemporary study of a wide range of topics including epistemology, philosophy of science, philosophy of mind, and metaphysics.

Texts

Required:

Roger Ariew and Eric Watkins. *Modern Philosophy: An Anthology of Primary Sources*, 2nd edition. Hackett, 2009.

Various supplementary handouts, available in class and on the course website.

Recommended:

Norman Melchert. *The Great Conversation, Volume II: Descartes through Derrida and Quine*. Oxford, 2007.

Jeffrey Thumak. *Classical Modern Philosophy: A Contemporary Introduction*. Routledge, 2006.

Other recommended sources are listed in the Course Bibliography.

On-Line Resources

The course website is:

http://www.thatmarcusfamily.org/philosophy/Course_Websites/Modern_S10/Course_Home.html

The course website includes an html syllabus and schedule, class notes, other readings and handouts, and links to websites specifically selected for this course. I will use the Blackboard site *only* to post grades.

Assignments and Grading:

Your responsibilities this course include the following, with their contributions to your grade calculation in parentheses:

Attendance and participation
Readings
Presentation (10%)
Two papers (20%, 25%)
Midterm and Final Exams (20%, 25%)

Attendance: While there is no direct reward or penalty for attendance, I expect students to come to class prepared to discuss the assigned reading.

Readings: As this course is a broad survey, there is a lot of assigned reading. I have divided the readings into three categories: primary, secondary, and tertiary readings.

You are responsible for completing all primary readings, which cover all the central topics in the course. Exams will be based on the primary readings.

The secondary readings, consisting mainly of further primary sources, will be useful in illuminating the primary readings. I will sometimes refer to the secondary readings in class. You are responsible for the secondary readings assigned for your presentation topic, and you should try to complete as many of the secondary readings as possible.

The tertiary readings are from the secondary sources (Melchert and Tlumak), and are optional.

To assist you with the readings, and to help prepare you for the midterm and final examinations, I will distribute reading guides, lists of questions, for all of the primary readings.

Presentation: Each student is required to make one in-class presentation, lasting approximately ten to fifteen minutes. I will distribute more specific guidelines for your presentation, as well as a sign-up sheet, in class. I welcome, indeed encourage, you to use your presentation topic as the theme for your second paper.

Papers: Each student will write two short papers. The first paper, 4-6 pages on any theme from the *Objections and Replies* to Descartes's *Meditations*, is due on February 9. The second paper, 5-8 pages on any topic in the material from Spinoza, Leibniz, Locke, Berkeley, or Hume, is due on April 27. I will distribute more details about the each paper in class.

Exams: The midterm exam will be given in class on March 11. The *comprehensive* final exam will be given at the appointed exam time, Tuesday, May 11, 9am-noon. Both exams will be based on questions from the Reading Guides, though the final exam will also include a short essay topic.

The Hamilton College Honor Code will be strictly enforced

Office Hours

My office hours for the Spring 2010, term are 10:30am - noon, Monday through Friday. My office is in room 201 of 210 College Hill Road, which is at the northwest corner of CHR and Griffin Road.

Schedule:

Note: The readings listed in each row are to be completed *before* class.

Part I: Descartes

Date	Topic	Primary Readings	Secondary Readings	Tertiary Readings
January 19	Early Modern Philosophy and the Scientific Revolution		David Rosenthal, "Philosophy and Its History" (Handout)	Melchert, Chapter 12
January 21	Sense Experience, Method, and Doubt	<i>Discourse on Method</i> , Parts 1 and 2 (AW 25-33) <i>Meditations on First Philosophy</i> , through Meditation One (AW 35-42)	Montaigne, <i>Apology</i> , §7 (AW 4-13)	Melchert 319-327 Tlumak 1-22
January 26	The Cogito and Certainty	Meditations Two and Three (AW 43-54)	Bacon, from <i>New Organon</i> (AW 16-20) Galileo, from <i>The Assayer</i> (AW 21-24) Montaigne, <i>Apology</i> , §8 (AW 13-15) Pascal, from <i>Pensées</i> (AW 106-109)	Melchert 327-332 Tlumak 22-38
January 28	The Cartesian World	Meditations Four through Six (AW 54-68) <i>Discourse</i> , Part 5 (AW 33-34)	Readings on the Ontological Argument (handout) Spinoza, from <i>Descartes's Principles of Philosophy</i> (AW 93-98)	Melchert 332-336 Tlumak 38-68
February 2	Descartes and His Critics	Descartes, "Arguments... Arranged in Geometrical Fashion" (AW 72-75)	Leibniz, Letters (AW 99-105)	Melchert 356-359

Part II: Spinoza

Date	Topic	Primary Readings	Secondary readings	Tertiary Readings
February 4	Materialism	Hobbes, from <i>Leviathan</i> (AW 114-136)		Melchert, 361-371
February 9	Substance	from <i>Ethics</i> , Part I (AW 144-164)	Letters to Oldenburg and to Meyer (AW 137-143)	Melchert 438 Tlumak 77-88
				Paper 1 is due
February 11	Knowledge and Freedom	from <i>Ethics</i> , Parts II and V (AW 164-195)		Tlumak 88-95; 100-102

Part III: Leibniz

Date	Topic	Primary Readings	Secondary Readings	Tertiary Readings
February 16	Monads and Theodicy	<i>The Monadology</i> (AW 275-283)	Malebranche, from <i>The Search After Truth</i> (AW 200-223)	Tlumak 133-141
February 18	The Complete-World View of Substance	<i>Discourse on Metaphysics</i> §1-§25 (AW 224-240)	Letters to Arnauld (AW 248-264)	Melchert 440
February 23	Freedom and Harmony	<i>Discourse on Metaphysics</i> §25-§37 (AW 240-247)	“Primary Truths” (AW 265-268) “A New System of Nature” (AW 269-274)	Tlumak 133-138; 159-163
February 25	Space and Time	Newton, Selections (AW 284-293) Letters to Clarke (AW 294-303)		Tlumak 164-171

Part IV: Locke

Date	Topic	Primary Readings	Secondary Readings	Tertiary Readings
March 2	Against Innate Ideas	<i>Essay</i> Book I, Chapters I-II (AW 316-322)	Boyle, “Of the Excellency...” AW (308-315)	Melchert 372-381 Tlumak 106-110
March 4	The Primary/Secondary Distinction and Identity	<i>Essay</i> , Book II, Chapters I-VIII (AW 322-337); Book II, Chapter XXVII (AW 367-377)	<i>Essay</i> , Book II, Chapters IX-XXIII (AW 337-367)	Tlumak 110-122
March 9	Abstract Ideas	<i>Essay</i> , Book III; Book IV, Chapters I-IV (AW 377-405)	Leibniz, Preface to the <i>New Essays</i> (AW 422-433) <i>Essay</i> Book IV, Chapters X-XVI (AW 405-421)	Tlumak 122-128

March 11: Midterm Exam

Spring Break

Part V: Berkeley

Date	Topic	Primary Readings	Secondary Readings	Tertiary Readings
March 30	Empiricism and Idealism	<i>Principles</i> , §1-33 (AW 447-453) <i>Three Dialogues</i> , Dialogue 1 (AW 454-474)	<i>On Motion</i> (AW 504-508)	Melchert 385-395
April 1	Against Abstract Ideas	<i>Principles</i> , Preface (AW 438-446) <i>Principles</i> §86-100 (Handout) <i>Three Dialogues</i> , Dialogue 2 (AW 474-484)	<i>Principles</i> §34-84 (Handout)	Tlumak, Chapter 5
April 6	Idealism, Mathematics, and Science	<i>Principles</i> , §100-156 (handout) (Handout)	<i>Three Dialogues</i> , Dialogue 3 (AW 484-503)	

Part VI: Hume

Date	Topic	Primary Readings	Secondary Readings	Tertiary Readings
April 8	Impressions, Ideas, Facts, Relations	<i>An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding</i> , I-IV (AW 533-548)	Bayle, "Pyrrho" (AW 512-516)	Melchert 397-409 Tlumak, 193-199
April 13	Causation and Induction	<i>An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding</i> , V-VII (AW 548-564)		Tlumak, 199-205
April 15	Skepticism	<i>An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding</i> , X-XII (AW 576-600)	<i>An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding</i> , VIII-IX (AW 564-576)	Tlumak, 208-221
April 20	The Self and Common Sense	from <i>A Treatise of Human Nature</i> (AW 517-532)	Reid, Selections (AW 641-653)	Melchert 409-415; 423-425

Part VII: Kant

Date	Topic	Primary Readings	Secondary Readings
April 22	The Synthetic <i>A Priori</i>	<i>Critique of Pure Reason</i> , Prefaces and Introduction (AW 717-729)	Melchert 426-447 Tlumak, 244-254; 291-300
April 27	Transcendental Aesthetic	<i>Critique of Pure Reason</i> (AW 729-737)	Tlumak, 254-257; 300-303
	Paper 2 is due		
April 29	Transcendental Deduction	<i>Critique of Pure Reason</i> (AW 737-756)	Tlumak, 258-268; 303-312
May 4	Analogies of Experience	<i>Critique of Pure Reason</i> (AW 768-781)	Tlumak, 268-277; 312-320
May 6	Antinomies; Ontological Argument	<i>Critique of Pure Reason</i> (AW 792-800)	Melchert 447-450 Tlumak, 285-291; 320-330

Final Exam: May 11, 9am-noon