

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

Hamilton College
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Presentation Assignment

During this semester, you will make one presentation to the class, lasting approximately ten to fifteen minutes. Presentations should summarize central theses, focus on arguments, and raise questions for discussion. In contrast to a standard, rhetorical philosophy paper, your presentations may be mainly exegetical. I welcome some critical examination of the readings, though the criticism need not be fully developed. Here are some general questions you might raise and try to answer in your presentation:

What is the big picture? What questions is the author attempting to answer?
What is the central claim you are examining?
Is the central claim epistemological, metaphysical, or methodological?
How does that claim differ from related claims we have already studied?
What is the philosopher's argument for the central claim?
With what premises would philosophers whose work we have already studied disagree? Why?
Is the central claim you are examining true?

Your presentation should demonstrate your attempt to grapple with some portion of the primary reading for class. You should also consider any assigned secondary readings. The tertiary readings will probably be useful to you.

Most classes during which there are presentations will contain two or three presentations. The two or three presenters on a given day may work together or independently. Paired presentations should last twenty to thirty minutes, and groups of three should take thirty to forty-five minutes. Shared presentations should show substantial evidence of shared work and understanding.

Your presentation may be as ambitious as you wish, as long as it is reasonably within the time guidelines. You might generate discussion by presenting a controversial position. You might ask interesting questions. You may read a short paper. You may do a PowerPoint presentation. You may be creative about how to interact with the class. If you want to do something more inventive, like have us break into groups for a short debate, I would be happy to help you think out the plan.

Resources:

Please feel free to meet with me before your presentations. I will try to have notes for each class available in time for you to use them in your preparation.

Many students find the oral communications lab, located in KJ 152, helpful. They have a wealth of resources readily available, and are eager to help. The staff at the lab can assist you both with the content of your presentation, and with determining how best to present your material. When you have prepared a draft of your presentation, they can record you while you practice giving the presentation. You can watch the recording with a tutor, or by yourself. You can sign up for an appointment with a tutor on the door of the lab, or you can email them at: oralcomm@hamilton.edu. Their website offers valuable resources: <http://www.hamilton.edu/academics/department.html?dept=Oral%20Communication>

Sign-ups

We will sign up for presentations on the third day of class, January 26. The dates and topics are listed below, with the number of presentation slots on each given day in parentheses.

- February 4, Hobbes's Materialism (2)
- February 9, Spinoza on Substance (2)
- February 11, Spinoza on Knowledge and Freedom (2)
- February 16, Leibniz on Monads and Theodicy (2)
- February 18, Leibniz on the Complete-World View of Substance (2)
- February 23, Leibniz on Freedom and Harmony (3)
- February 25, Leibniz and Newton on Space and Time (2)
- March 2, Locke, Against Innate Ideas (2)
- March 4, Locke, the Primary/ Secondary Distinction and Identity (3)
- March 9, Locke on Abstract Ideas (2)
- March 30, Berkeley, Empiricism and Idealism (3)
- April 1, Berkeley Against Abstract Ideas (2)
- April 6, Berkeley, Idealism, Mathematics, and Science (2)
- April 8, Hume on Impressions, Ideas, Facts, and Relations (2)
- April 13, Hume on Causation and Induction (2)
- April 15, Hume on Skepticism (2)
- April 20, Hume on the Self and Common Sense (2)

Presentation Sign-Up List

Date	Topics	Presenters Names
February 4	Hobbes's Materialism	1. 2.
February 9	Spinoza on Substance	1. 2.
February 11	Spinoza on Knowledge and Freedom	1. 2.
February 16	Leibniz on Monads and Theodicy	1. 2.
February 18	Leibniz on the Complete-World View of Substance	1. 2.
February 23	Leibniz on Freedom and Harmony	1. 2. 3.
February 25	Leibniz and Newton on Space and Time	1. 2.
March 2	Locke, Against Innate Ideas	1. 2.
March 4	Locke, the Primary/ Secondary Distinction and Identity	1. 2. 3.

Date	Topics	Presenters Names
March 9	Locke on Abstract Ideas	1. 2.
March 30	Berkeley, Empiricism and Idealism	1. 2. 3.
April 1	Berkeley Against Abstract Ideas	1. 2.
April 6	Berkeley, Idealism, Mathematics, and Science	1. 2.
April 8	Hume on Impressions, Ideas, Facts, and Relations	1. 2.
April 13	Hume on Causation and Induction	1. 2.
April 15	Hume on Skepticism	1. 2.
April 20	Hume on the Self and Common Sense	1. 2.