

**Philosophy 203: History of Modern Western Philosophy**  
Spring 2011  
Tuesdays, Thursdays: 9am - 10:15am

Hamilton College  
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### **Presentation Assignment**

During this semester, you will participate in one presentation to the class, lasting approximately ten to fifteen minutes. Presentations will mainly be done in pairs, though there are some opportunities for solo presentations.

Your presentation should demonstrate your attempts 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. A presentation 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. Connect the various assertions in your presentations; avoid mere lists. 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?

Shared presentations should show significant evidence of shared work and understanding. To assist me with the assignment of a grade, after the presentation, each presenter should send me a confidential email containing brief details concerning how the preparatory work was distributed. I understand that the person who speaks the most during the presentation may not be the person most responsible for the work. I hope that your work, and your grades, will ordinarily be distributed equally.

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. You may act out a dialogue of your own design. You could have us break into groups for a short debate,

If you want to do something more inventive, like I would be happy to help you think out the plan.

Most classes during which there are presentations will contain two or three presentations.

### **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](mailto:oralcomm@hamilton.edu). Their website offers valuable resources: <http://www.hamilton.edu/academics/departments.html?dept=Oral%20Communication>

### **Sign-ups**

We will sign up for presentations, by email, after the second day of class. You may request presentations as pairs, or as individuals. Because there are far more students than presentation slots, some people may be assigned a partner. Please send me at least three desired slots, in order of preference. The dates and topics are listed below, with the number of presentation slots on each given day in parentheses.

February 3, Hobbes's Materialism (2)  
February 8, Spinoza on Monism and Parallelism (2)  
February 10, Spinoza on Knowledge and Freedom (1)  
February 15, Leibniz on Monads and Truth (2)  
February 17, Leibniz on the Complete-World View of Substance and Harmony (2)  
February 22, Leibniz on Theodicy, Necessity, and Freedom (2)  
February 24, Leibniz and Newton on Space and Time (1)  
March 1, Locke, Against Innate Ideas and For the Primary/ Secondary Distinction (2)  
March 3, Locke, Identity and the Self (2)  
March 8, Locke on Abstract Ideas (1)  
March 29, Berkeley, Three Arguments for Idealism (2)  
March 31, Berkeley Against Abstract Ideas (2)  
April 5, Berkeley on Mathematics and Science (1)  
April 7, Hume on Impressions, Ideas, Facts, and Relations (2)  
April 12, Hume on Causation and Induction (2)  
April 14, Hume on the Self and Common Sense (2)  
April 19, Hume on Free Will (1)

Presentation Sign-Up List

Date	Topics	Presenters Names
February 3	Hobbes's Materialism	1. 2.
February 8	Spinoza on Monism and Parallelism	1. 2.
February 10	Spinoza on Knowledge and Freedom	1.
February 15	Leibniz on Monads and Truth	1. 2.
February 17	Leibniz on the Complete-World View of Substance and Harmony	1. 2.
February 22	Leibniz on Theodicy, Necessity, and Freedom	1. 2.
February 24	Leibniz and Newton on Space and Time	1.
March 1	Locke, Against Innate Ideas and For the Primary/Secondary Distinction	1. 2.
March 3	Locke, Identity and the Self	1. 2.
March 8	Locke on Abstract Ideas	1.

Date	Topics	Presenters Names
March 29	Berkeley, Three Arguments for Idealism	1. 2.
March 31	Berkeley Against Abstract Ideas	1. 2.
April 5	Berkeley on Mathematics and Science	1.
April 7	Hume on Impressions, Ideas, Facts, and Relations	1. 2.
April 12	Hume on Causation and Induction	1. 2.
April 14	Hume on the Self and Common Sense	1. 2.
April 19	Hume on Free Will	1.