

## Philosophy 203: History of Modern Western Philosophy

Spring 2011

Tuesdays, Thursdays: 9am - 10:15am

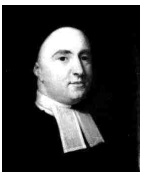
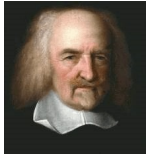
Benedict 105

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 eight philosophers of the modern era: Descartes, Hobbes, Spinoza, Leibniz, Locke, Berkeley, Hume, and Kant. Among the recurring topics to be discussed are the nature of mind, free will, space and time, the self, and scientific reasoning. 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*, 2<sup>nd</sup> 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 Tlumak. *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\\_S11/Course\\_Home.html](http://www.thatmarcusfamily.org/philosophy/Course_Websites/Modern_S11/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 mainly 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 post reading guides, lists of questions, for all of the primary readings.

**Presentation:** Each student is required to participate in one in-class presentation, lasting approximately ten to fifteen minutes. Most presentations will be done in pairs, though there will be opportunities for solo presentations as well. I will distribute more specific guidelines, 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 Tuesday, February 8. The second paper, 5-8 pages on any topic in the material from Spinoza, Leibniz, Locke, Berkeley, or Hume, is due on Tuesday, April 26. I will distribute more details about the each paper in class.

**Exams:** The midterm exam will be given in class on Thursday, March 10. The final exam will be given at the appointed exam time: Tuesday, May 10, 7pm-10pm. Both exams will be based on questions from the Reading Guides, though the final exam may also include a short essay topic.

**The Hamilton College Honor Code will be strictly enforced**

### **Office Hours**

My office hours for the Spring 2011, 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

Class	Date	Topic	Primary Readings	Secondary Readings	Tertiary Readings
1	January 18	Early Modern Philosophy and the Scientific Revolution		David Rosenthal, "Philosophy and Its History" (Handout)	Melchert, Chapter 12
2	January 20	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
3	January 25	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)	Melchert 327-332 Tlumak 22-38
4	January 27	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
5	February 1	Descartes and His Critics	Descartes, "Arguments... Arranged in Geometrical Fashion" (AW 72-75)	Leibniz, Letters (AW 99-105)	Melchert 356-359

Part II: Hobbes and Spinoza

Class	Date	Topic	Primary Readings	Secondary readings	Tertiary Readings
6	February 3	Materialism	Hobbes, from <i>Leviathan</i> (AW 114-136)		Melchert, 361-371
7	February 8 <b>Paper 1 is due</b>	Monism, Parallelism	Spinoza, <i>Ethics</i> , Part I (AW 144-164)	Letters to Oldenburg and to Meyer (AW 137-143)	Melchert 438 Tlumak 77-88 Singer, "The Spinoza of Market Street"
8	February 10	Knowledge and Freedom	Spinoza, <i>Ethics</i> , Parts II and V (AW 164-195)		Tlumak 88-95; 100-102

Part III: Leibniz

Class	Date	Topic	Primary Readings	Secondary Readings	Tertiary Readings
9	February 15	Monads, Truth	<i>The Monadology</i> (AW 275-283)	Malebranche, from <i>The Search After Truth</i> (AW 200-223)	Tlumak 133-141

Class	Date	Topic	Primary Readings	Secondary Readings	Tertiary Readings
10	February 17	The Complete-World View of Substance, Harmony	<i>Discourse on Metaphysics</i> §1-§25 (AW 224-240)	Letters to Arnauld (AW 248-264)	Melchert 440
11	February 22	Theodicy, Necessity, and Freedom	<i>Discourse on Metaphysics</i> §25-§37 (AW 240-247) from <i>Theodicy</i> 405-417 (handout)	“Primary Truths” (AW 265-268) “A New System of Nature” (AW 269-274)	Tlumak 133-138; 159-163
12	February 24	Space and Time	Newton, Selections (AW 284-293) Letters to Clarke (AW 294-303)		Tlumak 164-171

Part IV: Locke

Class	Date	Topic	Primary Readings	Secondary Readings	Tertiary Readings
13	March 1	Against Innate Ideas, For the Primary/Secondary Distinction	<i>Essay</i> Book I, Chapters I-II (AW 316-322); Book IV, Chapters I-II (AW 386-392) Book II, Chapters I-IX (AW 322-339)	Boyle, “Of the Excellency...” AW (308-315)	Melchert 372-381 Tlumak 106-110
14	March 3	Identity and the Self	<i>Essay</i> , Book II, Chapter XXVII (AW 367-377)	<i>Essay</i> , Book II, Chapters IX-XXIII (AW 337-367)	Tlumak 110-122
15	March 8	Abstract Ideas	<i>Essay</i> , Book III (AW 377-386)	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 10: Midterm Exam**

Part V: Berkeley

Class	Date	Topic	Primary Readings	Secondary Readings	Tertiary Readings
17	March 29	Three Arguments for Idealism	<i>Principles</i> , §1-33 (AW 447-453) <i>Three Dialogues</i> , Dialogue 1 (AW 454-474)		Melchert 385-395
18	March 31	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
19	April 5	Mathematics, Science, Skepticism and Atheism	from <i>On Motion</i> (AW 504-508) <i>Principles</i> , §100-156 (handout)	<i>Three Dialogues</i> , Dialogue 3 (AW 484-503)	

Part VI: Hume

Class	Date	Topic	Primary Readings	Secondary Readings	Tertiary Readings
20	April 7	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
21	April 12	Causation and Induction	<i>An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding</i> , V-VII (AW 548-564)		Tlumak, 199-205
22	April 14	The Self and Common Sense	from <i>A Treatise of Human Nature</i> Book I, Part 4, Section 6 (AW 525-532)	Reid, Selections (AW 641-653)	Melchert 409-415; 423-425
23	April 19	Free Will, Skepticism	<i>An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding</i> , VIII-IX, XII (AW 564-576, 593-600)	<i>An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding</i> , X-XI (AW 576-593)	Tlumak, 208-221

Part VII: Kant

Class	Date	Topic	Primary Readings	Secondary Readings
24	April 21	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
25	April 26 <b>Paper 2 is due</b>	Transcendental Aesthetic	<i>Critique of Pure Reason</i> (AW 729-737)	Tlumak, 254-257; 300-303
26	April 28	Transcendental Deduction	<i>Critique of Pure Reason</i> (AW 737-756)	Tlumak, 258-268; 303-312
27	May 3	The Refutation of Idealism, First Antinomy	<i>Critique of Pure Reason</i> (AW 781-783, 792-794)	Tlumak, 268-277; 312-320
28	May 5	The Ontological Argument	<i>Critique of Pure Reason</i> (AW 819-823)	Melchert 447-450 Tlumak, 285-291; 320-330

**Final Exam: Tuesday, May 10, 7pm-10pm**