

Philosophy 203: History of Modern Western Philosophy

Spring 2012

Tuesdays, Thursdays: 9am - 10:15am

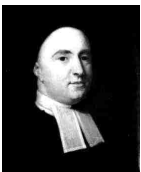
SC G041

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

On-Line Resources

The course website is:

http://www.thatmarcusfamily.org/philosophy/Course_Websites/Modern_S12/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.

Office Hours

My office hours for term are 10:30am - noon, Monday through Friday. My office is upstairs in the Philosophy Building, 202 College Hill Road.

Assignments and Grading:

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

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

Attendance: While there is no direct reward or penalty to your grade for attendance, I expect students to come to class prepared to discuss the assigned reading. I prepare carefully for classes and I expect you to be there in body and mind, asking questions and thinking.

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. 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.

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 other secondary readings as you reasonably can.

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

Panel Presentation: Each student is required to participate in one in-class panel presentation. Panels will be organized around specific themes. Prior to your in-class presentation, you are required to attend at least one practice session with your panel. I will distribute some specific guidelines, with dates. I welcome, indeed encourage, you to use your presentation topic as a 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 Thursday, February 9. The second paper, 5-8 pages on any topic in the material from Spinoza, Leibniz, Locke, Berkeley, or Hume, is due on Thursday, April 26. I will distribute more details about each paper in class.

Exams: The midterm exam will be given in class on Thursday, March 8, just before spring break. The final exam will be given at the appointed exam time: Wednesday, May 9, 2-5pm. 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

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 17	Early Modern Philosophy and the Scientific Revolution		Rosenthal, "Philosophy and Its Teaching"	Melchert, Chapter 12
2	January 19	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 24	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 26	Freedom, Mathematics, Science	Meditations Four through Five (AW 54-61)	Readings on the Ontological Argument (handout)	Melchert 332-336 Tlumak 38-68
5	January 31	The External World and The Mind-Body Distinction	Meditation Six (AW 61-68) <i>Discourse</i> , Part 5 (AW 33-34)	Spinoza, from <i>Descartes's Principles of Philosophy</i> (AW 93-98)	
6	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: Hobbes and Spinoza

Class	Date	Topic	Primary Readings	Secondary readings	Tertiary Readings
7	February 7	Materialism	Hobbes, from <i>Leviathan</i> (AW 114-136)		Melchert, 361-371
8	February 9 Paper 1 is due	Monism, Parallelism	Spinoza, <i>Ethics</i> , Part I (all) and Part II (P1-P13), (AW 144-172)	Letters to Oldenburg and to Meyer (AW 137-143)	Melchert 438 Tlumak 77-88 Singer, "The Spinoza of Market Street"
9	February 14	Knowledge and Freedom	Spinoza, <i>Ethics</i> , Part II (P14-end) and Part V (AW 172-195)		Tlumak 88-95; 100-102

Part III: Leibniz

Class	Date	Topic	Primary Readings	Secondary Readings	Tertiary Readings
10	February 16	Monads, Truth, Minds, and Bodies	<i>The Monadology</i> (AW 275-283) <i>Discourse on Metaphysics</i> §1-§25 (AW 224-240)	Malebranche, from <i>The Search After Truth</i> (AW 200-223) Letters to Arnauld (AW 248-264)	Tlumak 133-141 Melchert 440
11	February 21	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 23	Space and Time Panel Presentation 1: Minds and Bodies I	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	February 28	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 1	Identity and the Self Panel Presentation 2: Arguments for God’s Existence	<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 6	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 8: Midterm Exam

Part V: Berkeley

Class	Date	Topic	Primary Readings	Secondary Readings	Tertiary Readings
17	March 27	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 29	Against Abstract Ideas Panel Presentation 3: Innate Ideas and the Tabula Rasa	<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 3	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 5	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 10	Causation and Induction	<i>An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding</i> , V-VII (AW 548-564)		Tlumak, 199-205
22	April 12	The Self and Free Will	from <i>A Treatise of Human Nature</i> Book I, Part 4, Section 6 (AW 525-532) <i>An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding</i> , VIII-IX, XII (AW 564-576, 593-600)	Reid, Selections (AW 641-653) <i>An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding</i> , X-XI (AW 576-593)	Melchert 409-415; 423-425 Tlumak, 208-221

Part VII: Finishing Thematic Panel Discussions

Class	Date	Topics
23	April 17	Panel Presentations 4-6: The Primary-Secondary Distinction and the Resemblance Hypothesis; Minds and Bodies II; Abstract Ideas and Uses of Language;
24	April 19	Panel Presentations 7-9: Two Brands of Idealism; The Existence of the External World; Free Will and Determinism
25	April 24	Panel Presentations 10-11: The Self, Laws of Nature

Part VIII: Kant

Class	Date	Topic	Primary Readings	Secondary Readings
26	April 26 Paper 2 is due	The Synthetic <i>A Priori</i> ; The Transcendental Aesthetic	<i>Critique of Pure Reason</i> , Prefaces and Introduction (AW 717-737)	Melchert 426-447 Tlumak, 244-257; 291-303
27	May 1	Transcendental Deduction; The Refutation of Idealism	<i>Critique of Pure Reason</i> (AW 737-756; 781-783)	Tlumak, 258-268; 303-312
28	May 3	The Ontological Argument, Toward Moral Reasoning	<i>Critique of Pure Reason</i> (AW 819-823) Guyer, "Passion for Reason"	Melchert 447-450 Tlumak, 285-291; 320-330

Final Exam: Wednesday, May 9, 2pm-5pm