

Philosophy 203: History of Modern Western Philosophy
Spring 2014
Tuesdays, Thursdays: 9am - 10:15am
Science Auditorium G027

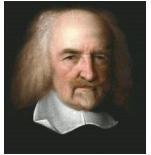
Hamilton College
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Syllabus

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:

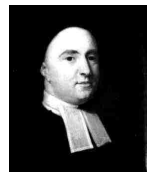
Roger Ariew and Eric Watkins. *Modern Philosophy: An Anthology of Primary Sources*, 2nd edition. Hackett, 2009.

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

Recommended:

Norman Melchert. *The Great Conversation, Volume II: Descartes through Derrida and Quine*, 6th ed. Oxford, 2010. (The full text, including both volume 1 and volume 2, is only marginally more expensive.)

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_S14/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 the Spring 2014 term are 10:30am - noon, Tuesdays and Thursdays. I may be available to meet at other times by appointment.



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 13. The second paper, 5-8 pages on any topic in the material from Spinoza, Leibniz, Locke, Berkeley, or Hume, is due on Thursday, May 1. I will distribute more details about each paper in class.

Exams: The midterm exam will be given in class on Thursday, March 13, just before spring break. The final exam will be given at the appointed exam time: TBA. Both exams will be based on questions from the Reading Guides, though the final exam may also include a short essay topic.

On Grades: Grades on assignments will be posted on Blackboard, along with a running total, which I call your grade calculation. Your grade calculation is a guide for me to use in assigning you a final grade. There are no rules binding how I translate your grade calculation into a letter grade. The Hamilton College key for converting letter grades into percentages is not a tool for calculating your final grade. I welcome discussion of the purposes and methods of grading, as well as my own grading policies.

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 21 | Early Modern Philosophy and the Scientific Revolution | Galileo, "Letter to the Grand Duchess Christina of Tuscany" | Rosenthal, "Philosophy and Its Teaching" | Melchert, Chapter 12 |
| 2 | January 23 | 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 28 | 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 30 | Freedom, Mathematics, Science | Meditations Four through Five (AW 54-61) | Readings on the Ontological Argument (handout) | Melchert 332-336 Tlumak 38-68 |
| 5 | February 4 | 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 6 | 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 11 | Materialism | Hobbes, from <i>Leviathan</i> (AW 114-136) | | Melchert, 361-371 |
| 8 | February 13 Paper 1 is due | Monism, Parallelism | Spinoza, <i>Ethics</i> , Part I (all, especially the appendix) 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 18 | 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 20 | Monads, Truth, Minds, and Bodies | <i>The Monadology</i> (AW 275-283) <i>Discourse on Metaphysics</i> §1-§25 (AW 224-240) “A New System of Nature” (AW 269-274) | Malebranche, from <i>The Search After Truth</i> (AW 200-223) Letters to Arnauld (AW 248-264) | Tlumak 133-141 Melchert 440 |
| 11 | February 25 | 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) | Tlumak 133-138; 159-163 |
| 12 | February 27 | 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 | March 4 | 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 386-405) Book II, Chapters I-IX (AW 322-339) | Boyle, “Of the Excellency...” AW (308-315) | Melchert 372-381 Tlumak 106-110 |
| 14 | March 6 | 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 11 | 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 13: Midterm Exam

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Part V: Berkeley

| Class | Date | Topic | Primary Readings | Secondary Readings | Tertiary Readings |
|-------|---------|---|--|--|-------------------|
| 17 | April 1 | 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 | April 3 | Against Abstract Ideas Panel Presentation 3: Innate Ideas and the Tabula Rasa | <i>Principles</i> , Introduction (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 8 | 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 10 | 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 15 | Causation and Induction | <i>An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding</i> , V-VII (AW 548-564) | | Tlumak, 199-205 |
| 22 | April 17 | 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 22 | Panel Presentations 4-6: The Primary-Secondary Distinction and the Resemblance Hypothesis; Minds and Bodies II; Abstract Ideas and Uses of Language; |
| 24 | April 24 | Panel Presentations 7-9: Two Brands of Idealism; The Existence of the External World; Free Will and Determinism |
| 25 | April 29 | Panel Presentations 10-11: The Self, Laws of Nature |

Part VIII: Kant

| Class | Date | Topic | Primary Readings | Secondary Readings |
|-------|------------------------------------|--|---|--|
| 26 | May 1 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 6 | Transcendental Analytic | <i>Critique of Pure Reason</i> (AW 737-756) | Tlumak, 258-268; 303-312 |
| 28 | May 8 | The Antinomies; The Ontological Argument | <i>Critique of Pure Reason</i> (AW 792-800; 819-823) | Melchert 447-450 Tlumak, 285-291; 320-330 |

Final Exam: Sunday, May 18, 9am - noon