

## Philosophy 203: History of Modern Western Philosophy

Spring 2015

Tuesdays, Thursdays: 9am - 10:15am

KJ127 (Red Pit)

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*, 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\\_S15/Course\\_Home.html](http://www.thatmarcusfamily.org/philosophy/Course_Websites/Modern_S15/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 2015 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 12. The second paper, 5-8 pages on any topic in the material from Spinoza, Leibniz, Locke, Berkeley, or Hume, is due on Thursday, April 30. I will distribute more details about each paper in class.

**Exams:** The midterm exam will be given in class on Thursday, March 12, just before break. The final exam will be given at the appointed exam time: Thursday, May 14, at 2pm. 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 20	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 22	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 27	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 29	Freedom, Mathematics, Science	Meditations Four through Five (AW 54-61)	Readings on the Ontological Argument (handout)	Melchert 332-336 Tlumak 38-68
5	February 3	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 5	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 10	Materialism	Hobbes, from <i>Leviathan</i> (AW 114-136)		Melchert, 361-371
8	February 12 <b>Paper 1 is due</b>	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 17	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 19	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 24	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 26	Space and Time  <b>Panel Presentation 1: Minds and Bodies I</b>	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 3	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 5	Identity and the Self  <b>Panel Presentation 2: Arguments for God’s Existence</b>	<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 10	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 12: Midterm Exam

Part V: Berkeley

Class	Date	Topic	Primary Readings	Secondary Readings	Tertiary Readings
17	March 31	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 2	Against Abstract Ideas  <b>Panel Presentation 3: Innate Ideas and the Tabula Rasa</b>	<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 7	Mathematics, Science, Skepticism and Atheism	from <i>On Motion</i> (AW 504-508) <i>Principles</i> , §101-156 (handout)	<i>Three Dialogues</i> , Dialogue 3 (AW 484-503)	

Part VI: Hume

Class	Date	Topic	Primary Readings	Secondary Readings	Tertiary Readings
20	April 9	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 14	Causation and Induction	<i>An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding</i> , V-VII (AW 548-564)		Tlumak, 199-205
22	April 16	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 21	Panel Presentations 4-6: The Primary-Secondary Distinction and the Resemblance Hypothesis; Minds and Bodies II; Abstract Ideas and Uses of Language;
24	April 23	Panel Presentations 7-9: Two Brands of Idealism; The Existence of the External World; Free Will and Determinism
25	April 28	Panel Presentations 10-11: The Self, Laws of Nature

Part VIII: Kant

Class	Date	Topic	Primary Readings	Secondary Readings
26	April 30 <b>Paper 2 is due</b>	The Synthetic <i>A Priori</i> and Forms of Intuition	<i>Critique of Pure Reason</i> , Prefaces, Introduction, and Aesthetic (AW 717-737)	Melchert 426-447 Tlumak, 244-257; 291-303
27	May 5	Apperception, the Application of Concepts, and the Transcendental Deduction	<i>Critique of Pure Reason</i> from the Transcendental Analytic (AW 737-756)	Tlumak, 258-268; 303-312
28	May 7	The Limits of Reason	<i>Critique of Pure Reason</i> , The Antinomies, On the Ontological Argument (AW 792-800; 819-823)	Melchert 447-450 Tlumak, 285-291; 320-330

**Final Exam: Thursday, May 14, 2pm - 5pm**