

Philosophy 203: History of Modern Western Philosophy
Spring 2016
Tuesdays, Thursdays: 9am–10:15am
SC 3024

Hamilton College
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Syllabus

Course Description

Is there a material world? Does God exist? Is there more to me than my body? Am I free to choose my actions? Am I born this way? What am I, anyway? What is the relation between language and mind and the world? Is mathematics real? How about science? Do we know the laws of nature? Are there even any laws? Is space and time real? What is the world like behind our perspectives?

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, to construct a systematic understanding of the world in order to answer the big questions like the ones of the above paragraph.

This course surveys the work of some of the major philosophers of the modern era: Descartes, Hobbes, Spinoza, 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.

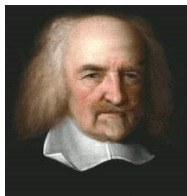
My unit notes, to be posted on the course website

On-Line Resources

The course website is:

http://www.thatmarcusfamily.org/philosophy/Course_Websites/Modern_S16/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 for this course, with their contributions to your grade calculation, include:

- Attendance
- Readings
- Readiness Assessment Tests (RATs) (20%)
- In-Class Work (5%)
- First Paper (15%)
- End-of-Unit Writing Assignments (15%)
- Midterm (15%)
- Peer Evaluations (10%)
- Final Paper or Final Exam (20%)

Attendance: Most classes will involve participatory activities which can not be done without being in class. You will be a member of a team, the other members of which will be counting on you to be there to help. There is no direct reward or penalty to your grade for attendance.

Readings: As this course is a broad survey, there is a lot of assigned reading. The readings are divided into three categories: primary, secondary, and tertiary readings. You are responsible for completing all primary readings, covering the central topics in the course. Class activities will presume that you have done the primary readings before class. Exams will be based on the primary readings. The secondary readings consist mainly of further primary sources. The tertiary readings are mainly from secondary sources. Both the secondary and tertiary readings are optional, though I may recommend, refer to, or use them in class.

Readiness Assessment Tests (RATs): You will take five RATs, ten-question multiple-choice quizzes, both individually and in teams, one at the beginning of each unit of the course. The RAT will cover material on the first readings of the unit. Your grade will be the average of your team score with your individual score.

In-Class Work: Much of classwork will be done in teams. I hope that your motivation for doing the work will be mainly that it is engaging and fun. I assume that your participation will be active. Some activities may be graded.

First Paper: The first paper, 4–6 pages on any theme from the *Objections and Replies* to Descartes's *Meditations*, is due on February 16.

End-of-Unit Writing Assignments: At the end of the second, fourth, and perhaps fifth units, each student will complete one short (500–750 word) writing assignment. I will distribute a set of questions. The one on which you will write will be randomly assigned.

Midterm: The midterm will be given in class on March 31. I will distribute sample questions in advance.

Peer Evaluations: You are responsible for being an active member of your team. You will assess the work of the other members of your team twice during the semester, once after the second unit and once at the end of the term. You will receive the feedback from the other members of your team anonymously.

Final Paper or Final Exam: Students may choose to write a final paper, five-to-seven pages, or sit for a final exam, in the same format as the midterm exam and covering the last two sections of the course. I will distribute a paper assignment; the second paper is due on April 28.

Accessibility and Diversity of Learning Styles

Your well-being and success in this course are important to me. Different people learn best in different ways. Please come talk with me about how best to balance your individual needs and learning style with my expectations for the course. If you are eligible for testing accommodations, please also see Allen Harrison, Associate Dean of Students for Multicultural Affairs and Accessibility Services in the Office of the Dean of Students, Elihu Root House.

Special Guest

On Monday, April 18, Prof. Becko Copenhaver of Lewis and Clark College, an expert in philosophy of mind and the modern era will be speaking, at 4pm, on Philosophy and Modern Memory. She will visit our class the following day. You should plan to attend her Monday afternoon talk; I expect it will be most excellent and engaging.

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.

Office Hours

My office hours for the Spring 2016 term are 10:30am–noon, Tuesdays and Thursdays. I may be available to meet at other times by appointment.

The Hamilton College Honor Code will be strictly enforced

Schedule

Preliminaries

Class	Date	Topic	Primary Readings To be completed <i>before</i> class	Secondary Readings	Tertiary Readings
1	January 19	The Scientific Revolution	Galileo, "Letter to the Grand Duchess Christina of Tuscany"	Rosenthal, "Philosophy and Its Teaching"	Melchert, Chapter 12

Unit 1: Descartes

Class	Date	Topics	Primary Readings To be completed <i>before</i> class	Secondary Readings	Tertiary Readings
2	January 21	RAT1 Doubt and Skepticism	<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 319–27
3	January 26	Appearance and Reality The Self 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 327–32
4	January 28	God Freedom Mathematics	Meditations Four through Five (AW 54–61)	Readings on the Ontological Argument (handout)	Melchert 332–336
5	February 2	The External World, Minds and Bodies	Meditation Six (AW 61–68) <i>Discourse</i> , Part 5 (AW 33–34)	Descartes, “Arguments... Arranged in Geometrical Fashion” (AW 72–75)	
6	February 4	Descartes and His Critics	Spinoza, from <i>Descartes’s Principles of Philosophy</i> (AW 93–98)	Leibniz, Letters (AW 99–105)	Melchert 356–59
7	February 9 Bring paper draft	Summation			

Unit 2: Monism

Class	Date	Topics	Primary Readings To be completed <i>before</i> class	Secondary Readings	Tertiary Readings
8	February 11	RAT2 God/Nature Monism	Spinoza, Appendix to Part I of <i>Ethics</i> (AW 160–64)		Melchert, 361–71
9	February 16 Paper 1 is due	Language Mind	Hobbes, from <i>Leviathan</i> (AW 114–36)	Singer, “The Spinoza of Market Street”	Melchert 438
10	February 18	Determinism Parallelism	Spinoza, <i>Ethics</i> , Part I and Part II, P1–P13, (AW 144–72)	From Letters to Oldenburg and to Meyer (AW 137–43)	
11	February 23	Knowledge Freedom	Spinoza, <i>Ethics</i> , Part II, P14–end, and Part V (AW 172–95)		

Unit 3: Empiricism: Naive Materialism and Idealism

Class	Date	Topic	Primary Readings To be completed <i>before</i> class	Secondary Readings	Tertiary Readings
12	February 25	RAT3 Primary/ Secondary Distinction	Locke, <i>Essay</i> , Book II, Chapter VIII (AW 332–37)	Boyle, “Of the Excellency...” AW (308–15)	
13	March 1	Innate Ideas Perception Materialism Mathematics	Locke, <i>Essay</i> Book I, Chapters I–II (AW 316–22); Book II, Chapters I–VII (AW 322–32) Book IV, Chapters I–II (AW 386–405)	Locke, <i>Essay</i> , Book II, Chapters IX–XXIII (AW 337–67)	Melchert 372–81
14	March 3	Personal Identity	Locke, <i>Essay</i> , Book II, Chapter XXVII (AW 367–77)	Locke, <i>Essay</i> , Book IV, Chapters X–XII (AW 405–14)	
15	March 8	Abstract Ideas	Locke, <i>Essay</i> , Book III (AW 377–86) Berkeley, <i>Principles</i> , Introduction (AW 438–46)	Leibniz, Preface to the <i>New Essays</i> (AW 422–33)	
16	March 10 Peer Evals Due	Idealism	Berkeley, <i>Principles</i> , §1–§33 (AW 447–53) Berkeley, <i>Principles</i> §86–§100 (handout) Berkeley, <i>Three Dialogues</i> , Dialogue 1 (AW 454–74)	Berkeley, <i>Principles</i> §34–§84 (handout) Berkeley, <i>Three Dialogues</i> , Dialogue 2 (AW 475–84)	Melchert 385–95
17	March 29	Mathematics Science Skepticism Atheism	Berkeley, from <i>On Motion</i> (AW 504–508) Berkeley, <i>Principles</i> , §101–§156 (handout)	Berkeley, <i>Three Dialogues</i> , Dialogue 3 (AW 484–503)	

March 31: Midterm Exam

Unit 4: Humean Skepticism

Class	Date	Topic	Primary Readings To be completed <i>before</i> class	Secondary Readings	Tertiary Readings
19	April 5	RAT4 Matters of Fact and Relations of Ideas	<i>Enquiry</i> I–II (AW 533–41)		Melchert 397–409
20	April 7	Causation Induction	<i>Enquiry</i> III–IV (AW 541–48)		
21	April 12	Skepticism	Hume, <i>Enquiry</i> V–VII (AW 548–64), XII (593–600) Reid, From <i>An Inquiry into the Human Mind</i> (AW 641–50)	Bayle, “Pyrrho” (AW 512–16)	
22	April 14	Compatibilism	Leibniz, <i>Discourse on Metaphysics</i> §13 (AW 230–32) Hume, <i>Enquiry</i> VIII (AW 564–75)	<i>An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding</i> , IX–XI (AW 575–93)	Melchert 409–15; 423–25

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Monday, April 18		Becko Copenhaver's Public Talk, "Philosophy and Modern Memory," 4pm, SC-G027 (Aud)			
23	April 19	The Self	Hume, <i>Treatise</i> , I.4.6 (AW 525–32) Reid, Identity (handout)		

Unit 5: Kant's Transcendental Idealism

Class	Date	Topic	Primary Readings To be completed <i>before</i> class	Secondary Readings
24	April 21	RAT5 The Synthetic <i>A Priori</i>	<i>Critique of Pure Reason</i> , Introduction (AW 724–29)	Melchert 426–47
25	April 26	Sensibility and Intuition	<i>Critique of Pure Reason</i> , Prefaces and Transcendental Aesthetic (AW 717–24, 729–37)	
26	April 28 Paper 2 is due	Concepts and Understanding Synthetic Unity of Apperception	<i>Critique of Pure Reason</i> from the Transcendental Analytic (AW 737–56)	
27	May 3	Space and Time	Newton, Selections (AW 284–93) Leibniz, Letters to Clarke (AW 294–303) Kant, <i>Critique of Pure Reason</i> , First Antinomy (AW 792–94)	Melchert 447–50
28	May 5 Peer Evals Due	Limits of Reason Freedom The Ontological Argument	<i>Critique of Pure Reason</i> , Third Antinomy and On the Ontological Argument (AW 798–800, 819–23)	

Final Exam: Friday, May 13, 2pm – 5pm