

Introduction to Early Modern Philosophy
PHL 301L
Fall 2016
mwf, 9-9:50am

Instructor

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Office: Waggener 319

Prerequisites

None.

Office Hours

During office hours, I'm glad to discuss readings, exams, papers, and life in general.

Wednesdays: 10-11:30am, Waggener 319

Thursdays: 3:30-5pm, by Lucky Lab Coffee Truck (2420 Guadalupe St.)
and by Appointment

Texts

Modern Philosophy: An Anthology of Primary Sources (Second Edition) ed. Roger Ariew and Eric Watkins. ISBN: 978-0-87220-978-7

(Note: it's really important that you **get the Second edition**).

Plus a variety of other readings, posted on Canvas.

Course Goals:

This course introduces some central debates in metaphysics and epistemology enlivened during the 17th and 18th centuries. We will aim to understand philosophical writings within the scientific and political contexts of early modern Europe. Additionally, we will consider how the argumentative strategies that we study continue to enliven contemporary philosophical debates.

The class will focus on various (but interconnected) topics:

- 1) God
- 2) Mind, Body, and Personhood
- 3) Knowledge, Skepticism, and Reality
- 4) Freedom of the Will

Classroom Rules

Laptops and other electronic devices are not allowed, unless you come speak with me and get an exception. This rule is also waived when the day's reading is distributed online (but in those cases, *please* turn off your wifi and don't use your devices for anything other than looking at your readings).

I intend to promote a classroom environment that is open-minded and respectful. Even if you strenuously disagree with me or one of your classmates, I expect you to refrain from interrupting, talking while someone else has the floor, and other similarly disrespectful behaviors. You'll be considered absent for that day if you break these rules.

Grade Evaluation

Quizzes: 15%

First Short Paper (3-4 pages): 15%

Midterm Exam: 20%

Second Paper (5-7 pages): 20%

Final Exam: 30%

Papers and tests will be given a number-score, and your final grade will be converted into the plus/minus system using the following rubric:

A = 94-100; A- = 90-93; B+ = 87-89; B = 84-86; B- = 80-83; C+ = 77-79; C = 74-76; C- = 70-73; D+ = 67-69; D = 64-66; D- = 60-63; F = 0-60

I prefer to grade papers blindly when possible. In order to do this, I only accept papers on Canvas, and I will deduct two points from papers with students' names on them. (The canvas software allows me to identify authors after I finish grading.) Though it conflicts with my blind-grading policy, I still strongly encourage you to discuss your paper with me ahead of the due date.

For both papers, late papers will lose 2 points for each 12-hour period that they are late. So, for example, if a paper is due at 9am on Monday and you submit it at 11am on Tuesday, your paper would lose 6 points (its lateness spans 9am-9pm, 9pm-9am, and the next 12 hour period).

Course Requirements

There are no official participation or attendance grades. But excellent attendance and active participation can result in up to 3 additional bonus points to your grade score. Very poor attendance (6 or more absences without excuse) will result in failure in the course, regardless of one's other scores.

If you want to have an absence excused, note that I only excuse absences via email, and only for good reasons. You must email me before class starts. I may also ask you to do one of the quiz questions via email in order to excuse the absence.

Quizzes: Quizzes will be done "Monte Carlo" style. At the beginning of many (but not all) sessions, I'll roll a die. If it comes up 1 or 2, there will be a 4-minute quiz that day. A second roll will determine the question on the following basis:

- 1: What was the main point of today's reading?
- 2: How does a concept from today's reading apply to a practical, or contemporary problem?
- 3: Copy the sentence that you think is the most important part of today's reading. Why is it important?
- 4: What claim in the reading did you find to be the most shocking, troubling, or exciting? Why?
- 5: How does today's reading relate to something else we've already discussed in the course?
- 6: Pick one of any of the above five questions.

If you haven't done the reading, or if you don't have your text, you can tell me about the most important idea you've learned about so far in the course for partial credit. Quizzes will be graded on a 3-point scale and weighted to fifteen percent of your final score at the end of the term (3 = good, 2 = good with

qualifications, 1 = has a significant error, 0 = absent). I will leave out your one lowest-scoring quiz in my final calculation.

Students must turn in all of the following assignments and exams in order to pass the course:

First Short Paper : (3-4 pages) In this paper your task will be mainly exegetical: you will explain one of Descartes' arguments and how it fares against certain objections.

Midterm Exam : Five questions handed out on October 26. You will be asked three of them on October 31 and required to answer two. The test will be open-book, but not open-notes.

Second Paper : (5-7 pages) The second paper is a comparative paper: you will be required to contrast the views of two thinkers that we looked at in the course. After explaining why these philosophers disagree, you will evaluate whose argument is stronger and why.

Final Exam : Eight questions handed out on December 5. You will be given five of the questions during the final exam (date TBD) and will be required to answer three. The test will be open-book, but not open-notes.

Academic Integrity

Academic dishonesty is a serious offense. Any plagiarized work will receive a score of 0 with no opportunities for make-ups. I will also report cases of plagiarism to the Office of the Dean of Students.

Plagiarized work includes both passing off someone else's work as your own, as well as failure to adequately cite one's academic sources. My standards follow the UT-Austin Honor Code :

- acknowledge the contributions of other sources to your scholastic efforts;
- complete your assignments independently unless expressly authorized to seek or obtain assistance in preparing them;
- follow instructions for assignments and exams, and observe the standards of your academic discipline; and
- avoid engaging in any form of academic dishonesty on behalf of yourself or another student.

See http://deanofstudents.utexas.edu/sjs/acint_student.php for further details.

Services for Students with Disabilities

We will follow the Guidelines posted on the Services for Students with Disabilities website (<http://diversity.utexas.edu/disability/rights-and-responsibilities/>)

Rights and Responsibilities: As a registered student with Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) it is important to understand your rights with regards to your accommodations as well as your responsibilities.

RIGHTS

1. It is your right to deliver your accommodation letter(s) to any and all instructors. You may not need all accommodations for every class, but any professor that you will need an accommodation from **must** have a copy of your accommodation letter.
2. It is your right to not deliver your accommodation letter for any class during a semester. This does not affect your right to have accommodations again for any subsequent semester.

3. It is your right to request adjustments to your accommodations. All requests will be reviewed by your coordinator and approved, as appropriate, in order to ensure equal access.
4. It is your right to have your disability kept confidential as the law allows. SSD will not share information regarding your disability with any faculty, staff, parent, or other entities unless you have completed a Release of Information and given permission to do so or there is an explicit need to know.
5. It is your right to have your approved accommodations provided to you free of charge, as mandated in the Americans with Disabilities Act. SSD will never charge you for your classroom accommodations.

RESPONSIBILITIES

1. It is your responsibility to meet with each professor during the first week of class, or within one week of receiving your accommodation letters if it is during the semester, to review your letter and discuss the use of accommodations in their class. **Accommodations become effective on the date the letter is delivered to your professor. Accommodations are not retroactive.**
2. It is your responsibility to read each class syllabus and talk with professors about the ways in which the course structure and essential requirements may impact the use of your accommodations.
3. It is your responsibility to report problems to SSD regarding professors who are not providing accommodations. This must be done during the semester the problem is occurring and not after grades have been given for the course.
4. It is your responsibility to request new accommodation letters for each semester that you are going to need accommodations or if there is an update to your accommodations.
5. If you have note taking assistance as an accommodation, you must attend class and be attentive. You do not have the right to request a copy of notes from a class for which you were absent.
6. If you require an alternative test location, or extra time on exams, it is your responsibility to arrange for this accommodation with your instructors and/or schedule to take your exam in the testing space at SSD at least *10 BUSINESS DAYS* prior to the exam if your professor is **unable** to accommodate you.

Alternative Formats: If you have text books or documents that you want scanned this material must be delivered to SSD at least one week prior to the date needed. A receipt showing purchase of the book to be scanned must be provided along with your request. *Interpreter Services:* Requests for interpreter services should be completed immediately following your registration for classes in order to assure this accommodation is provided on the first day of class.

Schedule of Readings (Subject to Revision)

w August 24

Introduction

f August 26

Kenny, "Aquinas" (Online)

m August 29

Martinich, Allhoff, & Vaidya, "General Introduction" (Online)

Note: focus mainly on sections 1, 2, and 3. Section 4 is recommended but not required.

w August 31

Descartes, *Discourse on Method* (p. 25-34)

f September 2

Galileo, *The Assayer* (p. 21-4)

m September 5 **No Class — Labor Day**

w September 7

Descartes, Meditation 1 (p. 40-42)

f September 9

Descartes, Meditation 2 (p. 43-47)

m September 12

Descartes, Meditation 3 & 5 (p. 47-54 & 58-61)

w September 14

Descartes, Meditation 4 (p. 54-58)

f September 16

Descartes, Meditation 6 (p. 61-68)

m September 19

Princess Elizabeth's correspondence with Descartes (online)

w September 21

Hobbes & Descartes (3rd Set of Objections and Replies) (p. 75-82)

f September 23

Pryor, "Guidelines on Writing a Philosophy Paper" (Online)

m September 26

First Short Paper Due

Leibniz, Discourse on Metaphysics, (Sect. 1-21) (p. 224-237)

w September 28

Leibniz, Discourse on Metaphysics, (Sect. 22-36) (p. 237-247)

f September 30

Leibniz, *Monadology* (p. 275-283)

m October 3

Anne Conway *Ancient and Modern Philosophy* Ch. 7 (Online)

w October 5

Margaret Cavendish, *Philosophical Letters*, Letters 35 and 36 (Online)

f October 7

Locke, Ch. 1.2 and 2.1 (318-328)

m October 10

Locke, Book II Ch. 3, 4, 5, 7, & 8 (p. 328-337)

Note: focus especially on chapter 8.

w October 12

Locke, Book II Ch. 22 "Of Power" (p. 348-357)

f October 14

Locke, Book II Ch. 27, "Of Identity and Diversity" (p. 367-76)

m October 17

Locke, Book III Ch. 3&4 General Terms, Words, and The Names of Substances (p. 377-386)

w October 19

Locke, Book IV, Ch. 10&11, Knowledge of Existence of God, and Other Things (p. 405-15)

f October 21

Berkeley, *Principles of Human Knowledge*, Introduction (p. 438-446)

m October 24

Berkeley, *Principles of Human Knowledge*, Part One (p. 447-453)

w October 26

Review; Midterm questions handed out

f October 28 **Class Canceled - Conference Travel. Consider meeting with your classmates to study!**

m October 31

Midterm Exam - Make sure to bring a blue book!

w November 2

Newton, *Principia*, (p. 284-290)

f November 4

Hume, *Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding* 2 & 3 (p. 538-542)

m November 7

Hume, *Enquiry* 4 (p. 542-548)

w November 9

Hume, *Enquiry* 5 (p. 548-555)

f November 11

Hume, *Enquiry* 7 (p. 556-564)

m November 14

Hume, *Enquiry* 8 (Liberty and Necessity) (p. 564-575)

w November 16

Baron D'Holbach "Of the System of Man's Agency" (Online)

f November 18

Hume, *Enquiry* 9 (Reason in Animals) (p. 575-576)

Re-read Descartes, p. 33-4.

m November 21

Hume, *Enquiry* 10 (Miracles) (p. 577-586)

w November 23

Hume, *Enquiry* 11 (Teleological Argument) (p. 586-593)

f November 25

No Class - Thanksgiving Break

m November 28

Hume, *Enquiry* 12 (p. 593-600)

w November 30

Reid *An Inquiry into the Human Mind* (p. 641-650)

f December 2

Reid "Of Common Sense" (p. 650-653)

Second Paper Due

m December 5

Wrap-up

Final Exam questions handed out

Final Exam: Time and place TBD.