

17th and 18th Century Philosophy (PHIL 202)  
Spring 2015  
T/Th 10:30-11:45  
East College 301

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Believe it or not, when philosophers refer to "modern" philosophy, they are talking about the philosophy of the 17th and 18th centuries, or European philosophy after the Renaissance. Certainly, many of the most important figures in the history of philosophy appeared in this period, and they wrote in dialogue with one another: Descartes, Locke, Spinoza, Pascal, Hume, and Kant, for example. The period is often characterized as culminating in the Enlightenment celebration of reason and religious skepticism: a turn toward scientific inquiry and attempts to understand it in relation to religious faith and the nature of human values. We will read classic primary texts, focusing on metaphysics and epistemology.

#### Work

(1) Weekly quizzes: you'll write a few sentences about a topic from the readings. This is to keep you reading.

(2) Mid-term and final essay exams.

One of the exams (but not both) can be waived in favor of a paper of five to seven pages. If you don't like your grade on a paper, you can re-write it once for a new grade.

Exams are March 5 and May 7, and if you are doing a paper rather than taking the final, it is due at the time of our final: 2:00 on May 7. However, if you're writing a final paper and want the chance to re-write, I'll have to receive the draft by Tuesday, April 28, and will try to return it on the last day of class. The final is not cumulative. Suggested paper topics and guidelines for writing papers/taking exams will be delivered and reviewed in a timely fashion.

#### Required text

*Modern Philosophy: An Anthology of Primary Sources* (Ariew and Watkins, editors)

#### Schedule

Week of January 20

Bacon, *New Organon* (pp. 16-20)

Week of January 27

Descartes, *Meditations* 1-3 (pp. 40-54; omit dedication, prefaces etc)

Week of February 3

Descartes, *Meditations* 4-7 (pp. 54-68)

Week of February 10

Locke, *Essay Concerning Human Understanding* (pp. 316-359)

Week of February 17

Locke, *Essay* (pp. 359-421)

Week of February 24

Pascal, selections from the *Pensees* (Moodle)

Week of March 3

Hobbes, selections from *Leviathan* (pp. 114-136)

*mid-term/paper: March 5*

Week of March 17

Spinoza, letters and *Ethics* (pp. 137-164)

Week of March 24

Spinoza, *Ethics* (pp. 164-195)

Week of March 31

Berkeley, *Three Dialogues* (454-503)

Week of April 7

Hume, *Enquiry* (533-564)

Week of April 14

Hume, *Enquiry* (564-600)

Week of April 21

Kant, *Prolegomena* (655-690)

Week of April 28

Kant, *Prolegomena* (690-716)

*The final exam is scheduled for Thursday, May 7, at 2PM. If you are doing a paper, it is due at that time. If you want a chance to re-write it, I'll need it in class on April 28.*

### Expectations

I expect you to show up having read the assigned texts and thought about them a bit. I would like the class to be informal, and I solicit your participation throughout. Plagiarism will be dealt with harshly.

### Accommodations for Disabilities

I am available to discuss appropriate academic accommodations that may be recommended for students with disabilities. Requests for academic accommodations are to be made during the first three weeks of the semester (except for unusual circumstances) so that appropriate arrangements can be made. Students are required to register with Academic Resource Services in the Advising Office located on the first floor of Biddle House (contact ext. 1080 or [waybranj@dickinson.edu](mailto:waybranj@dickinson.edu)) to verify their eligibility for appropriate accommodations.