

Phil 202
17th and 18th Century Philosophy
Spring, 2016
Prof. Feldman (e-mail: feldmans@dickinson.edu)
EC 211, x1226

Course Description:

Inspired by the achievements of the new science, yet haunted by the specter of skepticism raised by Descartes' evil deceiver, philosophers in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries grappled with questions about the scope and limits of human knowledge, the kinds and concepts of basic substance, the nature of the mind and of the human being, and the connection between the mind and the world. In this course, we will we will read works by Descartes, Spinoza, Locke, Leibniz, Berkeley, Hume, and Kant, to critically examine their responses to these and related questions.

Course Objectives: By the end of the semester, in both discussions and written work, students will be expected to interpret intricately argued philosophical texts, reconstruct, analyze and criticize arguments in and between those texts, situate the philosophical positions of the philosophers studied in the appropriate philosophical categories and contexts, and compare, contrast and evaluate the positions of the different philosophers.

You will thus be expected, both in clear writing and focused discussion to

- closely read and analyze the primary texts by the selected philosophers of this period, situating your reading and analysis in its argumentative context
- identify, reconstruct and assess the arguments in those primary texts
- be fluent in the philosophically appropriate vocabulary in describing, comparing and contrasting the views held by the philosophers studied in this course.
- critically respond to arguments made in the primary and (when appropriate) secondary literature.

Text: Roger Ariew and Eric Watkins (eds.): *Modern Philosophy: An Anthology of Primary Sources*, 2nd edition. Indianapolis, IN: Hackett Publishing Company, 2009. ISBN: 0-87220-978-4; 978-0-87220-978-7

Unless otherwise indicated, all page numbers for readings refer to this book.

Reading assignments, exam questions, and supplementary materials will be posted on Moodle. Check regularly for updates.

Schedule:

Jan. 26: Introduction: The new science: Bacon, *The New Organon*, pp. 16-20; Galileo, *The Assayer*, pp.21-24

Jan. 28: Method of Doubt: Descartes, *Discourse on Method*, Meditations I, pp. 25-43

Feb. 2: The quest for certainty: Descartes, *Meditations* 2-3, pp. 43-54

Feb. 4: Mind, body, and world: Descartes, *Meditations*, 4-6, pp. 54-68; Correspondence with Princess Elizabeth (Moodle)

Feb. 9: Critics strike back: Third and Fourth Set of Objections and Replies: Hobbes and Arnauld, pp.76-92; Hobbes' empiricism and materialism; *Leviathan*, pp.114-136

Feb. 11: Exam I Due

Feb. 11: Metaphysical Monism: Spinoza, *Ethics*, Bk I, pp. 144-164

Feb. 16: Mind and body: Spinoza, *Ethics*, Bk II, pp.164-188

Feb. 18: Determinism and human freedom: Spinoza, *Ethics*, Bk. V, pp.188-195

Feb. 23: Logic, God and substances: Leibniz, *Primary Truths*, pp.265-268; *Discourse on Metaphysics*, pp. 224-247; Letters to Arnauld, pp. 247-264

Feb. 25: God, freedom and determinism: Leibniz, Letters to Arnauld, 247-264

March 1: Substance and bodies: Leibniz, *New System of Nature*, pp. 269-274, *Monadology*, pp. 275-283

March 3: Time and space: Newton, *Principia*, pp.284-293, Leibniz, *Letters to Clarke* pp. 294-303

March 8: Exam II Due

March 8: Tabula Rasa?: Leibniz, Preface to the New Essays, pp.422-433; Locke, *Essay*, pp. 316-342

March 10: Theory of Ideas: Locke, *Essay*, pp. 342-359

Spring Break

March 22: Substances and personal identity: Locke, *Essay*, pp. 359-77

March 24: Language, Knowledge and its Limits: Locke, *Essay*, 377-421

March 29: *Esse est percipi*: Berkeley: *First Dialogue*, pp. 454-475

March 31: Idealism and Common Sense: Berkeley: *Second and Third Dialogues*, pp. 475-503; *On Motion*, pp.504-508

April 5: Exam III Due

April 5: Skepticism: Bayle, *Dictionary, Pyrrho, Note B*, pp. 512-516

April 7: Skepticism about the soul and the self: Hume, *Treatise*, pp. 517-532

April 12: Causal Reasoning: Hume, *Enquiry*, pp. 533-564

April 14: Liberty, Necessity and Miracles: Hume, *Enquiry*, pp. 564-592

April 19: The Humean Challenge: Hume, *Enquiry*, pp. 593-600; Kant, *Prolegomena*, pp. 655-672

April 21: Transcendental Idealism: Phenomena and Noumena, Space and Time: Kant, *Prolegomena*, pp. 673-679

April 26: The Possibility of an Objective World: The Categories: Kant, *Prolegomena*, pp.679-695

April 28: The Possibility of Metaphysics: Kant, *Prolegomena* pp.695-716

May 3: Kant's Response to Hume and Descartes: Kant, *The Second Analogy* (from the *Critique of Pure Reason*) pp.772-779; *Refutation of Idealism* (from *The Critique of Pure Reason*) pp. 781-783

May 5: Review

FINAL EXAM DUE: THURSDAY, MAY 12, 11:59 p.m.

Requirements: Students are expected to attend class faithfully, read the assigned texts prior to each class meeting, come prepared with questions and to participate in discussion, and become fanatically devoted to disentangling the knot of philosophical problems treated in this course.

There will be three take home essay exams, due on the dates indicated, and a cumulative take home final due on the date of the scheduled final---Thursday, May 12. The final grade will be determined by the three take home essay exams (together worth @ 60%, the final @40%) with adjustments made to reflect the quality of your contributions to class discussions.

Accommodations for Disabilities

I follow the college policy on accommodations for students with disabilities, available at https://www.dickinson.edu/info/20236/disability_services/1092/disclosing_and_documenting_accommodations

Feel free to discuss your specific concerns with me.

Academic Honesty: I subscribe to the college policies on academic honesty and expect you to do the same.