

PHIL 232: Modern Philosophy: From Descartes to Kant
Denison University, Spring 2009

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Course Narrative: From the medieval time onward, the dynamics of the world had drastically changed. Feudal governments had gradually begun being replaced by democracies, the “new sciences” of Galileo and Newton had altered the way we think about the world, and both the Renaissance and the Reformation had changed the way we view ourselves. In this course, we will survey of the major philosophical texts of this interesting period of human history. We will read the major philosophical texts of the 17th and 18th century, including the rationalists Descartes, Spinoza and Leibniz, who believed that the nature of the world could be uncovered through human reason; and also the empiricists Locke, Berkeley and Hume who all believed that sensation plays the dominant role in our human understanding—finally terminating in the philosophy of Immanuel Kant, who attempted to settle many of the disputes at the time in his system of transcendental idealism. The student will come to a better understanding of these important philosophers, all of whom still influence the way we understand knowledge, language and the mind.

Required Text:

Modern Philosophy: An Anthology of Primary Sources, ed. R. Ariew and E. Watkins
(Hackett, 1998) ISBN #: 9780872204409

Course Schedule: All dates and content scheduled is tentative and subject to change by the Instructor at any time for any reason.

DATE	ASSIGNMENT	TOPIC
19 Jan:	--	Course Introduction and intro to Descartes
21 Jan:	Bacon, <i>New Organon</i> [AW pp. 4-7]; Galileo, “Corpuscularism” [AW pp. 8-11]; Descartes, <i>Discourse on Method</i> 1,2 and 5 [AW pp. 12-21];	The Scientific Revolution and Cartesian Mechanism
26 Jan:	Martin Luther King Day (observed): No Class!!	
28 Jan:	Historical Introduction to Descartes [AW pp. 1-3]; <i>Meditations on First Philosophy</i> I-II [AW pp. 22-34]	The Methodology of Hyperbolic Doubt
2 Feb:	<i>Meditations</i> III-VI [AW pp. 34-55]; Objections and Replies [AW pp. 56-80]	Rationalism and Overcoming Hyperbolic Doubt

4 Feb:	Hobbes, <i>Leviathan</i> [AW pp. 100-122]	
9 Feb:	Historical Introduction to Spinoza [AW pp. 97-99]; Letters to Oldenburg and Meyer [AW pp. 122-128]; <i>Ethics</i> I [129-149]	Introduction to Spinoza; Overcoming Dualism
11 Feb:	<i>Ethics</i> II, V [pp. 149-180]	Knowledge and Human Freedom
16 Feb:	Historical Introduction to Leibniz [AW pp. 181-183]; <i>Discourse on Metaphysics</i> [AW pp. 184-207]; Letters to Arnauld [pp. 208-224]	Pre-established Harmony
18 Feb:	“Primary Truths” [AW pp. 225-228]; “A New System of Nature” [AW pp. 229-234]; <i>Monadology</i> [AW pp. 235-243]	On Substance; Or, Monads are Cool
23 Feb:	Newton, <i>Principia</i> [AW pp. 244-248] Leibniz, Letters to Clarke [AW pp. 249-258]	The Leibniz-Clarke Debate on the Nature of Space and Time
25 Feb:	Historical Introduction to Locke [AW pp. 259-261]; Boyle, “Of The Corpuscular or Mechanical Philosophy” [AW pp. 262-269]; Locke, <i>Essay</i> I, [AW pp. 270-276]; Leibniz, Introduction to <i>New Essays</i> [AW pp. 374-385]	The Critique of Rationalism: Mechanism and Innate Ideas
2 Mar:	<i>Essay</i> II, 1-14 [AW pp. 276-301]	Introduction to Empiricism; The Origin of Ideas
4 Mar:	<i>Essay</i> II and III [AW pp. 301-338]	Complex Ideas and Language
9 Mar:	Locke, <i>Essay</i> IV [AW pp. 338-373]	On Belief and Knowledge
11 Mar:	TBA	
16-20 Mar:	Spring Break, No Class!!	
23 Mar:	Malebranche, Search after Truth [AW pp. 389-412];	Occasionalism
25 Mar:	Historical Introduction to Berkeley [AW pp. 386-388]; Berkeley, <i>Three Dialogues</i> I [AW pp. 413-433]	Empiricist critique of Materialism
30 Mar:	<i>Three Dialogues</i> II-III [AW pp. 433-461]; <i>Principles of Human Knowledge</i> [AW pp. 462-477]	Subjective Idealism
1 Apr:	Historical Introduction to Hume [AW pp. 483-485] Bayle, “Pyrrho” [AW pp. 486-490] Hume, <i>Enquiry</i> 1-5 and 12 [AW pp. 491-512, 550-557]	Empiricism and Skepticism

6 Apr:	Hume, <i>Treatise</i> [AW pp. 558-572]	Personal Identity
8 Apr:	Historical Introduction to Kant [AW 573-578]; Preface and Introduction to <i>Critique</i> [AW pp. 634-646]	
13 Apr:	<i>Critique</i> , Transcendental Aesthetic [AW pp. 646-654];	Space and Time
15 Apr:	<i>Critique</i> , Transcendental Analytic I [AW pp. 664-672]	The Deduction of the Categories
20 Apr:	<i>Critique</i> , Transcendental Analytic II [AW pp. 672-698]	The Schematism, Analogies and Refutation of Idealism
22 Apr:	<i>Critique</i> , Transcendental Dialectic I [AW pp. 698-734]	Paralogisms and Antinomies
27 Apr:	Kant, Transcendental Dialectic II and Transcendental Doctrine of Method [AW pp. 698-749]	Cosmological Ideas and Pure Metaphysics
29 Apr:	TBA	
4 May:	TBA	

Note on the Indeterminacy of Time: Rarely is there enough time in the semester to cover everything an ideal course in philosophy should cover. Although everything on the reading list this semester is important, I reserve the right to alter the schedule to correspond with the pace of the class.

Evaluation: The main points of evaluation for this course include 3 short response papers (3-5 pages in length) each due throughout the semester. In addition to the short papers, there will be a take-home midterm exam (date TBA), as well as one final seminar paper (8-10 pages in length) due at the last day of the class. Guidelines and due dates for the papers will be announced.

The following weighting will be used to calculate your grade:

Short response Papers (3-5 pp.)	10% (each)
x 3 =	30 %
Attendance and Participation	20%
Midterm Exam	20%
Seminar Paper (8-10 pp.)	30%

Students with Disabilities: Any student who feels he or she may need an accommodation based on the impact of a disability should contact me privately as soon as possible to discuss his or her specific needs. I rely on the Academic Support & Enrichment Center in 102 Doane to verify the need for reasonable accommodations based on documentation on file in that office.

Note on Academic Dishonesty: Plagiarism is the ultimate mortal sin of academia. Please, cite properly and document accordingly anything that may appear in your written work for this class. If you are unclear about how to properly document a paper, simply ask me. But err on the side of caution: clear-cut cases of plagiarism (deemed so by myself) will result in the possibility of up to and including a "F" for the course. Don't try me, I will catch you. All submissions for this class will be cleared through electronic methods to detect plagiarism.

If you are unsure of what plagiarism constitutes, I highly recommend you view the tutorial at the following link: <http://www.cte.usf.edu/plagiarism/index.html>. Ignorance of the law, as they say, is no excuse.

The students and faculty of Denison University and the Department of Philosophy are committed to academic integrity and will not tolerate any violation of this principle. Academic honesty, the cornerstone of teaching and learning, lays the foundation for lifelong integrity.

Academic dishonesty is, in most cases, intellectual theft. It includes, but is not limited to, providing or receiving assistance in a manner not authorized by the instructor in the creation of work to be submitted for evaluation. This standard applies to all work ranging from daily homework assignments to major exams. Students must clearly cite any sources consulted - not only for quoted phrases but also for ideas and information that are not common knowledge. Neither ignorance nor carelessness is an acceptable defense in cases of plagiarism. It is the student's responsibility to follow the appropriate format for citations.

As is indicated in Denison's Student Handbook, available through mydenison.edu, instructors must refer every act of academic dishonesty to the Associate Provost, and violations may result in failure in the course, suspension, or expulsion. (For further information, see <http://www.denison.edu/student-affairs/handbook/article7.html>).

Expectations, Suggestions and Mandates for an efficient class:

1. Please arrive to class on time and expect to stay the entire duration of the class. If this is an impossibility, please make every attempt to notify me in advance of tardiness or absence.
2. Especially true in philosophy more than most other areas of study, diligence is important. Some of the reading will be difficult, since these are some of the most profound texts in the history of the world. The difficulty of the subject is indirectly proportional to the amount of work put into the course. Expect to have up to ten hours per week of reading and thinking in order to get an "A" for the course. Additionally, for these reasons, attendance is of vital importance.

3. Please come to class prepared (i.e., any reading assigned read, any questions concerning readings or lectures prepared, etc.)
4. Please be respectful of each other in the class. There will be times when students disagree about a topic discussed in class. This is a didactic process, not a combative one.
5. Due to the great excess of material and limited time in which we must cover ground, please do not create a disruption for those people who are attempting to learn. Disruptions include blurting out answers, name calling, chiding each other, snoring, etc. Laughing at the Instructor's jokes is obviously exempted from this policy. In addition, personal audio devices (except those in use to record lectures) and loud crunching snack foods are prohibited from the classroom. ***PLEASE TURN OFF your cellphones in class.***
6. Please feel free to make mistakes. We all will from time to time, even your omniscient instructor.
7. Please make use of my office hours. Waiting until the last moment in the semester to catch up is not advisable. I am excellent at fixing small problems, but horrendous at fixing large ones. The only difference between small and large problems is time.
8. This is a discussion-based "seminar" class, and your effective participation is a part of your final grade. "Effective" participation is a function of the quality, not the quantity, of one's overall participation in class. Thus, if you find yourself someone who is naturally reticent, please make an effort to participate and have your voice heard; likewise if you find yourself someone who is naturally garrulous, please allow others to be heard.
9. Have fun! The material is only as dry as you make it out to be. Sharpening one's mind can be an exhilarating process.