

** SYLLABUS **

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COURSE OBJECTIVES

The course is designed, firstly, to provide you with an overview of the dominant theories and conceptual tensions which shaped Western philosophical discussion during the modern period (circa 1500-1850); secondly, to acquaint you first-hand with the canonical texts around which that discussion centered.

TEXTS

There will be one required text:

— Baird, Forrest E., and Walter Kaufmann. *Philosophic Classics, Volume III: Modern Philosophy*. Fifth Edition. Upper Saddle River: Prentice Hall, 2008.

Sources of additional interest, highly recommended, and available in the bookstore:

— Atherton, Margaret, ed. *Women Philosophers of the Early Modern Period*. Indianapolis: Hackett, 1992.

— Descartes, René. *Philosophical Essays and Correspondence*. Edited by Roger Ariew. Indianapolis: Hackett, 2000.

— Leibniz, G.W. & Samuel Clarke. *Correspondence*. Edited by Roger Ariew. Indianapolis: Hackett, 2000.

— Matthews, Michael R. *The Scientific Background to Modern Philosophy: Selected Readings*. Indianapolis: Hackett, 1989.

— Nadler, Steven M., ed. *A Companion to Early Modern Philosophy* (Blackwell Companions to Philosophy). Blackwell Publishers, 2002. ISBN: 0631218009.



Though words be the signs we have of one another's opinions and intentions; yet, because the equivocation of them is so frequent according to the diversity of contexture, and of the company wherewith they go (which the presence of him that speaketh, our sight of his actions, and conjecture of his intentions, must help to discharge us of): it must be extreme hard to find out the opinions and meanings of those men that are gone from us long ago, and have left no other signification thereof but their books; which cannot possibly be understood without history enough to discover those aforementioned circumstances, and also without great prudence to observe them.

(Hobbes, *The Elements of Law, Natural and Politic* I.13.8)

GENERAL COURSE DIVISION

After a brief, thematic retrieve of the cardinal ideas and issues that survived from the classical period into the renaissance, the course will be structured as follows:

(1) RENAISSANCE AND THE NEW SCIENCE (2 periods)

Readings: Hobbes, from *Leviathan, Parts I & II* (Baird & Kaufmann, pp.61-99).
References: Nadler, II-IV, pp.7-59; XXII, pp.320-337.
Matthews, I-IV, pp.5-86.

(2) DESCARTES AND POST-CARTESIAN RATIONALISM (5 periods)

Readings: Descartes, from the *Meditations* (Baird & Kaufmann, pp.13-52).
Spinoza, from the *Ethics, Parts I & II* (Baird & Kaufmann, pp.114-165).
Leibniz, from the *Discourse, Theodicy, & Monadology* (Baird & Kaufmann, pp.255-298).
References: On Descartes: Nadler, V-VI, pp. 60-95; VIII pp.113-128.
Atherton, I, pp.9-21.
Descartes, Correspondence.
Matthews, V, pp.87-108; VII, pp.124-132.
On Spinoza: Nadler, XII, pp.167-182; XVI, pp. 225-246.
Atherton, II, pp.22-45.
On Leibniz: Nadler, XVIII, pp.260-280; XXVI, pp.388-403.
Atherton, III, pp.46-76; IV, pp.77-95.
Leibniz, Correspondence.

(3) BRITISH EMPIRICISM (5 periods)

Readings: Locke, from the *Essay* (Baird & Kaufmann, pp.179-246).
Berkeley, from the *Principles* (Baird & Kaufmann, pp.301-351).
Hume, from the *Enquiry* and the *Dialogues* (Baird & Kaufmann, pp.355-485).
References: On Locke: Nadler, XIX, pp.283-297; XXIV, pp. 354-374.
Atherton, VI, pp.126-146
On Berkeley: Nadler, XXIX, pp.437-455.
Matthews, VI, pp.109-123.
On Hume: Atherton, VII, pp.147-159
Nadler, XXXII, pp. 483-504.
Matthews, VII, pp.133-158.

(4) THE KANTIAN REVOLUTION (1 period)

Readings: Kant, from the *Prolegomena* and the first *Critique* (Baird & Kaufmann, pp. 513-609).
References: Nadler, XXXV-XXXVII, pp.545-585.

ASSIGNMENTS AND COURSE MECHANICS

Reading assignments will be made on a weekly basis, more or less in keeping with the course outline provided above. Because considerable emphasis will be placed on your gaining familiarity with the canonical texts (as well as the philosophical issues) treated in the course, it is imperative that you keep well abreast of the reading material.

Class format will comprise both lecture and discussion periods. Lectures will generally situate problems or positions within historical context; discussion periods will be devoted to exegesis of the texts.

Written assignments: students will be asked to submit four (4) short abstracts (none to exceed two (2) double-spaced typed pages) in the course of the semester. Each abstract should focus on one critical argument/position from each of the major course topics, requiring that one briefly summarize the purport of that argument or position in contemporary idiom. A schedule of topics and due dates for the abstracts is provided below. Additionally, the course requires submission of an interpretive essay (in the form of a research paper), not to exceed fifteen (15) double spaced typed pages. This assignment asks that you review and analyze the contribution(s) of a major historical figure to some specific field of inquiry (epistemology, metaphysics, ethics, philosophy of mind, etc.). Topics for the interpretive essay should be chosen by May 22th, with the paper due May 29th. A bibliography of sources relevant to this assignment will be provided by your instructor.

EXAMINATIONS AND GRADES

There will be a final examination in this course (5/29, 9:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.).

Final grades will be assigned according to the following distribution of points (total possible points = 200):

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|---------------------------------------|---------|
| (a) The abstracts (18 pts. each): | 72 pts. |
| (b) The interpretive essay: | 54 pts. |
| (c) The final examination: | 54 pts. |
| (d) Attendance & class participation: | 20 pts. |

and according to the following scale:

176-200 = A
152-175 = B
128-151 = C
104-127 = D
under 104 = F



SCHEDULE OF TOPICS FOR THE PHILOSOPHICAL ABSTRACTS

- (1) ***RENAISSANCE AND THE NEW SCIENCE***: your abstract should summarize the first nine (9) paragraphs of Chapter XIV from Part I of Hobbes' *Leviathan* (Baird & Kaufmann, pp. 80-82).
- (2) ***DESCARTES AND POST-CARTESIAN RATIONALISM***: your abstract should summarize the "Appendix" to Part I of Spinoza's *Ethics* (Baird & Kaufmann, pp. 133-137).
- (3) ***BRITISH EMPIRICISM***: your abstract should summarize the first eight (8) paragraphs of Section VII of Hume's *Enquiry* (Baird & Kaufmann, pp. 381-383).
- (4) ***THE KANTIAN REVOLUTION***: your abstract should summarize Sections 27-30 of Kant's *Prolegomena* (Baird & Kaufmann, pp. 568-569).

SCHEDULE OF DUE DATES

- May 14: Abstract (1)
- May 20: Abstract (2)
- May 22: Essay Topic Choice
- May 28: Abstract (3)
- May 29: Abstract (4)
- May 29: Interpretive Essay
- May 29: Final Examination

