

PAR 202: History of Western Philosophy II

Term: Spring 2022	Instructor: Robert Smithson
Time: TR 9:30am-10:45pm	Email: smithsonr@uncw.edu
Room: BR 100	Office: BR 266
	Office Hours: TR 2-3pm (or by appointment)

Course Description

This course will introduce students to main philosophical questions and themes of the early modern period (from Descartes to Hume). Is there an external world? If so, what is the nature of material objects? How do material bodies interact? How do the material world and the mind interact? Does God exist? What is the source of our ideas? In this course, we will read selections from René Descartes, Elizabeth of Bohemia, John Locke, George Berkeley, Gottfried Leibniz, David Hume, and Immanuel Kant.

Course Goals

1. To provide students with a rigorous, *non-caricatured* overview of the philosophical systems of a variety of philosophers from the early modern period.
2. To develop students' philosophical writing as well as their ability to reconstruct philosophical arguments.
3. To emphasize the relevance of early modern philosophy to the contemporary philosophical setting.

Course Texts

Four texts must be purchased for the course. It will be important to bring these texts to class when we are discussing these philosophers.

[DM] René Descartes, *Selected Philosophical Writings* (CUP) 1988

[BT] George Berkeley, *Three Dialogues Between Hylas and Philonous* (Hackett) 1979

[HE] David Hume, *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding* (OUP) 1998

Two other readings can be found online at <http://www.earlymoderntexts.com>.

[EC] Elizabeth of Bohemia, *Correspondence with Descartes*.

[LE] John Locke, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*.

[LM] Gottfried Leibniz. Various readings.

Grading

Three papers (4 pages each): 60%

Final: 10%

Short responses to readings: 20%

Participation quizzes: 10%

Papers

To facilitate anonymous grading, only include your identification number (and not your name) at the top of the document. For helpful advice on writing philosophy papers, see the “Writing Philosophy Papers” resources found on Canvas.

Attendance

The participation grade takes into account both attendance and discussion in class. Class attendance is mandatory. Students arriving late will receive reduced credit for attendance that day. Students leaving class early will also receive reduced credit.

The professor will accommodate a reasonable number of excused absences for religious holidays and official off-campus college business such as academic conference presentations and athletic competitions. However, students must discuss with the professor the dates of the anticipated absences no later than the last day of the drop period. Students must present to their professor written evidence of the anticipated absences and discuss with him/her how and when make-up work should be completed prior to missing the class. Students should not expect to receive allowance for excused absences if they do not meet with the professor beforehand and clarify the dates as necessary.

Absences will be addressed by the professor in accordance with his attendance policy. The professor retains the right to determine what would be considered to be a reasonable number of absences (excused or otherwise) for the course. A student will not fail a course because the number of religious observances and/or college business absences exceed the number of absences allowed, except if excessive absences make it impossible to fulfill the expectations of the course. The student’s class participation grade in the course, though, may still be affected.

Please do not come to class when you are not feeling well or are experiencing any COVID-19 symptoms. Absences due to possible illness do not count against your attendance grade, and I am very glad to work with you to make alternative arrangements for covering the material. If you have been exposed to COVID-19 or are concerned about exposure, please contact the Student Health Center at (910) 962-3280.

Honor Code

All students enrolled at UNCW are subject to the UNCW Student Academic Honor Code, which is intended to help every member of the UNCW community appreciate the high value placed on academic integrity and the means that will be employed to ensure its preservation. Students are expected to perpetuate a campus culture in which each student does his or her own work while relying on appropriate resources for assistance. In such a climate, students enjoy a special trust that they are members of a unique community in which one’s thoughts and words are attributed correctly and with proper ownership, and in which there is little need for systems to sanction those who cheat. As such, all UNCW students shall commit to the principles and spirit of the Honor Code by adhering to the following pledge:

As a student at The University of North Carolina Wilmington, I am committed to honesty and truthfulness in academic inquiry and in the pursuit of

knowledge. I pledge to uphold and promote the UNCW Student Academic Honor Code.

More information on the Honor Code is available at the following website:

<http://www.uncw.edu/odos/honorcode/>.

Please be especially familiar with UNCW's position on plagiarism as outlined in the UNCW Student Handbook. Plagiarism is a form of academic dishonesty in which you take someone else's ideas and represent them as your own. Here are some examples of plagiarism:

1. You write about someone else's work in your paper and do not give them credit for it by referencing them.
2. You give a presentation and use someone else's ideas and do not state that the ideas are the other person's.
3. You get ideas from some other reference material and do not reference that material.

Students should also refrain from using large language models (such as ChatGPT) to write their papers. This point will be discussed in class.

Accessibility Services

It is very important that this classroom be an inclusive environment that meets the learning needs of all of its students. If you are a person with a disability and anticipate needing any type of academic accommodations in order to fully participate in your classes, please contact the Office of Disability Services (962-7555). Please give me a copy of the letter you receive from Office of Disability Services detailing class accommodations you may need. If you require accommodation for test-taking, please make sure I have the referral letter no fewer than three days before the test.

Title IX Statement

UNCW practices a zero tolerance policy for any kind of violent or harassing behavior. If you are experiencing an emergency of this type contact the police at 911 or UNCW CARE at 962- 2273. Resources for individuals concerned with a violent or harassing situation can be located at <http://uncw.edu/noharm/resources/index.html>.

University Learning Center

The University Learning Center's (ULC) mission is to help students become successful, independent learners. Tutoring at the ULC is NOT remediation: the ULC offers a different type of learning opportunity for those students who want to increase the quality of their education. ULC services are free to all UNCW students and include the following:

- Learning Services (University Learning Center) <http://uncw.edu/ulc/learning/>
- Math Services <http://www.uncw.edu/ulc/math/index.html>
- Supplemental Instruction <http://www.uncw.edu/ulc/si/index.html>
- Writing Services <http://www.uncw.edu/ulc/writing/index.html>

Electronic Device Policy

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In order to promote classroom discussion, no laptops, tablets, phones, etc. are permitted during class except by instructor permission.

In order to protect the integrity of the classroom experience, the use of recording devices is limited to either the expressed permission of the faculty member or with proper documentation from the Office of Accessibility Services.

Course Schedule

This schedule is subject to change, depending on the progress of the discussion in the class. If there are changes, I will make note of them in class. Next to each class period, there is an assigned reading. The reading for 01/17 should be completed before class on 01/17, etc.

In addition to the listed reading, there is typically a handout summarizing the material discussed in class. This handout will be made available on Canvas. If it is helpful to you, you are able to read the handout prior to class, but this is not required.

Date	Topic/[Reading Assignment]
R 1/12	Syllabus/background.
T 1/17	Descartes' epistemology, sources of doubt [DS, First Meditation], [Canvas handout: "Meditation 1 Arguments"]
R 1/19	The cogito, essence vs. existence, Descartes' view of the thinking self [DS, Second Meditation], [Canvas handout: "Wax Argument"]
T 1/24	Clear and distinct perceptions, three versions of the causal argument, other ideas [DS, Third Meditation], [Canvas handout: "Causal Arguments"] [Optional: Nolan & Nelson (2007), "Proofs for the existence of God".]
R 1/26	Descartes' ontological argument, objections [DS, Fifth Meditation], [Canvas handout: "Ontological arguments"]
T 1/31	The Cartesian Circle: three interpretations [DS, Fifth Meditation], [Canvas handout: Cartesian Circle] [Optional reading: Newman & Nelson (1999), "Circumventing the Cartesian Circle".]
R 2/02	Catch-up day.
T 2/07	Non-deceiving God argument, dualism, Elizabeth's objection, writing philosophy [DS, Sixth Meditation], [EC, pp. 1-8], [Canvas handout: argument for external world]
R 2/09	The "plain historical method", the primary/secondary distinction [LE, Book 1- ch. 1] [Optional: excerpts from Priselac (2012)]
T 02/14	Locke's arguments against innatism [LE, Book 1- ch. 2], [Canvas handout: arguments against innatism]
R 2/16	Lockean ideas [LE, Book 2- ch. 1-6, 8 16, 17]

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- T 2/21 Locke on knowledge of the external world
[Canvas handout: Lockean knowledge of the external world]
R 2/23 Berkeleyan background, secondary qualities, primary qualities
[BT, Dialogue 1, pp. 2-26] [Canvas handout: analyses of matter]

- T 2/28 Absolute qualities, anti-abstraction arguments
[BT, Dialogue 1, pp. 26-35]
R 3/02 The master argument
[BT, Dialogue 1, pp. 35-42] [Canvas handout: master argument]

Spring break

- T 03/14 Idealist argument for God's existence, causation, other analyses of matter
[BT, Dialogue 2, pp. 45-59] [Canvas handout: dialogue 2 notes]
R 03/16 Berkeley's immaterialism, ordinary objects
[BT, Dialogue 3, pp. 60-68]

- T 3/21 Objections to immaterialism
[BT, Dialogue 3, pp. 68-94]
R 3/23 Leibnizian background, Cartesian physics, objections to Cartesian physics
[Optional: DS: Principles II(10-23,64); LP: A New System of Nature]
[Canvas handout: objections to Cartesian physics]

- T 3/28 Objections to Cartesian physics, atomism
[Optional: Leibniz, de Volder letters (178-181), On Body and Force]
R 3/30 Objections to Cartesian physics, atomism
[Optional: Leibniz, de Volder letters (178-181), On Body and Force]

- T 4/04 Features of monads (and motivations)
[LM: Monadology 1-35]
R 4/06 **NO CLASS: HOLIDAY**

- T 4/11 Relation between monads and bodies, reflecting the universe, pre-established harmony
[LM: Monadology 70-90, , de Volder letters (178-181), A New System of Nature]
R 4/13 Humean background, methodology, missing shade of blue
[HE: sections 1-2] [Canvas handout: Hume's methodology]

- T 4/18 **NO CLASS: NEW BABY (!)**
Relations of ideas, matters of fact, problem of induction
[HE: sections 3-5] [Canvas handout: problem of induction]
R 4/20 Problem of induction
[HE: sections 3-5]

- T 04/25 Necessary connections, Hume on causation
[HE: sections 6,7] [Canvas handout: Hume on causation]

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R 04/27 Hume on liberty
[HE: sections 8,12]