

Phil 220: Early Modern Philosophy

Term:	Summer Session 1	Instructor:	Robert Smithson
Time:	M-F 11:30-1	Email:	rhs2z@live.unc.edu
Room:	Caldwell 208	Office:	Caldwell 206A
		Office Hours:	W 1:15-3:15 and by appt.

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? Do humans have souls? 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, and David Hume.

At least one previous course in philosophy is required.

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

[LP] Gottfried Leibniz. *Philosophical Essays* (Hackett) 1989

[HE] David Hume, *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding* (OUP) 1999

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

Honor Code

In this class, the Honor Code is taken very seriously and all infractions will be reported to the Honor Council.

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Grading

Midterm: 20%

Two papers (5 pages each): 40%

Final: 30%

Participation/Unannounced quizzes: 10%

The participation grade takes into account both attendance and discussion in class. Class attendance is mandatory. If you have an excused absence (such as: traveling to events to represent the university, medical absences), please bring me a note or send me an email.

Papers

Topics for papers will be handed out three weeks prior to the due date. Each paper is 5 pages long. Papers should be emailed to me by the beginning of class period on the assigned due date. Students will lose a third of a letter grade for each day a paper is late. To facilitate grading, include only your PID number (and not your name) at the top of the document. For helpful advice on writing philosophy papers, see Jim Pryor's helpful introduction: www.jimpryor.net/teaching/guidelines/writing.html.

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 and will send out an email about the changes. Next to each class period, there is an assigned reading in brackets. The reading for 05/15 should be completed before class on 05/15, etc.

Date	Topic/[Reading Assignment]
T 05/15	Syllabus/Background, Descartes' epistemology, sources of doubt [DS, First Meditation], [Sakai handout: "Meditation 1 Arguments"]
W 05/16	The cogito, essence vs. existence, Descartes' view of the thinking self, clear and distinct perception [DS, Second Meditation], [Sakai handout: "Wax Argument"]
R 05/17	Three versions of the causal argument, origins of other ideas [DS, Third Meditation], [Sakai handout: "Causal Arguments"]
F 05/18	4th Meditation, free will, Descartes' ontological argument [DS, Fourth Meditation, Fifth Meditation]
M 05/21	The Cartesian circle [DS, Fifth Meditation], [Sakai handout: "Ontological arguments"] [Optional reading: Newman & Nelson (1999)]
T 05/22	Dualism, Elizabeth's objection, writing philosophy papers [DS, Sixth Meditation], [Sakai handout: argument for external world] [EC, pp. 1-8]

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W 05/23	The “plain historical method”, the primary/secondary distinction [LE, Book 2- ch. 1, 2, 8, 12]
R 05/24	Locke’s arguments against innatism [LE, Book 1], [Sakai handout: arguments against innatism]
F 05/25	Simple and complex ideas, specific ideas (solidity, infinity, power) [LE, Book 2- ch. 1-6, 16, 17, 21 (sections 1-29)]
M 05/28	NO CLASS
T 05/29	Berkleyan background, secondary qualities, primary qualities [BT, Dialogue 1, pp. 2-26] Paper 1 Due
W 05/30	Absolute qualities, anti-abstraction arguments, master argument [BT, Dialogue 1, pp. 26-42], [Sakai handout: master argument]
R 05/31	Idealist argument for God’s existence, causation, analyses of matter [BT, Dialogue 2, pp. 45-59]
F 06/01	Berkeley’s immaterialism, ordinary objects, objections [BT, Dialogue 3, pp. 60-94]
M 06/04	Midterm
T 06/05	Leibnizian background, objections to Cartesian physics, objections to atomism [LP: A New System of Nature, On Body and Force, de Volder letters (178-181)] [Sakai handout: objections to Cartesian physics]
W 06/06	Features of monads (and motivations) [LP: Monadology 1-35]
R 06/07	Levels of monads, arguments for God, problem of evil [LP: Monadology 36-70]
F 06/08	Relation between monads and bodies, pre-established harmony [LP: Monadology 70-90]
M 06/11	Hume’s methodology, Hume’s on the mind, missing shade of blue [HE: sections 1-2]
T 06/12	Relations of ideas, matters of fact, problem of induction [HE: sections 3-5] [Sakai handout: problem of induction]
W 06/13	Necessary connections, Hume on causation [HE: sections 6,7]
R 06/14	Hume on liberty [HE: sections 8, 12]
F 06/15	Review day, Paper 2 Due
M 06/18	FINAL EXAM (11:30-2:30)