

PHIL 220: Early Modern Philosophy

Term:	Spring 2016	Instructor:	Robert Smithson
Time:	MWF 9:05-9:55	Email:	rhs2z@live.unc.edu
Room:	Caldwell 103	Office:	Caldwell 105D
Website:	sakai.unc.edu/portal/ site/phil220-sp16	Office Hours:	MW 10-11 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? 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 Goals

1. To obtain an accurate, charitable overview of early modern philosophy that avoids standard caricatures.
2. To emphasize the relevance and importance of early modern philosophy to contemporary philosophical concerns.

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.

[DS] 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. In particular, papers previously turned in for other classes are not eligible to be turned in for this class.

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Grading

Midterm: 15%

Two papers (5 pages each): 40%

Final: 35%

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.

Technology

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

Course Schedule

The professor reserves the right to make changes to the syllabus, 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 1/11 should be completed before class on 1/11, etc.

Date	Topic/[Reading Assignment]
M 1/11	Syllabus/Background
W 1/13	Descartes' epistemology, sources of doubt [DS, First Meditation], [Sakai handout: "Meditation 1 Arguments"]
F 1/15	The cogito, essence vs. existence, Descartes' view of the thinking self [DS, Second Meditation], [Sakai handout: "Wax Argument"] [Optional: Nolan & Nelson (2007), "Proofs for the existence of God".
M 1/18	NO CLASS
W 1/20	Clear and distinct perceptions, preliminaries to causal argument [DS, Third Meditation], [Sakai handout: "Causal Arguments"]
F 1/22	CLASS CANCELLED
M 1/25	CLASS CANCELLED
W 1/27	[DS, Third Meditation], [Sakai handout: "Causal Arguments"] Descartes' ontological argument, objections
F 1/29	[DS, Fifth Meditation], [Sakai handout: "Ontological arguments"]

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M 2/1	Volition and intellect [DS, Fourth Meditation]
W 2/3	The Cartesian Circle: three interpretations [DS, Fifth Meditation], [Sakai handout: Cartesian Circle], [Optional: Newman & Nelson (1999), "Circumventing the Cartesian Circle".]
F 2/5	Finish Cartesian Circle, non-deceiving God argument, dualism [DS, Sixth Meditation], [Sakai handout: argument for external world]
M 2/8	Dualism, Elizabeth's Objection [EC, pp. 1-8]
W 2/10	Elizabeth's Objection, writing philosophy papers [EC, pp. 1-8]
F 2/12	The "plain historical method", Locke's naturalistic epistemology [LE, Book 1- ch. 1] [Optional: excerpts from Priselac (2012)]
M 2/15	CLASS CANCELLED
W 2/17	Locke's arguments against innatism [LE, Book 1- ch. 2], [Sakai handout: arguments against innatism]
F 2/19	Simple and complex ideas, specific ideas [LE, Book 2- chs. 1-7, 12, 16, 17]
M 2/22	More Lockean ideas, Locke on knowledge of the external world [LE, Book 2- ch. 21 (sections 1-29), ch. 8] [Sakai handout: Lockean knowledge of the external world] [Optional: excerpts from Priselac (2012)]
W 2/24	Berkleyan background, secondary qualities, primary qualities [BT, Dialogue 1, pp. 2-26]
F 2/26	Absolute qualities, anti-abstraction arguments, [BT, Dialogue 1, pp. 26-35]
M 2/29	The master argument [BT, Dialogue 1, pp. 35-42] [Sakai handout: master argument]
W 3/2	Idealist argument for God's existence, causation, other analyses of matter [BT, Dialogue 2, pp. 45-59]
F 3/4	Berkeley's immaterialism, ordinary objects [BT, Dialogue 3, pp. 60-68]
M 3/7	Objections to immaterialism [BT, Dialogue 3, pp. 68-94]
W 3/9	Review day
F 3/11	IN CLASS MIDTERM
M 3/14	NO CLASS
W 3/16	NO CLASS
F 3/18	NO CLASS

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M 3/21	Leibnizian background, Cartesian physics, objections to Cartesian physics [DS: Principles II(10-23,64); LP: A New System of Nature] [Sakai handout: objections to Cartesian physics]
W 3/23	Objections to Cartesian physics, atomism [LP: de Volder letters (178-181), On Body and Force]
F 3/25	NO CLASS
M 3/28	Features of monads (and motivations) [LP: Monadology 1-35]
W 3/30	Levels of monads, arguments for God, problem of evil [LP: Monadology 36-70]
F 4/1	Relation between monads and bodies, reflecting the universe [LP: Monadology 70-90, A New System of Nature]
M 4/4	Pre-established harmony [LP: Monadology 70-90, de Volder letters (178-181), A New System of Nature]
W 4/6	Humean background, Hume's view of the mind [HE: section 1]
F 4/8	Hume's methodology, missing shade of blue [HE: section 2]
M 4/11	Relations of ideas, matters of fact, problem of induction [HE: sections 3-5] [Sakai handout: problem of induction]
W 4/13	Problem of induction [HE: sections 3-5]
F 4/15	Necessary connections, Hume on causation [HE: sections 6,7]
M 4/18	Necessary connections, Hume on causation [HE: sections 6,7]
W 4/20	Hume on liberty [HE: sections 8,12]
F 4/22	Hume on liberty [HE: sections 8,12]
M 4/25	Looking ahead: Kant
W 4/27	Review Day
R 5/5, 8AM	FINAL EXAM