

PHIL 220: Early Modern Philosophy

Spring 2014
PHIL 220
MWF 1-1:50
Caldwell Hall, Room 105

Instructor Information

Name: Robert Smithson
E-mail: rhs2z@live.unc.edu
Office: Caldwell 206A
Office Hours: W 12-1, 2-3 and 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? 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.

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] Descartes, *Selected Philosophical Writings* (CUP) 1988

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

[LP] Leibniz, *Philosophical Essays* (Hackett) 1989

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

Other readings for the course can be found online at Jonathan Bennett's website, <http://www.earlymoderntexts.com/> or will be posted to Sakai.

Honor Code

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

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.

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 01/10 should be completed before class on 01/10, etc.

W 01/08: Syllabus/Background

F 01/10: Descartes [DS Med. 1]

M 01/13: Descartes [DS Med 2]

W 01/15: Descartes [DS Med. 3]

F 01/17: Descartes [DS Med. 3]

Optional reading: Nolan and Nelson (2008) "Proofs for the Existence of God"

M 01/20: NO CLASS

W 01/22: Descartes [DS Med. 4]

F 01/24: Descartes [DS Med. 5]

M 01/27: Descartes [DS Med. 5]

Optional reading: Newman and Nelson (1999) "Circumventing Cartesian Circles"

W 01/29: Descartes [DS Med. 6]

F 01/31: Elizabeth of Bohemia [Correspondence with Descartes, pp. 1-8]

M 02/03: Elizabeth of Bohemia [Correspondence with Descartes, pp. 1-8]

W 02/05: Locke [Essay: Book 2- ch. 1, 2, 8,12]

F 02/07: Locke [Essay: Book 1]

M 02/10: Locke [Essay: Book 2- ch.1-6, 8, 12, 16, 17, 21 (sections1-45)]

W 02/12: Locke [Essay: Book 2- ch.1-6, 8, 12, 16, 17, 21 (sections1-45)]

F 02/14: Berkeley [BT, dialogue 1]

M 02/17: Berkeley [BT, dialogue 1]

W 02/19: Berkeley [BT, dialogue 1]

F 02/21: Berkeley [BT, dialogue 2]

M 02/24: Berkeley [BT, dialogue 2]

W 02/26: Berkeley [BT, dialogue 3]

F 02/28: Berkeley [BT, dialogue 3]

M 03/03: Review day

W 03/05: **IN CLASS MIDTERM, part 1**

F 03/07: **IN CLASS MIDTERM, part 2**

M 03/09: NO CLASS

W 03/21: NO CLASS

F 03/11: NO CLASS

M 03/17: Leibniz [DS: Principles II(10-23,64); LP: A New System of Nature]

W 03/19: Leibniz [LP: de Volder letters (178-181), On Body and Force]

F 03/21: Leibniz [LP: Monadology 1-70]

M 03/24: Leibniz [LP: Monadology 1-70]

W 03/26: Leibniz [LP: Monadology 70-90, A New System of Nature]

F 03/28: Leibniz [LP: Monadology 70-90, de Volder letters (178-181), A New System of Nature]

M 03/31: Hume [HE: section 1]

W 04/02: Hume [HE: section 2]

F 04/04: Hume [HE: sections 3-5]

M 04/07: Hume [HE: sections 3-5]

W 04/09: Hume [HE: sections 6,7]

F 04/11: Review day

M 04/14: Hume [HE: sections 6,7]

W 04/16: Hume [HE: sections 8,12]

F 04/18: NO CLASS

M 04/21: Hume [HE: sections 8,12]

W 04/23: Looking ahead: Kant

F 04/25: Review day

R: 05/01: **FINAL EXAM (IN CLASS)**