

Department of Philosophy
PHL 302: Descartes to Hegel
Modern Philosophy
Semester II, 2018-2019

I. General Information

Meetings: TR: 9:30am-10:45am
Room, Smee WESL

Professor: Rob Thompson
Office: Smee Hall 207
Phone: 849-2930
Office Hours: See schedule on office door, and by appointment.
E-mail: robertthompson@pointloma.edu

Texts: Philosophic Classics Volume III: Modern Philosophy, 5/e, Baird and Kaufmann

II. Course Description

A survey of the major western philosophers of the 17th, 18th, and into the 19th centuries with special consideration for the influence of their thought upon the modern world.

III. Course Learning Outcomes

1. Students will engage in the disciplined practice of asking questions about God, the world, and of themselves, including questions for which there may be no easy answers.
2. Students will differentiate among interrelated movements or figures in the history of philosophy, especially the early modern period.
3. Students will evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of human reasoning or experience to provide an adequate account of the human condition, the world, ethics and Christian life, especially in conversation with philosophical notions and movements prevalent in the early modern period and into the 19th century.

IV. Course Requirements and Grading

Late work and extra credit: No late work will be accepted. No extra credit will be given.

5% **Attendance and Participation:** Attend *every* class session. No make-ups will be allowed for any required work unless the cause of the absence is one of the following: documented illness, religious observance, travel due to a sanctioned university event (e.g., team sports, musical presentation—be sure to see me to get such an absence cleared *before* missing the class). The student will be responsible for the content of any missed class. Moreover, significant tardiness will count as an absence. In addition, a warm body is a minimal requirement and is not sufficient. Thus, class participation is a critical component of the course.

Per the University's attendance policy, any student who misses more than 20% of the course may be de-enrolled without appeal. In addition to no credit being gained for the course, the student may receive a failing grade on his or her transcript if de-enrollment occurs after the last day to drop a semester

class. As with any course requirement, each student bears the responsibility to insure the attendance requirement is met.

- 15% **Readings:** Read all of the assigned material before coming to class. During roll call at the beginning of each class, students will be asked to give a number between 0 and 10 (10 being highest) indicating how much of the assigned reading was carefully and thoughtfully read. The number given will be the grade that the student receives for the day. For example, if you have read carefully and thoughtfully 85% of the reading for a given day, you should represent, and will receive, an 8.5 for the day. The lowest grade will be dropped, including if you have received a zero due to missing class. Only one low score will be dropped.
- 2% **Descartes Outline:** Each student is expected to complete an outline of Descartes' *Meditations on the First Philosophy*. The outline is due in stages related to when the various meditations are scheduled to be read and discussed in the class. Outlines must be typed, single spaced, in an accepted outline format, and are due at the beginning of each class session.
- 16% **Presentation:** Throughout the semester each student will do two in-class presentations. The presenter should include a brief and general introduction to, as well as a visual image of, the figure covered during that session. The presentation should mainly be an outline of the text(s) for the day and should reference (at the minimum) 9-12 significant portions (quotations or specific page/text references) highlighting the key ideas to be covered in class. The goal is to engage the text, get at the author's point of view, and foster robust discussion. Students must provide a detailed outline, complete with quotes, discussion topics, interpretive questions, and a bibliography for each member of the class. In addition, each student must give me a copy of their presentation notes, where it is clear that consideration has been given to how to approach the material, pose questions to foster discussion over the text, and to tease out implications given the philosopher's view. Please refrain from using electronic sources unless these are full text journals accessed through our library's numerous database collections. (NB: the goal is both to move through the salient elements of the reading for the day and to engage in critical discussion on the reading, so the presentations should reflect an effort to accomplish both elements.)
- 32% **Mid-Term and Final Exam:** Each student will be expected to complete an oral mid-term and written and oral final examination. The written portion is a matching component and is completed individually. The oral portion of the mid-term will be administered in small groups and will cover the material through Leibniz. The oral portion of the final will be administered as a class on the day of the final and will cover the material after Leibniz. Both are 16%.
- 30% **Final Essay:** Each student will be expected to complete a final essay. Final essays should reflect a comprehensive approach to the philosopher and the text, careful, critical engagement with primary source material, and should also include research from secondary sources (at the *very least* 3), including journal articles. Papers should include a clear thesis, be carefully structured in terms of argument, employ accurate and elegant syntax and grammar, and be no less than 10 pages (3300 words). In addition, students must use inclusive language. You are encouraged to meet with me for paper topic ideas and to work on overall argument once a topic has been chosen. (NB: As with all written work, grammar, organization, and spelling are of crucial importance.) The essay is due Friday, April 26, by 2pm in hardcopy to my mailbox or office.

V. Miscellany

1. *Academic Misconduct Policy*: Academic misconduct includes plagiarism and the use of unauthorized materials, information, or study aids in any exam or other academic exercise. It also includes assisting others in any attempt to cheat. It will not be tolerated. However, respect for academic honesty is consistent with discussing the ideas of the course with others. In fact, I encourage you to discuss any and all of the course material that you find interesting outside of class. In the end, however, you must do your written work on your own. If you have any questions about academic honesty, either in general or in particular, please ask me.

A special note on plagiarism is warranted. Each of you is responsible to know what plagiarism is and to avoid even the appearance of plagiarism in your work. (A decent working definition is the act of presenting information, ideas, and/or concepts as one's own when in reality they are the results of another person's creativity and effort.) No act of plagiarism, whether born of one's intention or ignorance, will be tolerated in this class. Anyone caught plagiarizing will incur severe academic punishment. Such punishment will include a grade of zero for the plagiarized work, and may also include expulsion with a failing grade from the course. The student's name and an explanation of the incident will also be forwarded to the Department Chair/School Dean and the area Dean. The area Dean will review the report and submit it to the Provost and the Vice President for Student Development. It will also be placed in the student's permanent academic file. Please see the University policy stated in the catalogue ([Academic Policies](#)).

2. *Discrimination/Harassment Policy*: Discrimination or harassment related to race, gender, ethnicity, sexual identity or orientation, religious choice, or any other type of behavior that dehumanizes human beings or dismisses difference, is not conducive to a good learning environment and is harmful to human vitality and healthy community. These behaviors will not be tolerated. I encourage all students to be open to any honest, respectful, and tactful discussion of issues that might arise in the context of our learning.

3. *Reasonable Accommodation Policy*: All students are expected to meet the standards for this course as set by the instructor. However, students who may need accommodations should discuss options with the Disability Resource Center during the first two weeks of class (by phone at 619-849-2486 or by e-mail at DRC@pointloma.edu). The DRC will contact professors with suggested classroom needs and accommodations. Approved documentation must be on file in the DRC within two weeks of the start of the semester.

4. *Inclusive Language Policy*: The use of inclusive language is now prevalent, even expected, throughout most sectors of our society (e.g., academia, government, business, religious organizations). Further, inclusive language is very often a more accurate and fair representation of the intended meaning of a person's communicative content. As such, everyone is expected to make use of inclusive language in all written work. The avoidance of such use in a given project will result in a lowering of the grade for that project. In addition, everyone is expected to make use of inclusive language during classroom discussions.

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Tentative Course Schedule

- January 10: Introduction & Syllabus
15: Descartes, *Letter, Preface, Synopsis, Med. 1 & 2*
17: Descartes, *Med. 3 & 4*: _____
22: Descartes, *Med. 5 & 6*: _____
24: Hobbes, *Leviathan* Chaps. 9 & 12, 13-15, 17, 18, 21: _____
29: Spinoza, *Ethics (First Part)* (roughly 23 pages): _____
31: Spinoza, *Ethics (Second Part)* (through P29, roughly 16 pages): _____
- February 05: Spinoza, *Ethics (Second Part)* (remainder, roughly 10 pages): _____
07: Leibniz, *Discourse on Metaphysics* (through paragraph 23, roughly 18 pages)
: _____
12: Leibniz, *Discourse on Metaphysics* (remainder), *Theodicy* (entire excerpt)
: _____
14: Leibniz, *The Monadology* (entire excerpt): _____
19: Locke, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding* Books I-II (through Chapter 12, roughly 22 pages): _____
21: Locke, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding* Books II-III (roughly 25 pages)
: _____
26: Locke, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding* Book IV, *An Essay Concerning the True Original Extent and End of Civil Government* (roughly 16 pages)
: _____
28: Berkeley, *A Treatise Concerning the Principles of Human Knowledge* (through paragraph 37, roughly 18 pages): _____
- March **05-07: Spring Break**
12: Berkeley, *A Treatise Concerning the Principles of Human Knowledge* (through paragraph 108, roughly 18 pages): _____
14: Berkeley, *A Treatise Concerning the Principles of Human Knowledge* (remainder, roughly 12 pages): _____
19: Hume, *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding* pp. 352-380 (Sections I-V, roughly 27 pages): _____
21: Hume, *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding* pp. 380-404 (Sections VI-X, roughly 24 pages): _____
26: Hume, *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding* (remainder, roughly 27 pages)
: _____
28: Rousseau, *The Social Contract* Book One (entire excerpt, roughly 9 pages)
: _____
- April 02: Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason* pp. 509-525 (Intro through section IV, roughly 16 pages)
: _____
04: Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason* pp. 525-537 (remainder of *Critique* excerpt, roughly 12 pages)
: _____
09: Kant, *Foundations for the Metaphysics of Morals, Section III* and *On a Supposed Right to Lie from Altruistic Motives* pp. 643-656: _____
11: Hegel, (.pdf) pp. 43-58: _____
16: Hegel, (.pdf) pp. 61-79: _____
18: Easter Break
23: Hegel, (.pdf) pp. 79-96: _____
25: Wollstonecraft, (.pdf): _____
- May 26: **Final Paper Due by 2:00pm (hard copy and in my mailbox or under office door)**
02: **Final Exam—Thursday, 10:30am-1:00pm**