Philosophy 150.205 Spring 2015

History of Modern Philosophy

**Revised Syllabus**

This course offers an overview of philosophical thought in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, focusing on fundamental questions of epistemology, metaphysics, and theology. The principal philosophers to be discussed are Descartes, Locke, Hume and Kant, with somewhat less time devoted to Spinoza, Leibniz and Berkeley. This course should provide you with an understanding of the main philosophers of the period:their aims and methods, the problems they confronted, and the theories they advanced. You should also acquire a sense of the broader trajectory of early modern philosophical thought. Knowledge of early modern philosophy is essential preparation for more advanced philosophical studies and for understanding the intellectual history of the West.

Instructor: Michael Williams

Gilman 270. Office hours: W 1-3.

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Assistants: Matthew O’ Dowd

James Schelberg

Lectures: M, W 10–10.50: Levering, Arellano Theater

Section 0I: F, 11-11.50: Shaffer 202

Section 02: F, 12-12.50: Mattin Center 160

Section 03: F, 10-10.50: Maryland 202

Section 04: F, 1.30-2.30: Gilman 119

**Readings**: all in *Modern Philosophy* (2nd Edition) edited by Roger Ariew and Eric Watkins. Read the editors’ introductions for biographical information on the philosophers we will be discussing (and any of the associated texts, if the mood takes you).

Jan. 30 Introduction: making sense of a new world. No reading.

Feb. 01 Montaigne; Bacon; Galileo (4-24).

**Descartes** (*Meditations on First Philosophy*)

Feb. 06 Dedicatory Letter, Preface, Synopsis, First Meditation 1 (35-43).

08 Meditation 2 (43-47).

13 [Lecture cancelled due to illness]

15 Meditations 3-4 (47-58).

20 Meditation 5-6 (58-68).

**Spinoza** (from *Ethics*)

22 Part 1; Appendix (144-164).

24 Part II (164-187). **N.B NO SECTIONS THIS FRIDAY.**

**Leibniz** (*Discourse on Metaphysics; Monadology*)

27 Discourse, 1-21 (224-237).

Mar. 01 Discourse, 22-37 (237-247).

06 Monadology (275-283).

**Locke** (from An *Essay Concerning Human Understanding*)

08 Introduction; Bk. I. Ch. 1; Bk. II, Ch. 1-12 (316-342).

13 Bk. II, ch. 12-22 (197-206).

15 Bk. II, ch. 23-27; Bk. III (342-377).

**Spring Break**

27 Bk. III; Bk. IV (377-421).

**Berkeley** (*Three Dialogues Between Hylas and Philonous*)

29 Preface; First Dialogue (454-474).

Apr. 03 Second Dialogue (475-484).

05 Third Dialogue (484-503).

**Hume** (*An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding*)

10 Section I-IV (533-548).

12 Section V-IX (548-576).

17 Section X-XI (577-593).

19 Section XII (593-600).

**Kant** (*Prolegomena to Any Future Metaphysics*)

24 Preface; Sections 1-13 (661-679).

26 Sections 14-35 (679-690).

May 01 Sections 36-49 (690-700).

03 sections 50-60; Scholium (700-716).

Requirements

1. Attendance at lectures and discussion sections. N.B. Attendance at section is **mandatory**. Participation in discussion may affect your grade.

2. Three short papers (4-5 pp). Papers must be submitted electronically to you TA by 9 AM on the due date.

First Paper: assigned Feb. 22; due Mar. 1. **N.B. Revised dates.**

Second Paper: assigned March 29; due April 06.

Third Paper: assigned April 24; dueMay 02.

3. Final Exam.

The date and time of the Final will be announced as soon as they are set by the Registrar’s office. Do not make plans to leave before knowing when the Final is to be held. There will be no early exams and without the Final you will not receive a grade for the course.

In determining your final grade, the papers will count for approximately 20% each and the final examination for approximately 30%. Class attendance and participation can count for up to 10%. Since this is an introductory course, dealing with material that will new to many of you, your final grade may be adjusted to reflect improvement over the course of the semester.