

PHIL 202  
MW 2:30 B 4:10 PM (02A1)  
Humanities Hall Conference Room

Professor Jessica Wahman  
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Office Hours: MW 1:30- 2; TTH 2 – 3  
(other times by appointment)

## **Renaissance and Modern Philosophy**

This course will focus on themes related to knowledge, reality, and the mind during the 17th and 18th centuries. We will begin by identifying some scientific contributions of the Renaissance period to modern thought and then focus on how a changing worldview helped to shape two competing theories of knowledge called rationalism and empiricism. Finally, we will examine Immanuel Kant's own "Copernican turn" as an attempt to reconcile these two competing positions. Throughout the semester, we will examine the ways in which modern philosophy developed coextensively with the Newtonian scientific age and also reflect on the extent to which these theories affect our thinking about reality, knowledge, and the mind today.

### ***Required Texts***

*Modern Philosophy: an Anthology of Primary Sources*, edited by Roger Ariew and Eric Watkins—Hackett Publishing  
Galileo, excerpt from *Dialogue Concerning the Two Chief World Systems*  
Spinoza, excerpt from Parts III and IV of the *Ethics*  
Leibniz, excerpt from the *New Essays*  
Kant, excerpt from the *Critique of Pure Reason*

The textbook is available at the bookstore. The remaining readings are available on Blackboard.

You are required to bring these readings to class on the days they are assigned. This means you may need to print out the Blackboard material, especially as some is difficult to read on the computer. Please factor print costs into your budget for course materials.

### ***Assignments and Grading Policy***

#### **Written Assignments**

This course is designated a Performance with Writing course, which means there will be a great deal of practice in the written expression of ideas as well as opportunities and expectations for revision of written work.

I. *Analytical Exposition Paper*—Every class meeting a written analysis is due on the assigned reading for that day, to be e-mailed to me ten minutes before the beginning of class (in the body of the e-mail, **not** as an attachment). I will provide a handout explaining the assignment, my expectations for its completion, and the grading policy and practice.

II. *Essays*—There will be three short (approx. 3 pp) essays in which you have the opportunity to revise and develop some of your earlier paper material. I will provide prompts/suggestions, but you may pick your own topic instead. These essays must be turned in electronically as a .doc or .docx file in an ***e-mail attachment*** on the day and time assigned (see reading/assignment schedule).

All graded analytical papers and all essays must be completed and submitted on time in order to pass the course.

### **Peer-review and Class Participation**

Discussion is an essential part of the practice of doing philosophy, and reviewing written work (one's own and that of others) is an important way to develop your own skill as a writer. Therefore, there are two ways in which you will be expected to participate throughout the semester: 1) during class, through question-and-answer and more open-ended inquiry regarding the significance of the textual material; and 2) as a peer-reviewer of another student's work (see handout).

I realize that some of you are more comfortable talking in class than are others, and so a diligent student who gives substantive, constructive, and regular written feedback on papers but is otherwise quiet in class will earn a "B" in class participation. However, part of doing philosophy is discussing and examining ideas together so that we may (kindly and respectfully!) divulge any weaknesses and (thoughtfully and articulately!) develop shared understanding. Therefore, excellent participation requires classroom interaction with both me and your peers. In addition, as critique and shared understanding are the goals of class discussion, excellence in participation is not reflected by the **quantity** of one's contributions but by their **quality**. Attentive listening with occasional well thought-out comments is preferable to frequent but off-the-cuff reactions.

### **Grading Policy**

Honor Code: All work in this course comes under the regulations of Oxford College's Honor Code. Your signature on your work attests to your upholding of the Honor Code. Please read the information on plagiarism on the Library web page and always ask me if you have any questions about assignments. Please also note that none of your writing assignments are intended to be research projects, so there should be no need for you to quote outside sources in any of your work. Of course, if you find it absolutely necessary to do so, you must cite your work or be in violation of the Honor Code.

The general percentages that I will consider when determining your grade are as follows:

Analytical Exposition Papers:	40%
Essays (15% each):	45%
Class participation:	15%

Please note that these percentages should be considered a guideline for understanding the relative weight of each area of your involvement. When assigning grades I will take into consideration—in addition to these quantitative percentages—such qualitative factors as disintegration of effort or noted improvement.

## ***Classroom Policies***

**Attendance:** Your attendance is required at all class meetings. Any unexcused absences will result in a “0” grade on overall class participation, even if you were active in discussion on the days you were present. Philosophical inquiry is a communal enterprise; the purpose of this policy is to ensure the continuity of our community. Absences will be excused only in the case of a serious illness, dire emergency, or observation of a recognized religious holiday (please notify me in advance of this required absence). Examples of events that do NOT constitute serious illnesses or dire emergencies are: fatigue, head colds, hay fever or other non life-threatening allergies, oversleeping/alarm clock failure, travel plans for early holiday getaway, studying for tests/catching up on work for other courses, or leveling up on World of Warcraft.

**Lateness policy:** You are expected to come to class on time, as am I. No more than two latenesses are considered appropriate. More than two latenesses will compromise your participation grade.

**Cell phones and personal computers:** The use of cell phones is prohibited in class. If you want to take notes on a laptop or tablet, that is fine, but you will be expected to disconnect your wi-fi connection during class time, as personal web surfing, emailing, tweeting, Facebook posting, etc., is both academically and socially unacceptable in a learning community. **NOTE:** Modern philosophy is not very funny. Therefore, if you are looking at your computer and smiling, this indicates to me that you may have ignored this expectation and are reading your e-mail or involved in some form of social media. Expect to be called on it, or better yet, just don’t do it.

Welcome! I look forward to working with you and to our collective engagement with these often arcane, abstract, and technical but nonetheless provocative ideas.

## TENTATIVE READING/ASSIGNMENT SCHEDULE<sup>1</sup>

8/27	Introduction to the course: Challenging the tradition and the epistemological turn
9/01	Labor Day Holiday
9/03(All) <sup>2</sup>	* <b>Galileo</b> , excerpt from <i>Dialogue Concerning the Two Chief World Systems</i> ; <b>Bacon</b> , <i>New Organon</i> (pp. 16-20) ( <b>full period</b> ) <sup>3</sup>
9/08 (I)	<b>Descartes</b> , Letter, Preface, Synopsis, and Meditations 1 & 2 (pp. 35-47)
9/10 (II)	Meditation 2 (cont.) and 3 (pp. 43-54)
9/15 (I)	Meditations 4 and 5 (pp. 54-61)
9/17 (II)	Meditation 6 (pp. 61-68)
9/22 (I)	<b>Spinoza</b> , <i>Ethics</i> , Part I (pp. 144-164)
9/24 (II)	Part II, up to Proposition 29 (pp. 164-177)
9/29 (I)	Part II Proposition 29 to end (pp. 177-187)
10/01 (II)	*Part III: Preface and General Definition of Emotions; *Part IV: Preface; Part V (pp. 188-195)
10/06 (I)	<b>Locke</b> , <i>Essay Concerning Human Understanding</i> , Book I, Chs. 1& 2 (316-322); Book II, Chs. 1-10 (pp. 322-339)
10/08 (II)	Book II, Chs. 12 and 27 (pp. 340-342; 367-377)
10/13	Fall Break
<b>10/15</b>	<b>Essay on Descartes and/or Spinoza due by 5 PM</b>
10/20 (I)	Book IV, ch 1-4 (pp. 386-405)
10/22 (II)	<b>Leibniz</b> , <i>Discourse on Metaphysics</i> , Chs. 1-18 (pp. 224-235)
10/27 (All) <sup>2</sup>	Chs. 19-37 (pp. 235-247) ( <b>full period</b> )
10/29 (I)	<i>Monadology</i> (pp. 275-283)
11/03 (II)	Preface to the <i>New Essays</i> (pp. 422-426 <b>only!!</b> ); * <i>New Essays on Human Understanding (excerpt)</i>
11/05 (I)	<b>Hume</b> , <i>Enquiry</i> , Sections I-IV, part I (pp. 533-545)
11/10 (II)	Sections IV, part II and V (pp. 545-555)
11/12 (I)	Section VII (pp. 556-564)

**Friday, 11/14: Essay on Locke and/or Leibniz due by 5 PM**

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<sup>1</sup> An asterisk indicates a reading on Blackboard. All other readings are from the textbook.

<sup>2</sup> Peer feedback only

<sup>3</sup> Refers to days when we will use the full hour and 40 minute period

### **TENTATIVE READING/ASSIGNMENT SCHEDULE (Cont.)**

11/17 (II)	Section VIII (pp. 564-575); Section XII, Part III (pp. 598-600)
11/19 (I)	* <b>Kant</b> , <i>Critique of Pure Reason</i> , Preface and Introduction (pp. 717-729, also one page of Introduction on Blackboard)
11/24 (II)	Transcendental Aesthetic (pp. 729-737)
11/26 (I)	Thanksgiving Break
12/01 (II)	Logic and Metaphysical Deduction (pp. 737-742 top)
12/03 (I)	Transcendental Deduction (pp. 742-756)
12/08 (II)	Second Analogy & Refutation of Idealism (pp. 772-779 and 781-783)

**Essay on Hume and/or Kant is due by 12 noon, Thursday, December 11<sup>th</sup>.  
(There is no in-class final for this class.)**