

INSTRUCTOR: Colin McLearn
COURSE: PHIL 971
TIME: T 1:30–3:35 p.m.
LOCATION: OLDH 1007
OFFICE: 1003 Oldfather Hall

mclear@unl.edu
<http://colinmclear.net>
Department of Philosophy
OFFICE HOURS: T/R 4–5 p.m.

INTROSPECTION & SELF-KNOWLEDGE

Course Overview

The course will examine views concerning introspection and self-knowledge as they appear in the work of three central early modern figures: Descartes, Locke, and Kant. We will also look at how these views have been developed and modified in contemporary philosophy. Questions of interest include:

- What is self-knowledge?
- Is self-knowledge special? (e.g. is it especially epistemically secure?)
- How is self-knowledge gained? (e.g. via sensory means?)
- Does self-knowledge require consciousness?

Required Materials

You will need the following books for this course. All materials are available at the campus bookstore.

- Descartes, *The Philosophical Writings of Descartes*, vol. 2
- Locke, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*
- Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*

Other readings will be posted on the [course website](#) or found at:

- <http://www.earlymoderntexts.com>

Course Requirements

- **Preparation:** You are expected to attend every class meeting fully prepared to discuss each assigned reading, to submit written work punctually, and to offer thoughtful and constructive responses to the remarks of your instructor and your classmates. Make sure that you bring the relevant readings with you to every class. I further expect you to treat both the texts at hand and your classmates' ideas with openness and respect.

- **Attendance:** Attendance is required. Absences will not be excused except in documented cases. 1/2 a letter grade will be deducted from your final course grade for every unexcused absence after your fourth.
- **Website:** We will use a course website for all materials. The site is available at: <http://colinmclear.net/phil971>. Upcoming assignments and secondary readings will be posted there. Please let me know if you have any problems. Technical glitches, computer malfunctions and crashing hard drives are not excuses for failing to complete work in this class.
- **Format for Papers:** Please submit work either as a rich text (rtf) or Microsoft Word file. All work must be typed. I will not accept any handwritten work aside from that which we do in class. Your papers should be in 12-point Times New Roman font, double-spaced with margins set to one inch on all sides. Your name, my name, the date and assignment should appear in the top left hand corner of the first page. Your last name and page number must appear in the top right hand corner on each subsequent page. Please staple or paperclip hard copies of papers and drafts. You are responsible for the presentation of your papers.
- **Late Work:** Late papers and assignments will standardly be marked down by 1/3 of a letter grade for each day the work is late (for example, from A- to B+, from B+ to B, and so on). If you foresee a conflict between due dates for an assignment and other of your commitments, please come talk to me!

Evaluation

Research Paper: 65%

- In two drafts. Topics will be suggested.

Reading Responses: 20%

- Reading responses (typically no more than 500 words in length) are due by 9 p.m. on the Monday evening prior to class. Responses should primarily be focussed on asking questions relevant to the reading or class discussion.

Participation: 15%

- The participation grade is based on your overall engagement with the course, including attendance, classroom discussion, and individual meetings with me. Please note: the grade will take into account both the quality and quantity of your participation.

Policies

- **Academic Integrity:** All the work you turn in (including papers, drafts, and reading responses) must be written by you specifically for this course. Your work must originate with you in form and content with all contributory sources fully and specifically acknowledged. Make yourself familiar with UNL's Student Code of Conduct and Academic Integrity Code, available online at <http://stuafs.unl.edu/ja/code>. **In this course, the normal penalty for any violation of the code is an “F” for the semester.** Violations may have additional consequences including expulsion from the university. Don't plagiarize – it just isn't worth it.
- **University Policies:** This instructor respects and upholds University policies and regulations pertaining to the observation of religious holidays; assistance available to physically handicapped, visually and/or hearing impaired students; plagiarism; sexual harassment; and racial or ethnic discrimination. All students are advised to become familiar with the respective University regulations and are encouraged to bring any questions or concerns to the attention of the instructor.
- **ADA:** Students with disabilities are encouraged to contact the instructor for a confidential discussion of their individual needs for academic accommodation. It is the policy of the University of Nebraska—Lincoln to provide flexible and individualized accommodation to students with documented disabilities that may affect their ability to fully participate in course activities or to meet course requirements. To receive accommodation series, students must be registered with Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) office, 132 Canfield Administration, 472-3787 voice or TTY.
- **Misc.:** Please turn off cell phones, beeping watches, and other gadgets that make noise before entering our classroom. Absolutely no texting is permitted during class. I will subtract up to five points from your participation grade each and every time your phone rings or I see you texting during class.

Further Resources

- **Jargon:** It's important to be on top of the technical terms used by philosophers. Please ask for clarification of terms in class. You can also consult Jim Pryor's online “[Philosophical Terms and Methods](#).”
- **Writing a Philosophy paper:** Papers should adhere to some consistent practice of footnoting and citation (Chicago, MLA, etc.). I don't really mind which one you use as long as you are consistent. On writing a philosophy paper, there is no better on-line guide than [Jim Pryor's](#). Please consult it. Hacker's *A Writer's Reference* is also extremely helpful. Useful online references may be found at the [Purdue Online Writing Lab](#).

- **Help with writing:** The University of Nebraska-Lincoln Writing Center can provide you with meaningful support as you write for this class as well as for every course in which you enroll. Trained peer consultants are available to talk with you as you plan, draft, and revise your writing. Please check the Writing Center website at: <http://www.unl.edu/writing> for locations, hours, and information about scheduling appointments.
- **Reference:** The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (<http://plato.stanford.edu>) offers excellent background resources for all the major figures and topics that we will discuss in class.

Tentative Assignment Calendar

TUESDAY	
Jan 12th	Intro & Set-up of Issues
19th	Descartes – Acquaintance
26th	Descartes vs. Malebranche
Feb 2nd	Contemporary acquaintance theory
9th	Catch up
16th	Locke – Introspection as inner sense
23rd	Shoemaker against inner sense

TUESDAY	
Mar 1st	Shoemaker against inner sense, continued
8th	Leibniz on consciousness and apperception
15th	Kant on inner sense
22nd	No Class — Spring Break!
29th	No Class — Class on Monday afternoon (Kant on apperception)
Apr 5th	Contemporary mixed views – Boyle, Shoemaker, Burge
12th	Transformative vs. additive conceptions of self-knowledge
19th	Consciousness & self-knowledge: Byrne, Dretske
26th	Self-knowledge & perception: Roessler
May 3rd	Exam Week — No Class