

## Philosophy 301L: Early Modern Philosophy, Spring 2011

**Topic:** Five Figures in the History of Modern Philosophy: Descartes, Locke, Berkeley, Leibniz, and Kant.

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**Office hours for Proops:** By appointment only. (Procedure: send me an e-mail mentioning several times you can definitely make a meeting and I'll respond with a time I can make. Meeting by appointment avoids congestion in the office and should save both of us time.)

**Teaching assistant:** Brian Miller

**Office hours for Miller:** by appointment ([brian.miller@mail.utexas.edu](mailto:brian.miller@mail.utexas.edu))

### Course description

This course examines metaphysical and epistemological issues in early modern philosophy in a selection of major figures from Descartes to Kant. Topics include: the existence of God, scepticism, the existence of the external world, *a priori* knowledge, the nature of colour, the nature of the self, mind-body interaction, cause, possibility, substance, essence and free will. **Note that ethical questions will not feature in this course.** In addition to developing an understanding of these fundamental philosophical concepts and issues, students will learn how to read a historical text sympathetically yet critically.

### Texts

The sole required text for this course is the anthology: *Modern Philosophy*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, Roger Ariew and Eric Watkins, eds. This is an anthology of primary texts in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century philosophy. **This text will be available at the Co-op on Guadalupe. Unfortunately, earlier editions are NOT suitable for our needs.**

### Grading Policy

The final grade will be based on four components: (1) section attendance and participation (20%) (note: lecture participation and attendance will **not** be used to determine the grade); (2) two forty-five minute in-class tests (15% each); (3) one short paper (four pages, double-spaced, 12 point; (25%)); and (4) a longer paper (5 pages, double-spaced, 12 point; 25%). Note: plus and minus grades **will** be awarded.

## **Policy on Plagiarism**

Students found to have plagiarized will be referred to the relevant Dean, who will impose the appropriate sanctions. (Plagiarists should at the very least expect to fail the class). Note that, depending on the particulars of the case, sanctions may well include deeming the student to have failed the class, and possibly even the suspension of the student from the University. Further advice on what constitutes plagiarism and how to avoid it will be given at the time of the first assignment.

## **Policy on late papers**

Papers submitted late without a reasonable excuse (e.g., serious illness, documented with a doctor's note), will be docked one third of a grade for each part-day they are late. So a paper submitted more than 48 hours late but less than 72 hours late will be docked a whole grade; one more than 24 hours late but less than 48 hours late will be docked 2/3 of a grade (so, e.g., from B+ to B-). Papers submitted more than 72 hours late without a reasonable excuse will receive no credit.

## **Extra credit**

There will be no extra credit assignments in this class.

## **Students with disabilities**

Students with disabilities may request appropriate academic accommodations from the Division of Diversity and Community Engagement, Services for Students with Disabilities, 471-6259.

## **About the in-class writing exercises**

The exercises will take 45 minutes. You will have to answer **three** of the six questions, which three being revealed by only at the start of the exercise. **So to be safe you will need to prepare answers to all six questions.** For each question you should aim to prepare an answer that will cover roughly 2.5-3 sides of a blue book double-spaced (i.e., writing on every other line). **You must bring your own blue book (or green book) to section. The exercise is closed-book (and closed notes). No computers are allowed; so you will have to write by hand** (unless you have a note saying otherwise from the Office for Services for Students with Disabilities or from your doctor). From the time the exercise is distributed (roughly a week ahead) students will be under exam conditions and shouldn't ask the TA or me for the answers!

**Please be sure to notify me at the \*beginning\* of the course if you will need any special accommodations.**

## Syllabus

You should be sure to have read the readings for a given lecture before that lecture.

Note: The quantity of reading assigned sometimes varies from lecture to lecture and on some days, when less reading is assigned, students will be expected to read ahead. The syllabus is subject to change and supplementation. All page references are to the 2<sup>nd</sup> edition of *Modern Philosophy*.

### I. Descartes and his Critics

Tu. Jan. 18. No reading. a) Aims of the course. b) Descartes' life, writings and project.

Th. Jan. 20. Letter of Dedication, Synopsis, 1<sup>st</sup> Meditation, pp. 35-43 (omit the "Preface to the Reader", which we read later), reply to Hobbes in 3<sup>rd</sup> set of objections (just one paragraph on p. 76). Kurt Smith, "Descartes' Life and Works," in *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/descartes-works/>

Tu. Jan. 25. 2<sup>nd</sup> Meditation, pp. 43-47 and selections from the *Discourse on the Method*, pp. 25-34; 3<sup>rd</sup> Objections, objection II and reply, pp. 76-79

Th. Jan. 27. 3<sup>rd</sup> Meditation, pp. 47-54; 3<sup>rd</sup> set of objections: objection V and reply, pp. 79-80; objections IX and X and replies, pp. 81-82; 4<sup>th</sup> objection and replies, pp. 83-92.

Tu. Feb. 1. 4<sup>th</sup> Meditation, pp. 54-58, the whole of the reply to the 2<sup>nd</sup> set of objections, pp. 69-75.

Th. Feb. 3. 5<sup>th</sup> Meditation, pp. 58-61; 3<sup>rd</sup> set of objections: Objection X and reply pp. 81-82. Lawrence Nolan, "Descartes' Ontological Argument," in *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/descartes-ontological/>

Tu. Feb. 8. 6<sup>th</sup> Meditation, pp. 61-68. Preface to the Reader, pp. 37-38. **FIRST PAPER ASSIGNED**

### II. Leibniz

Th. Feb. 10. Biographical sketch. *Discourse on Metaphysics*, §§ 1-13, pp. 224-232; Letter to Arnauld, pp. 248-254.

Tu. Feb. 15. *Discourse on Metaphysics*, §§ 15-26, pp. 232-240.

Th. Feb. 17. *Discourse on Metaphysics*, §§ 28-37, pp. 240-247.

Tu. Feb. 22. *Primary Truths*, pp. 265-268.

Th. Feb. 24. *A New System of Nature and Communication of Substances, and of the Union of Soul and Body*, 269-274.

Tu. Mar. 1. *The Principles of Philosophy, or the Monadology*, 275-283. **FIRST PAPER DUE (IN CLASS)**

### **III. Locke**

Th. Mar. 3. Biographical sketch, Ideas in general. Criticism of Innate Ideas, Criticism of Descartes' view that the essence of the mind is to think, pp. 316-328.

Tu. Mar. 8. Primary and Secondary Qualities, pp. 328-337 (finish just before ch. IX "Of Perception"); Robert Boyle: "Of the excellency and grounds of the corpuscular or mechanical philosophy," 308-315.

Th. Mar. 10. Our Idea of Substance, ch XXIII, "Of our complex ideas of substances," pp. 359-367. **FIRST IN-CLASS WRITING EXERCISE QUESTIONS ASSIGNED**

Tu. Mar. 15. NO CLASS: SPRING BREAK

Th. Mar. 17. NO CLASS: SPRING BREAK

Tu. Mar. 22. Real and Nominal Essence, pp. 377-386; Leibniz, *New Essays*, Preface, 422-433. **[YOU ARE ADVISED TO START THE READING ON BERKELEY FOR TUE MAR. 29]**

### **IV. Berkeley**

Th. Mar. 24. **FIRST IN-CLASS WRITING EXERCISE HELD IN CLASS**

Tu. Mar. 29, Biographical sketch: *Three Dialogues*, The First Dialogue, (excerpt): pp. 454-464. Lisa Downing, "George Berkeley" in the *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, "<http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/berkeley/>(This article should be read throughout the Berkeley unit) *A Treatise Concerning the Principles of Human Knowledge*. **[NOTE THE READING FOR THIS WEEK IS CONSIDERABLY LONGER, THOUGH LESS DENSE, THAN THAT FOR PREVIOUS WEEKS.]**

Th. Mar. 31, *Three Dialogues*, The Second Dialogue, pp. 475-485.

Tu. April 5, *Three Dialogues* The Third Dialogue: common sense defended, pp. 484-503. **SECOND PAPER ASSIGNED**

### **V. Kant**

Th. April 7. Biographical sketch; Kant's critical project, "Preface," pp. 717-724

Tu. April 12, A priori and a posteriori judgments, “Introduction,” pp. 724-729.

Th. April 14, Analytic and synthetic judgments (re-read texts assigned for April 12)

Tu. April 19. Our representations of Space (and Time) as a priori intuitions, “Transcendental Aesthetic,” pp. 729-737 (the reading ends just before the “Transcendental Doctrine of Elements”)

Th. April 21. Substance: The First Analogy, pp. 678-772.

Tu. April 26, The Transcendental Ideas. Transcendental Illusion; The First Paralogism, pp. 783-788 (begin at “Transcendental Logic” Division II”). **SECOND PAPER DUE; QUESTIONS FOR SECOND IN-CLASS WRITING ASSIGNMENT ASSIGNED**

Th. April 28, The first two Antinomies, pp. 788-797 & pp. 801-804.

Tu. May 3, Kant’s Criticisms of the Ontological Argument, pp. 819-823.

Th. May 5, **SECOND IN-CLASS WRITING ASSIGNMENT HELD IN CLASS**