

## Philosophy 610QB: Problems of Knowledge and Valuation: Spring 2010

Topic: *History of Modern Philosophy: From Descartes to Kant (but skipping Spinoza and Hume)*

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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 assistants: Kate Ritchie: [k.c.ritchie@mail.utexas.edu](mailto:k.c.ritchie@mail.utexas.edu)

Office hours for Ritchie: by appointment only.

### Course description

This course examines metaphysical and epistemological issues in early modern philosophy from Descartes to Kant. Topics include: the existence of God, scepticism, the existence of the external world, *a priori* knowledge, the nature of colour and other apparently subjective properties, the nature of the self, mind-body interaction, cause, causal inference, 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 an historical text sympathetically yet critically.

### Texts

The sole required text for this course is: *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) a forty-five minute in-class test (25%); (3) one short paper (five pages, double-spaced, 12 point; 25%); and (4) a longer paper (seven pages, double-spaced, 12 point; 30%). Note: plus and minus grades **will** be awarded. The submission of

both papers and the sitting of the final in-class writing exercise are necessary conditions for receiving a non-“F” grade.

### **Policy on Plagiarism**

Students found to have plagiarized will be referred to the relevant Dean, who will impose the appropriate sanctions. 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 exercise**

The exercise will take 45 minutes and will take place in the final meeting of the class (i.e., in the lecture **not** in the section on Tuesday, May 6). You will have to answer **three** of the six questions, which three being revealed by your section-leader 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 pages 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.** The exercise is worth 25% of the final grade. 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. 19. No reading. a) Aims of the course. b) Descartes' life, writings and project.

Th. Jan. 21. Letter of Dedication, Synopsis, 1<sup>st</sup> Meditation, pp. 35-43, reply to Hobbes in 3<sup>rd</sup> set of objections (just one paragraph on p. 76).

Tu. Jan. 26. 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. 28. 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. 2. 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. 4. 5<sup>th</sup> Meditation, pp. 58-61; 3<sup>rd</sup> set of objections: Objection X and reply pp. 81-82.

Tu. Feb. 9. 6<sup>th</sup> Meditation, pp. 61-68. **FIRST PAPER ASSIGNED**

### II. Leibniz

Th. Feb. 11. Biographical sketch. *Discourse on Metaphysics*, §§ 1-13, pp. 224-232; Letter to Arnaud, pp. 248-254.

Tu. Feb. 16. *Discourse on Metaphysics*, §§ 15-26, pp. 232-240,

Th. Feb. 18. *Discourse on Metaphysics*, §§ 28-37, pp. 240-247

Tu. Feb. 23. *Primary Truths*, pp. 265-268.

Th. Feb. 25. *A New System of Nature and Communication of Substances, and of the Union of Soul and Body*, 269-274. **FIRST PAPER DUE**

Tu. Mar. 2. *The Principles of Philosophy, or the Monadology*, 275-283.

### **III. Locke**

Th. Mar. 4. 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. 9. 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 11. Our Idea of Substance, ch XXIII, "Of our complex ideas of substances," pp. 359-367, Leibniz, *New Essays*, Preface, 422-423.

Tu. Mar. 16. NO CLASS: SPRING BREAK

Th. Mar. 18. NO CLASS: SPRING BREAK

Tu. Mar 23. Real and Nominal Essence, pp. 377-386

### **IV Berkeley**

Th. Mar 25. Biographical sketch: *Three Dialogues*, The First Dialogue, 454-474 [NOTE THE READING FOR THIS WEEK IS CONSIDERABLY LONGER, THOUGH LESS DENSE, THAN THAT FOR PREVIOUS WEEKS]

Tu. Mar. 30, *Three Dialogues*, The Second Dialogue, pp. 475-485.

Th. April 1, *Three Dialogues* The Third Dialogue: common sense defended, pp. 484-503.

### **VI Kant**

Th. April 8, Biographical sketch; Kant's critical project, "Preface," pp. 717-724

Tu. April 13. Analytic and synthetic judgments; a priori and a posteriori judgments, "Introduction," pp. 724-729.

Th. April 15, 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") **SECOND PAPER ASSIGNED**

Tu. April 20, Substance: The First Analogy, pp. 678-772.

Th. April 22. Cause: The Second Analogy, pp. 772-779.

Tu. April 27. The Transcendental Ideas. Transcendental Illusion; The first Paralogism, pp. 783-788 (begin at “Transcendental Logic” Division II”) . **SECOND PAPER DUE; IN-CLASS WRITING ASSIGNMENT ASSIGNED**

Th. April 29, The first two Antinomies, pp. 788-797 & pp. 801-804.

Tu. May 4, Kant’s Criticisms of the Ontological Argument, pp. 819-823.

Th. May 6, **IN-CLASS WRITING ASSIGNMENT**