

PHILOSOPHY 111: HISTORY OF PHILOSOPHY—EARLY MODERN
Winter 2012

Professor: Samuel C. Rickless
Office: HSS 8009
Office Hours: Fridays 10am-12pm
Office Phone: 858-822-4910
E-mail: srickless@ucsd.edu

Course Description

This course focuses on the development of Early Modern metaphysics and epistemology through the works of René Descartes (1596-1650), Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz (1646-1716), John Locke (1632-1704), George Berkeley (1685-1753), and David Hume (1711-1776). The Early Modern period is governed by gradual evolution away from the doctrines of Aristotle (384-322 BCE), as incorporated into the Catholic theological framework articulated by his prominent medieval supporters, most notably Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274), and towards a new way of looking at the world that is sympathetic to the emerging sciences conducted within the research program of corpuscularian mechanism. It is common to think of the main figures of this period as divided into two camps: rationalists (Descartes and Leibniz), for whom some ideas are innate and reason can penetrate into the fundamental truths about the nature of the universe, and empiricists (Locke, Berkeley, and Hume), for whom there are no innate ideas and all knowledge of non-self-evident truths is founded on sense experience. But the interplay between these five philosophers reveals a far more complex story, one in which the rationalist/empiricist division is only one of many. We will see, for example, that Leibniz is sympathetic to Aristotle in ways that Descartes is not, that the main thesis of Locke's empiricism derives from Aristotle, that Berkeley's view of the natural world is arguably more similar to Leibniz's than it is to anyone else's, and that all figures other than Hume are sufficiently rationalist to believe that unaided reason is capable of providing us with knowledge of the existence of God. Understanding the evolution of metaphysics and epistemology in the Early Modern period is one of the keys to understanding the views of Immanuel Kant (1724-1804).

[**Prerequisites:** Departmental Stamp, course designed for philosophy majors.]

Course Texts

M: Descartes. *Meditations of First Philosophy*.

PE: Leibniz. *Philosophical Essays*.

EHU: Locke. *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*.

P3D: Berkeley. *Principles of Human Knowledge and Three Dialogues*.

1E: Hume. *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding*.

All these texts are required and may be purchased at the UCSD Bookstore. Please bring the relevant texts to lecture. Please use and quote from the assigned translations and editions and no others.

Course Schedule

January 9: Introduction: Aristotelianism

January 11: Descartes (The Method of Doubt)

Reading: Dedicatory Letter to the Sorbonne, Preface, Synopsis, First Meditation (**M**, pp. 3-15), Objections & Replies (**M**, pp. 63-67).

January 13: Descartes (The Cogito and the Nature of Mind)

Reading: Second Meditation (**M**, pp. 16-23), Objections and Replies (**M**, pp. 68-77)

January 16: **Martin Luther King Jr. Day – NO LECTURE**

January 18: Descartes (Two Arguments for the Existence of God)

Reading: Third Meditation (**M**, pp. 24-36), Objections and Replies (**M**, pp. 78-89)

January 20: Descartes (God's Veracity and the Source of Error)

Reading: Fourth Meditation (**M**, pp. 37-43), Objections and Replies (**M**, pp. 90-94)

January 23: Descartes (The Nature of Body, the Ontological Argument, and the Circle)

Reading: Fifth Meditation (**M**, pp. 44-49), Objections and Replies (**M**, pp. 95-106)

January 25: Descartes (Real Distinction and the Argument for the Existence of Bodies)

Reading: Sixth Meditation (**M**, pp. 50-62), Objections and Replies (**M**, pp. 107-115)

January 27: Descartes (Problems with Interactionism)

Reading: Correspondence with Princess Elisabeth (pp. 61-73) – Handout

January 30: Leibniz (First Principles)

Reading: **PE**, Discourse on Metaphysics (pp. 35-68), On the Ultimate Origination of Things (pp. 149-155)

FIRST PAPER DUE

February 1: Leibniz (Pre-established Harmony)

Reading: **PE**, A New System of Nature (pp. 138-145), Postscript of a Letter to Basnage de Beauval (pp. 147-149)

February 3: Leibniz (Idealism)

Reading: **PE**, Letters to Arnauld (pp. 77-90), Note on Foucher's Objection (pp. 145-147), Monadology (pp. 213-225)

February 22: Locke (Personal Identity)

Reading: **EHU**: Book II, Chapter 27 (pp. 328-348)

February 24: Locke (Knowledge)

Reading: **EHU**: Book IV, Chapters 1-4 (pp. 525-573)
Book IV, Chapters 9-11 (pp. 618-639)
Book IV, Chapter 15 (pp. 654-657)
Book IV, Chapter 16, Sections 1-9 (pp. 657-663)

February 27: Berkeley (Why Qualities are Ideas)

Reading: **P3D**, Preface (pp. 117-119) and First Dialogue (pp. 121-156)
SECOND PAPER DUE

February 29: Berkeley (The Argument for Idealism and the Master Argument)

Reading: **P3D**, First Dialogue (pp. 121-156)
P3D, Introduction to the Principles (pp. 37-51) and Principles,
Sections 1-33 (pp. 53-64)

March 2: Berkeley (Replies to Objections)

Reading: **P3D**, Third Dialogue (pp. 175-208)
P3D, Principles, Sections 34-84 (pp. 64-84)

March 5: Hume (Impressions and Ideas)

Reading: **1E**, Sections 1-3 (pp. 2-15)

March 7: Hume (The Problem of Induction)

Reading: **1E**, Sections 4-5 (pp. 16-37)

March 9: Hume (The Idea of Necessary Connection)

Reading: **1E**, Section 7 (pp. 40-54)

March 12: Hume (Personal Identity and Immaterial Substance)

Reading: Treatise of Human Nature, Book I, Chapter 4, Sections 5-6 and
Appendix—Handout

March 14: Hume (Skepticism)

Reading: **1E**, Section 12 (pp. 108-121)

March 16: Conclusion

March 23: **THIRD PAPER DUE** (before 2:30pm in my dept mailbox, HSS 7th Floor)

Course Requirements

- * One medium paper (approx. 2000 words): 25% due January 30
- * One medium paper (approx. 2000 words): 25% due February 27
- * One take-home final paper (approx. 3000 words): 50% due March 23

Regular attendance and doing the required reading ahead of lectures are absolutely critical. Your understanding of the material will be greatly enhanced by attending lectures, and your understanding of the lectures will be greatly enhanced by reading the material.

Paper extensions will only be given to those who present evidence indicative of a valid excuse in a timely manner. [Note that computer or printer failure does **not** usually constitute a valid excuse, so be sure to take all necessary precautions to safeguard your coursework.] If at any time you believe you have a legitimate claim to an extension either at that time or later in the quarter, bring it to my attention as soon as possible (e.g., if you are going to be out of town for a legitimate purpose, such as a university-sponsored concert performance, athletic event, conference, or the equivalent). Unexcused late papers will receive a grade of **F**.

Additional Notes

- * If accommodations are needed for a disability or for religious reasons, please discuss the matter with me as soon as possible.
- * The academic honor code must be observed in this course. Any student who cheats or plagiarizes (even a little bit) will receive an automatic **F** for the course and will be referred to the Academic Integrity Coordinator for disciplinary proceedings that may lead to suspension or expulsion.
- * The policies stated above are subject to change.