

## **PHH 3400 - Modern Philosophy**

Class meets TR 10:00-11:15

Bldg 74, Room 104

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Office Hours: Mondays, 11-2, and by  
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Page:

<http://www.uwf.edu/sallyf/welcome.htm>

### **COURSE OVERVIEW**

During the 17th and 18th centuries, spurred on by changes and rapid developments in the natural sciences, Western philosophy underwent a period of growth that shaped the way we in the 21<sup>st</sup> century approach central philosophical issues. In this course we will trace the development of the philosophy of this so-called "modern" period through seven of its major figures:

Descartes, Spinoza, Leibniz, Locke, Berkeley, Hume, and Kant. In general, we will focus on issues in two main areas of philosophy that were of special interest to these figures: 1) Metaphysics, or the study of what there is, what exists, and the fundamental categories of reality, and 2) Epistemology, or the study of what and how it is possible to know. Tradition has grouped the first three of our historical figures (Descartes, Spinoza, and Leibniz) together under the name "Rationalists". The second three (Locke, Berkeley and Hume) are grouped together under the name "Empiricists". Kant is usually treated as a category unto himself, as he considered himself to have "transcended" both categories. This traditional division is useful and we will follow it, pointing out recurrent themes that appear in Rationalist and Empiricist thinking. We will be careful to note as we progress, however, that in some

ways this traditional division is too simple, overly restrictive, and that considerable comparisons can be made between figures from disparate groups.

**Student Learning Outcomes** - After completion of this course, students will be able to:

1. Describe the important issues in early modern philosophy
2. Outline the history of the development of those issues
3. Analyze the arguments given by various authors for their claims
4. Evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of those authors' claims

**Topics Covered:** Rationalism and Empiricism, Knowledge and Sensation, Substance, Arguments for the Existence of

God, and God's Nature, Free Will and Determinism.

## **GRADING POLICY**

The grade in this course will be determined on the basis of exams and attendance/class participation. There will be three exams: two in-class midterms and one take-home final, each worth 30% of the overall grade. The remaining 10% of the grade will be determined on the basis of class attendance and participation. The in-class examinations must be written in "blue books" -- examination booklets that are available at the UWF bookstore, and other college bookstores. Students are responsible for bringing their own blue books to the exams.

Students should retain all of their written work for the course until after they have received their final grade.

Students with a documented disability who require specific examination or course related academic accommodations should contact the Student Disability Resource Center (SDRC) by email at [sdrc@uwf.edu](mailto:sdrc@uwf.edu) or by phone at (850) 474-2387.

### **ATTENDANCE, MAKE-UPS, ETC.**

I expect each of you to have done the reading in advance of class, and to be prepared to contribute to the discussion of the material. The reading assignments for this class are typically not particularly lengthy, however, they require close attention. My best advice is to read each assignment over in advance of class, grapple with it as best you can, and then read it a second time, more carefully, after lecture. This will give you the best overall understanding and retention of the material. There is no excuse for not doing the reading on a regular basis, and your performance in

the class will only suffer if you neglect the assigned reading. In class we will be discussing the issues raised in the reading, and expanding on them. Attendance is mandatory and will be taken. Chronic tardiness is rude and inconsiderate to your instructor and to other members of the class. I try not to be late to class – you must do so as well. If you have a scheduling conflict, please speak to me as soon as possible. In the event class should need to be cancelled, I will make every effort to inform you by email – please make sure that your UWF email account is active, and that you check it regularly for messages from your instructor(s). (Note that you can set up a forwarding link so that your UWF email is forwarded to another account, such as AOL, Yahoo, etc. Check online in your Argonet account information for details.)

Make-up exams will only be allowed in cases of legitimate need, and authentication

of excuse will be required (e.g., doctor's note.) Arrangements should be made in advance except in cases of emergency, and as soon as possible in the case of emergency. You will find that I am much more understanding of your problems if you attempt to make arrangements with me in advance, rather than waiting until after the fact.

Plagiarism is an extremely serious issue to me. It strikes at the very heart of the intellectual enterprise in which we are mutually engaged, and undermines all of our collective efforts. As the UWF Honor Code states: "As Argonauts we act with integrity. We do not lie, cheat, steal or tolerate those who do." I take all suspected cases of plagiarism seriously, and, if proven, will punish them to the extent that the University of West Florida policies allow, which include failure for the assignment, failure for the course, and recommendation of further

action by university administration. Briefly, plagiarism is the failure to accurately and openly provide citations for the ideas and words used in your written assignments. This includes lifting quotations without credit from books, magazines, newspapers or other printed material as well as “borrowing” from the Internet. It also includes misuse of ideas - presenting ideas as your own when they have in fact been derived from another source.

The University’s plagiarism policy can be found in PDF format at *[uwf.edu/studentaffairs/division/publications/plagbroch.pdf](http://uwf.edu/studentaffairs/division/publications/plagbroch.pdf)*. The UWF Library has a good online tutorial to help students learn the best practices to avoid plagiarism at *<http://library.uwf.edu/Research/OnlineTutorials/Plagiarism/>*.

## **CAPSTONE COURSE INFORMATION**

All Philosophy Majors must complete a “Capstone Course” project before graduation. If this course is to be designated as your Capstone Course, please speak with the instructor as soon as possible. No designations for Capstone Course status will be accepted after the third week of class.

*Please* review the information on the Capstone Project at

<http://uwf.edu/philosophy/capstoneproject/>.

There is some good information about the department’s expectations and your options.

## **REQUIRED TEXT**

**The Longman Standard History of Modern Philosophy (Paperback)** by Daniel Kolak, Garrett Thomson. Longman, 2006.

[http://www.amazon.com/Longman-Standard-History-Modern-Philosophy/dp/0321235126/ref=sr\\_1\\_1?ie=UTF8&s=books&qid=1198166070&sr=8-1](http://www.amazon.com/Longman-Standard-History-Modern-Philosophy/dp/0321235126/ref=sr_1_1?ie=UTF8&s=books&qid=1198166070&sr=8-1)

**CLASS SCHEDULE** with Proposed Reading Schedule. (Subject to revision. Students are responsible for keeping track of any and all changes announced in class or via group email.)

*Part one: The Rationalists*

Jan. 6: Introduction

Jan. 11-27: Readings from Descartes. Read all of *Meditations on First Philosophy*. Students may wish to supplement with other readings from DesCartes, esp. *Discourse on the Method* and *Rules for the Direction of the Mind*.

Feb. 1 - 8: Readings from Spinoza. Read Part One of *Ethics*. Those with an interest in

Philosophy of Mind may wish to supplement with Ethics, Part Two. Those with an interest in Philosophy of Religion, Religious Studies or Political Philosophy may wish to supplement with *Theological-Political Treatise*.

Feb. 10: Review for first in-class midterm.

**Feb. 15: First in-class midterm. Covers Descartes and Spinoza. Don't forget to bring your blue book(s)!**

Feb. 17 - 24: Readings from Leibniz. Read all of *The Monadology*. Students may wish to supplement with *New Essays on Human Understanding* (Leibniz' commentary on Locke's *Essay Concerning Human Understanding*.) Those with an interest in Religious Studies and Philosophy of Religion may wish to supplement with readings from *Theodicy*, *Essays on the Goodness of God, the Freedom of Man, and the Origin of Evil*.

*Part two: The Empiricists*

Mar.1 – Mar. 10: Readings from Locke. Read all of the selections from Locke's *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*. Focus especially on Book I, chapters 1 and 2; Book 2, chapters 1,2,8,11-13,22-23; Book 3, chapters 1-3 and 6; Book 4, chapters 1-4, 9 and 11. Students may wish to supplement by reading more of the *Essay*, and/or by reading some or all of Leibniz' *New Essays on Human Understanding*.

Mar. 14 -18 NO CLASSES. SPRING BREAK. ☺

Mar. 22: Review for 2<sup>nd</sup> in-class exam.

**Mar. 24 : Second in-class midterm. Covers Leibniz and Locke. Don't forget to bring your blue book(s)!**

Mar.29 - Apr. 5: Readings from Hume. Read all of *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding*. Students would do well to supplement with readings from Hume's *Treatise of Human Nature*, of which the *Enquiry* is but a summary. Those with an

interest in Ethics may wish to supplement with the last section of the *Treatise of Human Nature* titled “Of Morals”. Those with an interest in Aesthetics may wish to supplement with readings from “*Of the Standard of Taste*” and “*Of Tragedy,*” as well as

*Part three: Kant*

Apr.7-14: Readings from Kant, TBA. Students may wish to supplement with anything other than more Kant, but they should probably read some more *The Critique of Pure Reason* anyway. Of course those interested in Ethics should supplement with readings from *The Critique of Practical Reason*. Those with an interest in aesthetics may wish to supplement with readings from *The Critique of Judgment*. Take-home final to be distributed on Thurs. April 14<sup>th</sup>.

Apr. 19 & 21: Dead Week. No class meetings. Class Meetings will be substituted with study days. Your instructor will be

available (In office hours and at other times via email) to assist with your final papers.

**TAKE HOME FINAL EXAMS DUE THURSDAY, APRIL 28<sup>th</sup> BY 11 AM.**