

**Modern Philosophy (PHIL 245)  
Fall 2007**

**Tuesdays and Thursdays 2:20–3:30  
Memorial Hall 301**

**Instructor: Catherine Sutton  
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Wednesdays, 2:15–4:15  
& gladly by appointment**

**Course Description**

This course focuses on (mostly) seventeenth- and eighteenth-century philosophy, including the work of Descartes, Locke, Leibniz, Hobbes, Hume, Kant, and Mill. We will study works on the source of knowledge, the nature of the human mind, free will, principles of identity, theories of ethics, and the source and authority of the moral law.

**Course Goals**

- Students will be able to articulate René Descartes' role in shaping modern philosophy and the debates in philosophy of mind and epistemology.
- Students will learn how to study historical texts and how to compose an annotated bibliography.
- Students will bolster their skills in thinking and writing about philosophical questions.
- Students will discuss and evaluate the moral debates of the modern era (1600s to late 1800s).

**Required Texts**

*Modern Philosophy: An Anthology of Primary Sources*, edited by Roger Ariew and Eric Watkins (abbr. A&W in reading assignments)

*Moral Philosophy from Montaigne to Kant*, edited by J. B. Schneewind (abbr. JBS in reading assignments)

## Recommended Resources

*The Cambridge Dictionary of Philosophy*, at Reeves Library, Reference Main Level, B41 .C35 1999

This is more of an encyclopedia than a dictionary. It has excellent, concise overviews of the philosophers that we will be studying.

*Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, <http://plato.stanford.edu/>

This source is more in-depth than the *Cambridge Dictionary*. It is written by top philosophy professors, and it is a reputable and reliable online source.

## Assignments

You will prepare an annotated bibliography entry for each assigned reading, and turn in each entry on the day the reading is due.

You will prepare a class presentation on one philosopher; see last page of this syllabus for possible presentation topics.

You will write two papers—one short (due 9/11) and one longer (due 11/1).

There will be periodic reading quizzes and a final essay exam.

Reading quizzes, in-class assignments, and annotated bibliography entries 25%

Bibliography entries 1% each

Quizzes and in-class assignments fill out the remaining 25%

Short paper 15%

Class presentation 20%

Long paper 20%

Final essay exam 20%

## Grading scale

94↑=A (Excellent)

90=A-

87=B+

84=B (Good)

80=B-

77=C+

74=C (Satisfactory)

70=C-

67=D+

64=D (Poor)

60=D-

Below 60=F

## **Paper Submission Guidelines**

All assignments should be typed and double-spaced, with standard margins and font size, unless otherwise specified. Number the pages of your papers, and staple your paper before turning it in.

Late papers may be docked ten points for the first day and five points for each additional day. If you need an extension because of extenuating circumstances, make arrangements with the professor as soon as possible.

## **Attendance**

Attendance is key to earning good grades in this class. If you are absent from class, you are responsible for finding out from classmates what you missed—including notes, announcements, and copies of materials. In-class quizzes and assignments cannot be made up; these grades are a type of participation grade. If you turn in an assignment late because of an absence, the assignment grade will be docked a late penalty. If you have special circumstances for an absence, make arrangements with the professor as soon as possible.

## **Plagiarism and Collaboration**

The standard penalty for plagiarism or other cheating is an F for the assignment or an F for the course. Plagiarism cases are reported to Moravian's Academic Affairs Office, who may impose other penalties as appropriate to the offense.

Become familiar with the Academic Honesty Policy in the student handbook. If you have questions about the policy or about what counts as plagiarism and what is fair use, please ask so that you are confident about what is and is not permissible.

In this course, students may work together by giving one another *feedback* on papers and other writing. Of course, students may not have someone else do the revising or writing for them. Students may also get feedback from the Moravian College Writing Center. To make an appointment, call 610-861-1592 or stop by the Writing Center on the second floor of Zinzendorf Hall. The Writing Center now offers evening appointments (Sundays through Wednesdays) at Reeves Library. Sign up for those appointments at the Reference Desk.

## **Students with Disabilities**

Reasonable accommodation will be provided on a case-by-case basis to students with documented disabilities. Students who would like accommodations for learning disabilities or ADD/ADHD should meet with Mrs. Laurie Roth in the Office of Learning Services. Students who would like accommodations for other disabilities should meet with Dr. Ronald Kline in the Counseling Center. The student should then speak to the instructor so that appropriate academic accommodations can be made.

## Presentation Topics

You may develop your own presentation topic (run the topic idea by the professor), or choose one of the following. Each presentation should begin with a biography of the philosopher. (The biography should be between one-paragraph and one-page in length.)

David Hume and the missing shade of blue, *Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding*, Section II (A&W 498): Hume argues that all of our ideas arise from impressions, but he ends section II of the *Enquiry* by describing a counterexample: the missing shade of blue. Explain this counterexample. Then explain how Hume thought it affected his theory of ideas, and argue how you think it should affect his theory of ideas.

Solutions to the mind-body problem: René Descartes' bequest to dualism was the mind-body problem was, How can a physical human body interact with its own nonphysical soul? Descartes' answer, that they interact via the pineal gland, is widely recognized as weak. Choose one of the following philosophers and explain his solution to the mind-body problem. What are the strengths and weaknesses of his solution? How is the solution consonant with your philosopher's other philosophical beliefs?

G. W. Leibniz's parallelism

Nicolas Malebranche's occasionalism

Baruch Spinoza's dual-aspect theory (aka double-aspect theory)

Blaise Pascal, *Pensees*, "The Wager" (A&W 94-96) and the entry on *decision theory* (aka rational choice theory) in *The Cambridge Dictionary of Philosophy*: Some historians point to Pascal's Wager as the beginning of rational choice theory, which economists and philosophers use today. Explain to the class what decision theory is and how it works; then explain how "The Wager" is a form of rational choice theory.

Baruch Spinoza, *The Ethics*: Choose one of Spinoza's Propositions, and present it to the class in argument form with its premises drawn from Spinoza's definitions, axioms, and other Propositions and the conclusion as the Proposition itself. (You can use other Propositions as premises without giving the supporting premises for that proposition.) Hint: Choose an earlier proposition to present a shorter argument.

Moral Theorists: Samuel Pufendorf, Francis Hutcheson, Joseph Butler, Thomas Reid, Richard Price

Choose one of the above moral theorists, read the selection of his work in the A&W anthology, and present his theory to the class. According to the theorist, what is the source of the moral law, and from what source does the moral law draw its validity? Is the moral law discovered or invented? How does it obligate or motivate us? Discuss how this theorist notably disagreed with the one or more moral theorists we have covered in class.

## Modern Philosophy, Fall 2007

### Course and Assignment Calendar

Subject to revision by the instructor

Tues. Aug 28: Intro to the class and history of modern philosophy

Thurs. Aug 30: Rationalism and empiricism debate

Due: Read “Synopsis of the Following Six Meditations” and “Meditation One” (A&W 25-30); prepare an annotated bibliography entry for “Meditation One”

T Sept 4: René Descartes

Due: Read “Meditation Two” and “Meditation Four” (A&W 30-34, 41-45); prepare two annotated bibliography entries, one for each Meditation

R Sept 6: Descartes

Due: Read “Meditation Six” (A&W 48-55); prepare an annotated bibliography entry

T Sept 11: Descartes and his critics

Due: Read Hobbes’ objection “Against Meditation II” and Descartes’ reply (A&W 63-65). Reread with Monday’s assignment in mind.

R Sept 13: Descartes and his critics

Due: Write a two- to three-page paper in which you analyze one of Hobbes’ objections against Meditation II and Descartes’ reply. Who gives the better argument and why? Could Hobbes or Descartes have made his argument stronger, and if so, how?

T Sept 18: John Locke

Due: Read intro to Locke (A&W 259-260) and *Essay*, Book I, Chp. II, sections 1-8 (A&W 272-273); prepare an annotated bibliography entry

R Sept 20: Locke’s epistemology

Due: Read *Essay*, Book II, Chp. I, sections 1-6 (A&W 276-277); prepare an annotated bibliography entry

T Sept 25: Locke legacy in language and knowing

Due: Read *Essay*, Book III, Chp. III, sections 1-18 (A&W 329-334); prepare an annotated bibliography entry

R Sept 27: David Hume

Due: Read *Enquiry* Section II (A&W 496-498); prepare an annotated bibliography entry

T Oct 2: Immanuel Kant

Due: Read handout selection (public domain) from *Critique of Pure Reason*, Introduction sections 1, 5; prepare an annotated bibliography entry

R Oct 4: Metaphysics, mind, and the moderns  
Due: Presentation topic and planned resources

T Oct 9: No class; fall recess

R Oct 11: Student presentations

T Oct 16: Student presentations

R Oct 18: Locke on metaphysics and personal identity  
Due: Chp. XXVII, sections 9-19 (A&W 322-326); prepare an annotated bibliography entry

T Oct 23: Baruch Spinoza and Gottfried Leibniz  
Due: Read selections from Spinoza's *Ethics* (A&W 97-99, 129-134), and prepare an annotated bibliography entry; read introduction and *Discourse on Metaphysics* section 9 (A&W 181-183, 188-189), and prepare an annotated bibliography entry

R Oct 25: Student presentations; George Berkeley  
Due: Read (A&W 386-388, 474-475 [sections 18-20]); prepare an annotated bibliography entry

T Oct 30: David Hume on causation  
Due: Read *Enquiry* Section VII, part II (A&W 519-522); prepare an annotated bibliography entry

R Nov 1: Modern debates about moral philosophy  
Due: Longer paper (5–8 pages) on a philosophical problem covered in the class

T Nov 6: Suarez's natural law theory  
Due: Read selections from *On Law and God the Lawgiver* (JBS 67-70, 76-79, 84-85); prepare an annotated bibliography entry

R Nov 8: Thomas Hobbes  
Due: Read selection from *De Cive* (JBS 111-121; chp. V on 134–135); prepare an annotated bibliography entry

T Nov 13: David Hume  
Due: Read selection from *Enquiry Concerning the Principles of Morals* (JBS 545-551; 562-565); prepare an annotated bibliography entry

R Nov 15: Locke's moral and political philosophy  
Due: Read selections from *Essay* (JBS 183-192); prepare an annotated bibliography entry

T Nov 20: Student presentations

R Nov 22: No class; Thanksgiving recess

T Nov 27: Student presentations; intro to ethical theory

R Nov 29: Kantian ethics

Due: Read selection from *The Metaphysics of Morals* (JBS 651-656); make notes toward an annotated bibliography entry to submit next class

T Dec 4: Kantian ethics

Due: Read selection from *The Metaphysics of Morals* (JBS 657-664); prepare an annotated bibliography entry

R Dec 6: John Stuart Mill

Due: Read handout selection from “What Utilitarianism Is”; prepare an annotated bibliography entry

Exam week: Final exam (essay and perhaps short-answer questions)