

MORAVIAN COLLEGE
COURSE SYLLABUS
Fall 2009

PHIL 245 Early Modern Philosophy
MW (1:10 PM-2:20 PM)
Classroom: Comenius Hall, 218

Instructor: Dr. Bernie Cantens
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Web Page: <http://berniephilosophy.com/>
Office Hours: MTW and TR 2:30 PM – 3:30 PM

Text

The Rationalist: Descartes, Spinoza, and Leibniz. New York: Anchor Books, 1974.
ISBN-0-385-09540-6

Empiricists: Locke, Berkeley, and Hume. New York: Anchor Books, 1974.
ISBN-0-385-09622-4

Kant, Immanuel. *Prolegomena to Any Future Metaphysics.* Upper Saddle River: Prentice Hall
1997.
ISBN 0-02-319330-1

*** Make sure you bring the text to every class!**

Course Description

A study of the original works of the preeminent philosophers of the Early Modern era, including Descartes, Spinoza, Leibniz, Locke, Berkeley, Hume and Kant. (M3) *Fall, Alternate Year, Cantens.*

Relationship of Course to University Mission

A quality liberal arts education must take into account the ability to reflect across the spectrum of disciplines. This task requires skills of analysis of basic concepts and principles, reading and writing skills, and a constructively critical attitude. The study of philosophy is an integral part of a general curriculum that helps students achieve these cognitive skills.

Course Goals

The objectives of this course are the following: 1) to study the origin and nature of early modern philosophy (1600-1800); 2) to introduce students to the major epistemological and metaphysical themes in early modern philosophy; 3) to study the writings of the most prominent philosophers of the Early Modern period (e.g., Descartes, Spinoza, Leibniz, Locke, Berkeley, Hume and Kant); 4) to familiarize students with the interconnection and interdependence of philosophical ideas throughout the history of philosophy (e.g., Ancient, Medieval, Late Modern, and Post-Modern); 5) to introduce students to the methods and nature of philosophical inquiry; 6) to

introduce students to complex and difficult arguments that will help them develop critical reading skills; 7) to familiarize students how to express clearly difficultly and complex ideas that will help them develop critical writing skills.

Learning Outcomes

The following outcomes are expected of the students who complete this course: 1) to think and write intelligibly about ultimate questions; 2) to obtain a basic understanding of the relevance and importance of ultimate questions for the prosperity of individuals and society in the Modern era; 3) to critically evaluate their own and others' answers to ultimate questions; 4) obtain a basic understanding of prominent themes in the Early Modern period and their relevance for contemporary and post-modern philosophies; 5) to acquire a basic understanding of metaphysical and epistemological concepts, doctrines, and theories of the Early Modern period; 6) to acquire a basic understanding of the thoughts of some of the most prominent philosophers of the Early Modern era (e.g., Descartes, Spinoza, Leibniz, Locke, Berkeley, Hume and Kant); 7) to write clearly and develop original arguments on complex metaphysical and epistemological issues.

Grading and Assignments

Papers (60 Points)

Students will complete 2 philosophical writing assignments on a topic *directly* related to this course and that are a part of the topics of assigned readings. The first writing assignment will be a *reflection paper* approximately 5-7 pages long, double-spaced and 12-Times New Roman font. A reflection paper "is the exploration of the connections between course material and a person's individual life or psyche" (John C. Bean, *Engaging Ideas*, 93). "A person's life" should be interpreted broadly to include a personal experience, a movie you recently saw, a book you recently read, etc. The students will be graded according to four criteria: (1) whether there is an appropriate and reflective application of philosophical concepts, ideas or issues to some mundane affairs related to the student's life (construed broadly); (2) whether the paper is well organized and demonstrates a logical flow of ideas; (3) whether there are well constructed and developed arguments and/or critical explanations of philosophical problems and solutions; and (4) whether the writing skills, such as word use, sentence structure, grammar, and punctuation are correct. (25 Points)

The second writing assignment is a *top-down, thesis-governed paper* approximately 8-10 pages long, double-spaced and 12-Times New Roman font. A thesis-governed paper is a more formal academic style paper – "the prototypical structure of academic prose. Such writing begins with the presentation of a problem to be addressed; near the end of the introduction, after the writer has presented the problem, the writer states his or her thesis, often accompanied by a purpose statement or a blueprint statement that gives the reader an overview of the whole essay. The body of the paper then supports the thesis with appropriate arguments and evidence" (John C. Bean, *Engaging Ideas*, 87). The students will be graded according to four criteria: (1) whether the introduction has a clear and explicit thesis and organized developing statements; (2) whether the paper is well organized and demonstrates a logical flow of ideas (in accordance with the introduction); (3) whether there are well constructed and developed arguments and/or critical explanations of philosophical problems and solutions; and (4) whether the writing skills, such as word use, sentence structure, grammar, and punctuation are correct. (35 Points)

In an effort to provide opportunities for the writing process to work the papers will be completed in 4 parts: (1) Thesis, (2) Introduction and Outline, (3) 1st Draft, and (4) Final Paper. Each part will be checked by the professor.

First Paper Assignment (25 Points)

Paper thesis: 3nd week of class.
Paper introduction and outline: 4th week of class.
First draft: 5th week of class.
Final draft: 6th week of class.

Second Paper Assignment (35 Points)

Paper thesis: 11th week of class
Paper introduction and outline: 12th week of class
First draft: 13th week of class
Final draft: 15th week

Exams (40 Points)

There will be two exams throughout the semester. Each exam is worth 20% of the final grade. The exam will be composed of essays and short answers.

Exam 1: October 7, 2009
Exam 2: December 15, 2009 (Tuesday at 1:30 PM)

It is within the instructor’s purview to apply qualitative judgment in determining grades for an assignment or for the course.

Chronological Order of Assignments and Exams

September 14	Thesis of 1 st paper	
September 21	Introduction and outline	
September 28	1 st draft	
October 5	1 st paper due	(25 points)
October 7	Midterm	(20 points)
November 9	Thesis of 2 nd Paper	
November 16	Introduction and outline of 2 nd Paper	
November 23	2 nd draft	
December 9	2 nd paper due	(35 points)
December 15 (1:30PM)	Final Exam	(20 points)

Class Participation

Attendance will be taken every class period and students will be marked down for unexcused absences. Students will lose 1 point for every unexcused absence up to a possible 5 points. If a student has 5 unexcused absences he or she must meet with the professor to continue

participating in the class. Students can make up lost points in unexcused absences by actively participating in class discussions or attending out-of-class philosophical lectures or events. Unexcused absences include only the following: (1) sickness with a doctor's note, (2) death in the immediate family, or (3) some other extraordinary event.

Learning Methods

Multimedia This course will combine traditional classroom lecturing with multimedia presentations. Every lecture will be supplemented with power point presentations and internet information. All course materials, such as syllabus, review questions, term paper information, etc., are posted on my website: <http://berniephilosophy.com> . This will give the students direct access to most of the materials for this class at their convenience.

Class Dynamic Class participation is expected of all students enrolled in this course. Questions and class discussions are encouraged as an effective vehicle to motivate students' interest in the subject matter. *If there are few questions and little discussion taking place in the classroom, the professor reserves the right to choose individual students to answer questions or give their view and the arguments on a particular issue.* Therefore, careful daily reading of the text and handouts is essential for success in this course.

Attendance Policy:

Attendance is mandatory. Students **must** bring their text and journals to every class! Students will lose 1 point for every unexcused absence up to a possible 5 points. Students can make up lost points in unexcused absences by actively participating in class discussions or attending out-of-class philosophy lectures and events. Unexcused absences include only the following: (1) sickness with a doctors' note, (2) death in the family, or (3) some other extraordinary event.

Academic Dishonesty Policy

See Student Handbook pp. 32 – 38

Students who wish to request accommodations in this class for a disability should contact Mr. Joe Kempfer, Assistant Director of Learning Services for Disability Support, 1307 Main Street (extension 1510). Accommodations cannot be provided until authorization is received from the office of Learning Services.

Student Behavior:

See Student Handbook pp. 38 – 40

Course Requirements

Reading of assignments before class is essential to succeed in this course. Students are expected to be ready for class, meaning they should read the assigned chapters before the professor introduces them. Class participation, note taking, and discussion are highly encouraged. The study of philosophy does not only consist of memorization; students must also read analytically and reflect critically on the texts and reading assignments. When studying difficult material, it is often necessary to read it several times before a proper understanding is achieved. Do not be disappointed if you do not understand a philosophical reading assignment on your first try.

Grading/Measures of evaluations:

Exam 1: 20%
Exam 2: 20%
Reflection Paper: 25%
Traditional Thesis Paper: 35%

A=100-94; A- =93-90; B+=89-87; B=86-84; B- = 83-80; C+=79-77; C = 76-70; D=69-60;
F=<59

PROGRAM AND READING ASSIGNMENTS

	DESCARTES (1596-1650)
August 31	Introduction: The Early Modern Period
September 2	<i>Meditations on First Philosophy</i> , Meditations I and II, pp. 99-111.
Sept. 7	Labor Day
Sept. 9	<i>Meditations on First Philosophy</i> , Meditations III and IV, pp. 128-152.
Sept. 14	<i>Meditations on First Philosophy</i> , Meditations V and VI, pp. 153-175.
	SPINOZA (1632-1677)
Sept. 16	<i>The Ethics</i> , Pt. I and Appendix, Concerning God, pp. 179-215.
Sept. 21	<i>The Ethics</i> , Pt. V, The Power of the Understanding or of Human Freedom, pp. 379-408.
	LEIBNIZ (1646-1716)
Sept. 23	<i>Discourse on Metaphysics</i> , I-XV, pp. 409-427.
Sept. 28	<i>Discourse on Metaphysics</i> , XVI-XXXVII, pp. 427-453

Sept. 30	<i>Monadology</i> , (1)-(58), pp. 456-464
Oct. 5	<i>Monadology</i> , (59)- (90), pp. 464-471
Oct. 7	Midterm
Oct. 12	Recess
Oct. 14	Recess
	LOCKE (1632-1704)
Oct. 19	<i>Essay Concerning Human Understanding</i> , Introduction, and Book I, Ch. I-VIII, pp. 7-30.
Oct. 21	<i>Essay Concerning Human Understanding</i> , Bk. I, Ch. IX-XXVI, pp. 31-62.
Oct. 26	<i>Essay Concerning Human Understanding</i> , Bk.1, Ch. XXVII, pp. 62-75.
Oct. 28	<i>Essay Concerning Human Understanding</i> , Bk. IV, Ch. I-XI (Abridged), pp. 75-113.
	BERKELEY (1685-1753)
Nov. 2	Introduction: Empiricism <i>A Treatise Concerning the Principles of Human Knowledge</i> , (1)-(45), pp. 135-168.
Nov. 4	<i>A Treatise Concerning the Principles of Human Knowledge</i> , (46)-(85), pp. 168-185.
Nov. 9	<i>A Treatise Concerning the Principles of Human Knowledge</i> , (86)-(156), pp. 185-215.
Nov. 11	<i>The First Dialogue Between Hylas and Philonus</i> , pp. 217-252.
	HUME (1711-1776)

Nov. 16	<i>An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding</i> , Sections I-VI, pp. 307-348.
Nov. 18	<i>An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding</i> , Sections VII, pp. 349-364.
Nov. 23	<i>Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion</i> , pp. 431-471.
Nov. 25	Thanksgiving
Nov. 30	<i>Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion</i> , pp. 471-517.
	KANT (1724-1804)
Dec. 2	<i>Prolegomena to Any Future Metaphysics</i> , Introduction, and Preambles ... pp. 3-27.
Dec. 7	<i>Prolegomena to Any Future Metaphysics</i> , First Part of the Main Transcendental Problem, pp. 28-41.
Dec. 9	<i>Prolegomena to Any Future Metaphysics</i> , Second Part of the Main Transcendental Problem, pp. 42-74.
Dec. 15	Final Exam: December 15, 2009 (Tuesday at 1:30 PM)

PLEASE, as a courtesy to the other students in the class, turn off all phones upon entering class!