

PHIL 3400, 01: MODERN PHILOSOPHY

Florida State University, Summer B 2010

MTWRF 9:30-10:45, WMS 214

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Office Hrs: M/W 11:00am-12:15pm

Course description and objectives

This course is an introduction to the philosophy of the “modern” period in Europe (roughly, the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries). We will examine attempts by five influential philosophers of this period to deal with some central metaphysical and epistemological questions. The course has two main objectives. The first is to familiarize you with the work of some influential philosophers of the modern period. The second is to develop your ability to think carefully and critically about the issues covered by challenging you to accurately and concisely reconstruct philosophical positions and arguments in your own words and then critically and intelligently evaluate those positions and arguments.

Required texts

1. Descartes, Rene. *Meditations on First Philosophy*, ed. Cress. Hackett Publishing. (1993) ISBN: 0872201929. **(D)**
2. Locke, John. *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, Abridged and ed. Winkler, Hackett Publishing (1996) ISBN: 087220216X. **(L)**
3. Berkeley, George. *Three Dialogues Between Hylas and Philonous*, ed. Dancy, Oxford Univ. Press (1998) ISBN: 0198751494. **(B)**
4. Hume, David. *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding* (Oxford Philosophical Texts) ed. Beauchamp, Oxford Univ. Press (1999) ISBN: 0198752482. **(H)**
5. Reid, Thomas. *Inquiry and Essays*, ed. Beanblossom and Lehrer. Hackett Publishing (1983) ISBN: 0672611732 **(R)**

Course requirements

Attendance: Students are expected to attend class regularly. If you miss class, it is your responsibility to find out what you missed. Note: exam questions will be based not only on course readings but also on class lecture and discussion. If you do not attend class regularly, you will not do well in the course.

Reading & Quizzes: Students are expected to complete the assigned reading prior to each class meeting. There will be short, unannounced quizzes on the assigned readings. The quizzes should not be difficult, provided that you have read the material carefully. Your quiz average for the semester will count for 10% of your final grade.

Short Papers: You will be required to write two short papers (roughly, 4-5 double spaced pages). Topics and further instruction regarding the papers will be given in class. Each paper will count for 35% of your final grade.

Final Exam: There will be an in class, comprehensive final exam. The exam will have an essay format and will count for 20% of your final grade.

General classroom policies

Be Punctual: Students are expected to show up for class on time. When you are late you miss both lecture material and reading quizzes, which are given at the beginning of class. Also, walking in late is distracting to others. So do your best to be on time. I realize, of course, that sometimes “stuff happens” and you cannot avoid being late. If you do arrive late, however, be sure to enter the classroom unobtrusively.

No Electronics: Cell phones and other electronic devices should be turned off during class. This includes laptops. Sorry. Easy access to wi-fi on campus is a distraction.

Participation: Students are encouraged to ask questions and engage in class discussion. Arguably, the best way to learn philosophy is to do it, and to do it, you need to ask questions and critically discuss the material. So try your best not to be shy. We will often engage in close examination of the course texts. Students are therefore expected to bring the text being discussed to class.

Basic Respect: Students are expected to show basic respect toward the instructor, TA, and fellow classmates. This especially applies to class discussion. Whoever is speaking, whether it is the instructor, TA or one of your classmates, respect the speaker by listening to what s/he is saying. This means, at the very least, not jeering, snickering, interrupting or carrying on private conversations while the person is speaking.

Policy on late or missed assignments

Permission to make up missed quizzes and exams requires formal documentation as consistent with FSU policy. Quizzes and exams may not be made up unless the absence is excused. Excused absences include, but are not limited to, serious family emergencies, serious illness, and medical procedures. Unexcused absences include, but are not limited to, “I

overslept,” “I couldn’t find parking,” “I planned a vacation to Hawaii during the exam,” etc. Students should speak with their teaching assistant regarding accommodations for make-up work and should do so within a week of missing a quiz or exam. Regarding assignments handed in late, I will deduct ½ of a letter grade for each day late, including weekends.

Gordon rule

This course partially satisfies FSU’s liberal studies area IV requirement. Since it is a ‘W’ (writing) course, each student must write a minimum of 3,000 words by the end of the course. Due to a university rule, students who write fewer than 3,000 words cannot receive a grade higher than a D+.

Honor policy

The Florida State University Honor Policy outlines the University’s expectations for the integrity of students’ academic work, the procedures for resolving alleged violations of those expectations, and the rights and responsibilities of students and faculty members throughout the process. Students are responsible for reading and abiding by the Academic Honor Policy, which can be found at <http://www.fsu.edu/~dof/honorpolicy.htm>.

Disabilities

Students with disabilities requiring academic accommodation should register with and provide documentation to the Student Disability Center and bring a letter to the instructor indicating the need for accommodation and what type. This should be done during the first week of class. For more information regarding services available to FSU students with disabilities, contact

Student Disability Resource Center
97 Woodward Avenue, South
Florida State University
Tallahassee, FL 32306-4167
(850) 644-9566 (voice)
(850) 644-8504 (TDD)
sdrc@admin.fsu.edu
<http://www.fsu.edu/~staffair/dean/StudentDisability/>

NOTE: Except for changes that substantially affect implementation of grading, this syllabus is a guide for the course and is subject to change with advanced notice.

Course schedule

Date	Reading Schedule	Assignments
5/10	Introduction to Course	
5/11	(D) Meditation One	
5/12	(D) Meditation Two	
5/13	(D) Meditation Three	
5/14	(D) Meditation Four	
5/17	(D) Meditation Five	
5/18	(D) Meditation Six	
5/19	(L) Epistle to the Reader and Of innate notions, pp. 1-14; 23-29.	
5/20	(L) Of Ideas, pp. 33-41; 47-56; 66-68.	
5/21	(L) Of our complex ideas of substances, pp. 117-129 Of the names of substances, pp. 192-202.	Short Paper 1
5/24	(L) Of power, pp. 93-112.	
5/25	(L) Of identity and diversity, pp. 133-149.	
5/26	(B) The First Dialogue, pp. 59-93.	
5/27	(B) The First Dialogue cont.	
5/28	(B) The Second Dialogue, pp. 94-110.	
5/31	NO CLASS: Memorial Day	
6/1	(B) The Third Dialogue, pp. 111-143	
6/2	(B) The Third Dialogue cont.	
6/3	(H) Of the Origin of Ideas & Of the Association of Ideas, pp. 96-107.	
6/4	(H) Skeptical Doubts & Skeptical Solution, pp. 108-130.	Short
	Paper 2	
6/7	(H) Of the Idea of Necessary Connexion, pp. 134-147.	
6/8	(H) Of Liberty and Necessity, pp. 148-164.	
6/9	(H) Of Miracles, pp. 169-186.	
6/10	(R) Of the Powers...of Our External Senses, pp. 159-180.	
6/11	(R) Of the Powers...of Our External Senses, pp. 181-206.	
6/14	(R) Of Active Power in General, pp. 299-309.	
6/15	(R) Of the Liberty of Moral Agents, pp. 323-336	
6/16	(R) Of the Liberty of Moral Agents, pp. 336-351	
6/17	Review	
6/18	Final Exam	