

Phil 413: Modern Philosophy
T/R 11:10-12:25
Bolton 003
TAMU Spring 2008

Contact Information:

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Office hours: Tuesday 2:15-4:30pm, and by appointment

Required Texts:

Rene Descartes. *Discourse on Method and Meditations on First Philosophy*.
Cambridge University Press, 1996.

Benedict de Spinoza. *A Spinoza Reader*. Princeton University Press, 1994.

G.W Leibniz. *Philosophical Texts*. Oxford University Press, 1998.

John Locke. *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*. Oxford University Press,
1979.

George Berkeley. *A Treatise Concerning the Principles of Human Knowledge*. Oxford
University Press, 1998.

David Hume. *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding*. Oxford University Press,
1999.

Immanuel Kant. *Prolegomena to Any Future Metaphysics*. Cambridge University Press,
1997.

I suggest purchasing the texts listed here, as many of them have very helpful and substantive introductions to their subject matter. These books have also been put on reserve at Evans Library.

Course Description:

This course covers the Modern period in the history of Western philosophy, roughly spanning the 17th and 18th centuries. While the course will be oriented by investigation and examination of the thought of central figures in this period, including Descartes, Spinoza, Leibniz, Locke, Berkeley, Hume, and Kant, we will approach each figure with certain themes in mind. The largest themes will concern each thinker's vision of human knowing and the nature of the human mind. More narrow themes of the course will include the relation of the mind to nature, the discipline of science, causality, substance, and freedom.

Course Objectives:

Students should complete the course with an understanding of the key concepts of the Modern period in philosophy. Moreover, students should also have a sense of the historical development of ideas about human knowing, tracing the thread from Rationalism, through Empiricism, and culminating in the Transcendental Idealism of Immanuel Kant.

Course Requirements:

For this course, students will be required to write one long paper (10 pages), due at the end of the semester. Students must also complete midterm and final examinations. I expect that you will come to class having read the assigned course material, and prepared for critical engagement and discussion about the reading.

Grading:

Paper	50%
Midterm	20%
Final	30%

Appointments and Correspondence:

It is my goal to help you succeed in your academic endeavors, and I am therefore more than willing to meet with you outside of scheduled office hours to accommodate your schedule. To set up an appointment, you may see me before or after class, stop by my office, call, or email. If you choose to email me (for any reason), I will expect that your email be professional and courteous in tone and structure, and I will do the same. Also, you should not expect that if you email me in the evenings that I will return your email before the next day.

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Policy Statement:

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you believe you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please contact the Department of Student Life, Services for Students with Disabilities, in Cain Hall or call 845-1637.

Academic Integrity Statements: Aggie Honor Code:

“An Aggie does not lie, cheat, or steal, or tolerate those who do.”

Upon accepting admission to Texas A&M University, a student immediately assumes a commitment to uphold the Honor Code, to accept responsibility for learning, and to follow the philosophy and rules of the Honor System. Students will be required to state their commitment on examinations, research papers, and other academic work. Ignorance of the rules does not exclude any member of the TAMU community from the requirements or the processes of the Honor System. For additional information, please visit: <http://www.tamu.edu/aggiehonor/>

Plagiarism and/or cheating in this class will not be accepted, and will result in failure of the course. This includes plagiarism that is unintentional or results from ignorance regarding proper citation practices. If you are unsure about what constitutes acceptable citation practices, please consult with the writing center or library resources on writing styles.

Course Assignments

Selections are to be read for the class date listed

(These are subject to change as the semester progresses. Changes will be announced in class and will be reflected through updates to the online syllabus. Pages refer to the primary texts listed above.)

Date	Reading	Pages
1/15	Introduction to the Modern period	
1/17	Revolutions in science: Bacon's "Idols"	Handout
1/22	Descartes: <i>Meditations I-III</i>	12-36
1/24	Descartes: <i>Meditations I-III</i>	12-36
1/29	Descartes: <i>Meditations IV-VI</i>	37-62
1/31	Descartes: <i>Meditations IV-VI</i>	37-62
2/5	Spinoza: <i>Ethics, First Part</i>	85-115
2/7	Spinoza: <i>Ethics, First Part</i>	85-115
2/12	Spinoza: <i>Ethics, Second Part</i>	115-152
2/14	Spinoza: <i>Ethics, Second Part</i>	115-152
2/19	Leibniz: <i>The Monadology</i>	267-281
2/21	Leibniz: <i>Discourse on Metaphysics</i>	53-89
2/26	Leibniz: <i>Discourse on Metaphysics</i>	53-89
2/28	Midterm Exam	
3/4	Locke: <i>An Essay Concerning Human Understanding, Book II</i>	Selections
3/6	Locke: <i>Essay, Book II</i>	Selections
3/11	Spring Break	
3/13	Spring Break	
3/18	Locke: <i>Essay, Books II and IV</i>	Selections
3/20	Berkeley: <i>A Treatise Concerning the Principles of Human Knowledge, §§1-85</i>	TBA
3/25	Berkeley: <i>Principles</i>	TBA
3/27	Hume: <i>An Enquiry into Human Understanding</i>	5-34
4/1	Hume: <i>An Enquiry into Human Understanding</i>	5-34
4/3	Hume: <i>An Enquiry into Human Understanding</i>	35-61
4/8	Hume: <i>An Enquiry into Human Understanding</i>	35-61
4/10	Kant: <i>Prolegomena to Any Future Metaphysics</i>	143-158, 15-31
4/15	Kant: <i>Prolegomena</i>	143-158, 15-31
4/17	No Class	
4/22	Kant: <i>Prolegomena</i>	47-80
4/24	Kant: <i>Prolegomena</i>	47-80
5/2	3-5pm Final Examination	