MODERN PHILOSOPHY
PHIL 3330.001
Spring 2006

Tues., Thurs., 11 am – 12:20 pm
GAB 317
Office: ENV 325H

Dr. Edward H. Pauley
Hours: TR 9:30 – 10:45 am
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Course Description

This course will survey representative thinkers from the 17th and 18th centuries. Specifically, the Continental Rationalists (Descartes), the British Empiricists (Locke, Hume), and Immanuel Kant. Original works from these four philosophers will be studied, with the emphasis in the case of the Rationalists and Empiricists being on epistemology (theory of knowledge), and in the case of Kant on ethics.

The essential difference between the philosophical method of the Rationalists and that of the Empiricists is the primary reliance on reason as the means of discovering truth in the former case and on experience, particularly sense experience, in the latter case. The Rationalists (Descartes, Spinoza and Leibniz) sought certainty as the outcome of their philosophical reflections, whereas the Empiricists (Locke, Berkeley and Hume) settled for probability, the only conclusion allowed by a reliance on sense experience as the primary source of knowledge of the external world.

Immanuel Kant, by his own admission, began his philosophical career as a Rationalist and later modified his views on human knowledge as a result of the influence of David Hume, the British Empiricist, who Kant said awoke him from his "dogmatic slumbers." Kant applied his metaphysical views, not to the realm of human knowledge, but to the arena of moral judgment where he postulated the existence of entities that could not be known the way things in the physical world are known.

Textbooks

- Rene Descartes, Meditations on First Philosophy, Cambridge University Press
- John Locke, An Essay Concerning Human Understanding, Viking/Penguin
- David Hume, An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding, Oxford U. P.
- Immanuel Kant, Critique of Practical Reason, Prentice Hall
- Frederick Copleston, Modern Philosophy: Vols. 4, 5 and 6, Doubleday

Requirements

- Two quizzes, worth 25% of the grade each, and a final exam, worth 50% of the grade. For extra credit, an optional term paper, minimum 12 pages, exclusive of end notes, double-spaced. The paper grade would replace the lower quiz grade.
- Regular attendance, with three unexcused absences allowed.
- E-mail address and local telephone number where student will be reachable.