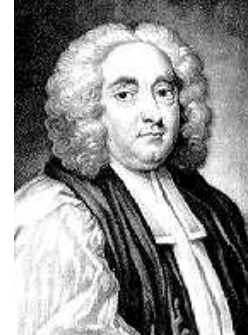


Introduction to Modern Philosophy: Metaphysics and Epistemology from Descartes to Hume

Dr. Carl B. Sachs, csachs@unt.edu
Curry 204
MWF 12:00-12:50

940-565-2256
ENV 320-F
MW 1-2



Rene Descartes, 1596-1650
1685-1753

John Locke, 1632-1704

Gottfried Leibniz, 1646-1716

George Berkeley,

COURSE DESCRIPTION: A study of the major philosophical movements (rationalism, empiricism, materialism, dualism, idealism) in the 17th and 18th centuries. Philosophers studied will include Descartes, Spinoza, Leibniz, Locke, Berkeley, and Hume.

COURSE OBJECTIVES: The goal of this course is to familiarize students with the primary problems, concepts, and thinkers associated with “early modern” philosophy, beginning with Rene Descartes (1596-1650) and ending with David Hume (1711-1776). The philosophers of this period developed intricate and fascinating systems in both metaphysics (theory of reality) and epistemology (theory of knowledge). We will explore how these systems took shape through the conflict between religion, science, and politics.

As a consequence of these cultural developments, the philosophers of the early modern period were confronted the problem of how to account for the place of the mind (or soul) within the new, scientific universe. Some, such as Descartes, thought it necessary to argue for dualism – that both mind and matter are fundamentally real. Others, such as Leibniz and Berkeley, argued that mind alone is real. Still others, such as Locke and Hume, argued that such questions could not be answered with any definitiveness.

Underpinning these systems are views about the nature of *substance* and of *causation*. The early modern philosophers used these concepts to navigate the problem-space opened up by the Protestant Reformation and the Scientific Revolution. Some basic

historical knowledge of these movements is assumed. Here is where Wikipedia can be your friend.

TEXT:

Modern Philosophy: An Anthology of Primary Sources (ed. Ariew and Watkins). Referred to as *MP* below. Additional readings will be made available as in-class hand-outs.

*Note: These texts were written several hundred years ago and can be challenging at first. You may find it helpful to consult a 'modernized' version of any of these texts, available on-line at www.earlymoderntexts.com. Doing so is **not** an acceptable substitute for the assigned reading.*

COURSE POLICIES:

Attendance Policy: There is no official attendance policy. However, I have an excellent memory for faces and will soon know who comes to class and who doesn't. Contributing to class discussions, and asking questions about what you don't understand, is essential to mastery of the material. You will not be able to get a B or higher in the class without regular attendance.

Plagiarism/Cheating: No form will be tolerated. This includes any of the following: use of notes or text during an examination; copying anything off the Internet without proper citation; changing an answer on a quiz or exam after time is up; looking at/allowing others to look at your work; and sharing exams. Any of the above will result in an "F" for the course and you will be reported to the Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities. Furthermore, you are responsible for asking me if something counts as plagiarism or not.

Academic Conduct: I prohibit the use of laptops, cell phones, i-pods, and other electronic devices, with the exception of those that have an exclusively educational function (e.g. recorders). These are wholly disruptive to the class. Additionally, perpetual tardiness, talking, sleeping or any other behavior I or others deem disruptive will not be tolerated. Punishment will be swift and creative.

Classroom Behavior Policy: During any class discussion, a level of respect must be maintained towards your fellow classmates at all times. Anyone who is disrespectful to a fellow student will be asked to leave for that day and have points deducted from their participation grade. Repeated acts of disrespect will result in a permanent removal from class and a grade of "F" for the course.

Disability Accommodation: Anyone requiring special accommodations should contact me at their discretion during the first week of class. Any special accommodations approved by the ODA will be fully granted to the extent specified by the policies of the ODA and the University of North Texas.

Harassment Policy: A policy to safeguard against sexual harassment and racial harassment is in place at UNT. Do not tolerate a harassment situation from any student or faculty: see me or the Department Chair, Baird Callicott, for either a course of action or for referral to another faculty or staff contact person.

ASSESSMENT

This is a large lecture class. While there will be opportunities for discussion in class, you will be assessed in terms of your ability to keep up with the assigned reading, take notes in class, and demonstrate your understanding of the material through written exams. For this reason, assessment will be based on the following:

- a) weekly quizzes based on the reading and lecture;
 - 12 quizzes @ 5% of the final grade each;
- b) exams;
 - Mid-Term: 20% of the final grade;
 - Final Exam: 30% of the final grade.

Quizzes: There will be “semi-weekly” quizzes – meaning that some weeks there will not be a quiz. Each quiz will be a short, multiple-choice reading quiz. You may miss up to 2 quizzes without penalty. Extra-credit assignments which can be used to make up for missed quizzes will be announced throughout the semester.

Exams: There will be a mid-term exam and final exam with both short-answer sections and essay questions. Review sessions will be held periodically throughout the semester and on the last day of class. Study guides will be made available in class as hand-outs and on either WebCT or the Philosophy Department website.

SCHEDULE OF READINGS/LECTURES:

Monday	Wednesday	Friday
	1/21 Introduction: What is “modern” philosophy?	1/23 Descartes “Letter” and “Preface” MP 22-27
1/26 Descartes 1 st <i>Meditation</i> MP 27-30	1/28 Descartes 2 nd <i>Meditation</i> MP 30-34	1/30 Descartes 3 rd <i>Meditation</i> MP 34-41
2/2 Descartes	2/4 Review of Descartes	2/6 Intro to Spinoza

6 th <i>Meditation</i> MP 48-51, 55	MP 59-62	MP 129-30
2/9 Spinoza What is God? MP 130-134	2/11 Spinoza What is God? MP 134-138	2/13 Spinoza What God is not MP 143-149
2/16 Spinoza Understanding and Judging MP 169-172	2/18 Spinoza Blessedness MP 179-180	2/20 Review of Spinoza
2/23 Leibniz Explaining Nature MP 229-232	2/25 Leibniz Body and Soul MP 232-234	2/27 Leibniz Monads and Souls MP 235-237
3/2 Leibniz The Nature of God MP 238-241	3/4 Leibniz Our Relation to God MP 242-243	3/6 Review of Leibniz
3/9 Mid-Term Exam	3/11 Intro to Locke Against Innate Ideas MP 270-272	3/13 Locke Simple Ideas MP 272-274; 276-279
3/16 <i>No Class</i>	3/18 <i>No Class</i>	3/20 <i>No Class</i>
3/23 Locke Types of Qualities MP 280-281; 285-290	3/25 Locke Ideas of Substance MP 293-295; 312-320	3/27 Locke The Existence of God MP 358-363
3/30 Berkeley Skepticism MP 413-423	4/1 Berkeley "Sensible Objects" MP 424-430	4/3 Berkeley The Idea Idea MP 431-433
4/6 Berkeley Immaterialism MP 433-437	4/8 Berkeley Immaterialism MP 438-443	4/10 Review of Berkeley Common Sense? MP 460-461
4/13 Intro to Hume MP 491-496	4/15 Hume Origin of Ideas MP 496-402	4/17 Hume The Problem of Causation MP 502-506
4/20 Hume The Solution? MP 506-512	4/22 Hume "Free will"? MP 522-532	4/24 Hume On Miracles MP 534-543
4/27 Hume On Design MP 543-550	4/29 Hume The Purpose of Skepticism MP 550-557	5/1 Review of Hume Enemy or Friend of Common Sense?
5/4 <i>Pre-Finals Week</i> <i>Rationalism</i>	5/6 <i>Pre-Finals Week</i> <i>Empiricism</i>	5/8 <i>Pre-Finals Week</i> <i>Review Session</i>

FINAL EXAM: The final exam for this class is scheduled for Friday, May 15, 10:30-12:30 pm