History of Philosophy: Aquinas to Kant
Philosophy V2201y; Spring, 2010

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Teaching Assistants

Each student will be assigned a TA. The TA's are Mark Berger (mnb2120@columbia.edu), Ariadna Pop (ap2380@columbia.edu) and Daniel Zeigenbein (drz2104@columbia.edu).

Course Description

This is an introduction to philosophy through the examination of major figures and ideas in the history of philosophy from the 13th through the 18th century in western Europe. We will analyze, dissect, and discuss the works of major philosophers with special focus on their views about philosophical method, the nature of reality, the foundations and extent of knowledge, and the foundations of science. We will attempt to place the ideas of these thinkers as much as time allows in the historical and scientific context that produced them.

Course Goals

Learn what philosophy is by analyzing what it has been.
Develop critical and analytical reading and writing skills.
Explore fundamental philosophical questions.
Stretch our philosophical imaginations.
Delight ourselves with the sometimes bizarre but always fascinating ideas of brilliant thinkers in our period.

Assignments

Three one-page, single-spaced papers
One 5-page double-spaced paper
Mid-term and Final examinations

Grades

Mid-term 20%
Final 30%
Three one-page papers combined with attendance: 30%
One five-page paper 20%

Readings

Because we will read and discuss particular passages in class, it is very important that you have HARD COPIES OF REQUIRED READINGS with you. There are three different means of obtaining texts.

-- Some assigned readings are ONLY available in Courseworks. Find them in the Assignments section, listed alphabetically by author's name.

---Some assigned texts are available as eBooks through the Columbia Library Web. From Columbia homepage, search Past Masters, and go directly to the Past Masters Info Resource Page (this requires a uni). On the long list of resources there, go to Continental Rationalists. Descartes' *Meditations*, Spinoza's *Ethics*, and Leibniz's *Discourse on Metaphysics* may be found there (the latter is in *Leibniz: Philosophical Essays*, eds. Ariew/Garber. You might want to buy an edition of these texts.

---These books are available at Book Culture (on 112th b/w Brdwy and Amsterdam) and in the reserve room at Butler Library:
Descartes, *Meditations* (Hackett)
Anne Conway, *Principles of the Most Ancient and Modern Philosophy* (Cambridge U. Press)
Berkeley, *Three Dialogues between Hylas and Philonous* (OUP)
Hume, *Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding* (OUP)
Kant, *Prolegomena to Any Future Metaphysics* (OUP)

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Lecture Topics and Readings

Week 1 Introduction to course; Aquinas' *Principles of Nature*
January 19: Course description; conceptions of the history of philosophy; the problem with "modern" philosophy; what is metaphysics? Introduction to Aquinas.
January 21: Aquinas' conception of nature; form, matter, and the causes of things.
Reading: Aquinas's *Principles of Nature* (Courseworks, pp. 1-7).
BRING READING MATERIAL TO CLASS.
First paper assignment distributed.

Week 2 The Aristotelian Renaissance: Its method, principles, and concerns.
January 26: Aquinas on matter, change, and causation.
January 28: Aristotle's legacy and its transformation within Christian theology; the problem of God.
Reading: Aquinas' "Five Ways" (Courseworks, pp. 8-10).
First paper due Friday, 4:00.

Week 3 Renaissance Philosophy and Early Modern Science
February 2: Renaissance skepticism, anti-Aristotelianism, humanism, and reformed theology.
Reading: Erasmus (Courseworks, pp. 31-36); Luther (Courseworks, pp. 37, 42-45); Montaigne (Courseworks 70-81); Marie de Gournay (Courseworks, pp. 11-15).
February 4: The middle way of Gassendi (Courseworks, Gassendi Agst Aristotelians, pp. 110-120; and Syntagma, pp. 16-29) and Bacon (Courseworks, pp. 82-109).

Week 4 "Divine Madness": The Mathematical Science or How to Create the World.
February 9: Mathematics, reading God's mind, and how to create the world.
Reading: Kepler (Courseworks, pp. 52-57).
February 11: Galileo's *The Assayer* - the fundamental reality of (much of) modern science; the distinction between primary and secondary qualities; the mechanical philosophy (Courseworks, pp. 64-68).
Second paper assignment distributed.

Week 5 Descartes' *Meditations on First Philosophy*.
February 16/18: The importance of the work as a meditation; the skeptical method and the goals of the first meditation; the *cogito* argument and its implications; Descartes' meditation on wax and what it tells us about our knowledge of bodies; clearness and distinctness as a criterion of truth; that God exists and is not a deceiver; problems and implications with the argument for the existence of God in Med. 3; how we make mistakes. Reading: Descartes' *Meditations*; read all 6 meditations, and then focus on 1, 2, 3, and 4. Best to have published book, but *Meditations* is available as eBook on Columbia Library Web (see **Readings** above).
Second paper due Friday, 4:00.

Week 6 Descartes' Science and Dualism; Elisabeth of Bohemia's Critique.
February 23: How we know the essence of bodies; the role that God plays in the acquisition of knowledge; the ontological argument for the existence of God; what we really are and how we exist in the world of material objects. Reading: *Meditations* 4, 5 and 6.
February 25: Elisabeth's criticism of Cartesian metaphysics. Reading: Elisabeth of Bohemia's correspondence with Descartes (Courseworks, pp. 105-136, i.e., §2-59).

Week 7 Conclusions; Review
March 2: Elisabeth, Cartesianism, and Knowledge. Review.
March 4: **MID-TERM EXAMINATION**

Week 8 Reactions to Cartesianism: Conway's Vitalism
March 9/11: Three kinds of substances; creatures as modes; moral and metaphysical hierarchy.
Reading: Anne Conway's *Principles of the Most Ancient and Modern Philosophy* (entire book).

Week 9 **Spring Break: March 15-21**

Week 10 Spinoza's Simple Monism
March 23/25: Spinoza on substance, cause, attributes, modes
Reading: Spinoza, *The Ethics*, Part I. (Best to have published book, but *Ethics* is available as eBook on Columbia Library Web (see **Readings** above)).
Third paper assignment distributed.

Week 11 Leibniz's Infinitely Complex Monism
March 30/April 1: Leibniz's Preestablished Harmony, substance, theories of truth and causation.
Reading: Leibniz's *Discourse on Metaphysics*, § 8-16, 22-23, 26-31, 33-35 (available as eBook).
Third paper due Friday, 4:00.

Week 12: More Reactions to Cartesianism
April 6: Berkeley's phenomenalism: that all qualities are sensible qualities, i.e. ideas; that to be is to be perceived; that there is no material substance or substratum; the revival of common sense.
Reading: Berkeley's *Dialogues* - Preface and First Dialogue
April 8: Berkeley's conception of science and God.
Reading: Read quickly through Second and Third Dialogues.

Week 13 Hume's Response
April 13:. Hume's philosophical concerns; his distinction between impressions and ideas; the laws of human thought. Reading: *Enquiry*, sections 1-3.
April 15: Matters of fact vs relations of ideas, matter of fact reasoning; causation, probability, and necessity.
Reading: *Enquiry*, sections 4-8, 12.

Week 14 Hume's Conclusions and Kant's Enlightenment.
April 20/22: Hume's skeptical conclusions and Kant's Dogmatic Slumber: the state of metaphysics, Kant's method, what metaphysics as a science depends upon; that metaphysics is possible only if there are *a priori* synthetic judgments.
Reading: Preface and Preamble of Kant's *Prolegomena*.
Final PAPER TOPICS DISTRIBUTED

Week 15 How is metaphysics possible? Kant and Critique
April 27: How pure mathematics is possible; how pure science of nature is possible.
Reading: *Prolegomena*, First Part (all); Second Part, § 14-20, 22-23, 27-33, 36.
April 29: How metaphysics is possible.
Reading: *Prolegomena*, Third Part (all); Solution (all).

Week 16 **Final PAPER DUE Thurs., May 6th by 3:00.**

EXAM: THERE WILL BE A THREE-HOUR FINAL EXAMINATION. The schedule for finals will be available on-line by mid semester.