

BARNARD COLLEGE, DEPARTMENT OF PHILOSOPHY
Fall Term 2009
PHIL V 3237. Early Modern Philosophy. Tu Th 1:10-2:25. Milbank (Barnard) TBA

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Office Hours: Tu Th 10:30–12.

General Course Description. A study of one or more topics or major philosophers from the Renaissance through the 18th century. Sample topics: substance and matter; space, time, and motion; bodies, minds and spirits; liberty and necessity; causation; identity and individuation; knowledge and scepticism; philosophy and science; philosophy and theology; issues in moral and political philosophy. Sample philosophers: Bacon, Berkeley, Conway, Descartes, Gassendi, Hobbes, Hume, Kant, Leibniz, Locke, Newton, Pascal. 3 pts.

Topics and Philosophers for Fall 2009. Responses to Greek Skepticism, Mechanical Philosophy, Causality (Hume). Minds, Bodies, their causal relations (Descartes, Leibniz, Spinoza). Liberty and Necessity (Descartes, Spinoza, Hume). Miracles (Spinoza, Hume). Personal identity (Locke, Reid). Space, time, and motion (Descartes, Newton, Huygens, Leibniz, Kant).

PREREQUISITE: One philosophy course, or permission of the instructor.

REQUIRED TEXTS. Paperbacks, available at Book Culture (536 W112 St).

Descartes. *Meditations on First Philosophy, with selections from the Objections and Replies*, ed. John Cottingham. CUP.

Hume. *Enquiry concerning Human Understanding*, ed. Tom Beauchamp. OUP.

Leibniz. *Philosophical Essays*, trans. Roger Ariew and Daniel Garber. Hackett. Referred to as “AG” in the Readings.

Locke. *Essay concerning Human Understanding*, abridged by Kenneth Winkler. Hackett.

Spinoza. *Ethics, Treatise on the Emendation of the Intellect, Selected Letters*, trans. Samuel Shirley. Hackett.

NOTE. These editions of these texts are **essential** for the course. **No other editions or collections will do:** the class and the instructor must be “on the same page”. The prescribed readings include texts on Reserve and additional readings which will be made available, normally as PDF documents, in **Courseworks (CW)**.

READINGS ON RESERVE. Wollman Library, Barnard College.

Cottingham, John. *The Rationalists*, 1988.

Copleston, Frederick. *Descartes to Leibniz; The British Philosophers; French Enlightenment; Kant. A History of Philosophy*, vols. 4-6.

Garber, Daniel, and Michael Ayers, eds. *The Cambridge History of Seventeenth-Century Philosophy*, 2 vols., 1998.

Popkin, Richard H. *The History of Scepticism from Savonarola to Bayle*, revised ed. 2003.

Woolhouse, R. S. *The Empiricists*, 1988.

COURSE ASSIGNMENTS:

Paper I: Due October 15. 7 pages (double spacing), 35%

Paper II: Due November 19. 7 pages (double spacing), 35%

Final Examination: December 17. 2 questions, equally weighted, totalling 30%

Paper topics will be announced normally two weeks before each due date. **The Final Exam covers the whole course.**

Class discussion is expected and strongly encouraged.

NOTES:

- 1. It is important that you attend class regularly, and that you always bring to class the relevant required text or reading. Note that the Final examination will cover topics introduced in class as well as those arising directly from the readings.**
- 2. The acceptance and grading of papers submitted after the due date are solely at the discretion of the instructor.**
- 3. If you are absent from class for extended periods of time, it is your responsibility to explain your absences to the instructor. This is important if illness is the reason for the absences.**
- 4. Plagiarism, established by the instructor in a paper or in a question in the Final examination, will result in a fail grade for that paper or question, and will be reported to the relevant Dean of Studies. Recall the Honor Code.**
- 5. The final examination will not be rescheduled to meet individual requests except in the case of examination timetable conflicts, examination crowding as defined by the Registrar, personal illness or serious family emergency (medical certificates or other documentation required). Note that the date of the Final examination is December 17.**
- 6. It is not acceptable to visit the restroom during class, unless for medical reasons, which you must explain to the instructor. Nor is it acceptable to eat during class.**

OVER →

LECTURES AND READINGS:

For further coverage of the topics read the relevant chapters or sections of Copleston, Cottingham, Garber & Ayers, Woolhouse (all on Reserve), and consult one or other of the works listed in “Ancillary Sources” at the end of the syllabus. CW = Courseworks.

Weeks 1-3. Early Modern Philosophy and its contexts. The challenge of and responses to Greek Skepticism. The Scientific Revolution. Scientific knowledge. "Mechanical philosophy". Causality.

Readings: Descartes, *Meditations* I, II, selected Objections & Replies; *Principles of Philosophy*, Part II, selections (CW): II, arts. 1-5, 10-30, 36-44). Locke, *Essay*, bk. 4, chaps. 1-3, 11, 15. Hume, *Enquiry*, secs. 4, 5, 12.

Readings (Reserve): Popkin, chs. 1-3 (Reserve).

Weeks 4-6. Mind, Body and their causal relations. Descartes, Spinoza, Leibniz.

Readings: Descartes, *Meditation* VI. Spinoza, *Ethics*, Part I, Defns. and Axioms, Props. 1-14, Appendix; Part II, Defns. and Axioms, Props. 1, 2, 7, 11-13; Part III, Preface, Props. 2, 6-9. (In the case of the *Ethics*, "Prop." includes the Proof and (where they exist) Scholia, Corollaries, and Explications.) Leibniz, *Primary Truths*: AG, pp. 30-33. *Discourse on Metaphysics* (AG), secs. 9, 13, 14, 30, 33. *New System of Nature*: AG, pp.142-144. Letter to Basnage de Beauval: AG, pp. 147-149. *Monadology*, arts. 1-14: AG, pp. 213-215.

PAPER I due Thursday, October 15.

Weeks 7-8. Free will, liberty and necessity: Descartes, Spinoza, Hume.

Readings: Descartes, *Meditation* IV, Objections & Replies, pp. 92-94. Spinoza, *Ethics* I, props. 16, 17, 28, 29, 32, 33; II, props. 48. Hume, *Enquiry*, secs. 7, 8.

Academic and Election Day Holidays: November 2-3

Weeks 9 (November 5)- 10. Are miracles possible? Spinoza and Hume.

Readings: Spinoza, *Tractatus Theologico-Politicus*, ch. 6 (CW). Hume, *Enquiry*, sec. 10.

PAPER II due Thursday, November 19.

Weeks 11- 12 (November 24). Personal identity: Locke, Hume, Reid.

Readings: Locke, *Essay*, Bk. 2, Chap. 27. Hume, *Enquiry*, sec. 10. Reid, “Of Identity”, and “Of Mr Locke’s Account of our Personal Identity”, 1785 (CW).

Thanksgiving: November 26-29.

Weeks 13-14. Space, Time, and Motion: Descartes, Newton, Huygens, Leibniz, Kant.

Readings: Descartes, *Principles of Philosophy*, recap; Newton, *Principia*, Scholium (CW); Huygens’ critique of Absolute Space (CW); Leibniz, Letters to Clarke: AG, pp. 324-342. Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*: on Space and Time, from the Transcendental Aesthetic (CW).

READING PERIOD: December 15-16.

FINAL EXAMINATION: December 17, Noon – 3 p.m. Milbank (Barnard) tba

ANCILLARY SOURCES

These provide details on philosophers, topics, and explanations of philosophical terms.

The Philosopher's Index. Provides up-to-date comprehensive subject-and-author indices to articles, books, and anthologies. Columbia Library Web (Electronic Resources – Databases – Indexing and Abstracting).

Angeles, Peter A., ed. *The HarperCollins Dictionary of Philosophy*, 2nd ed. Butler Reference.

Audi, Robert, ed. *The Cambridge Dictionary of Philosophy*. Butler Reference.

Blackburn, Simon, ed. *The Oxford Dictionary of Philosophy*. Wollman & Butler Reference.

Copleston, Frederick. *A History of Philosophy*, 9 vols. Wollman & Butler Reserve.

Craig, Edward, ed. *The Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, 10 vols. Wollman and Butler Reference. Online at Columbia Library Web (Electronic Resources — Databases — Encyclopedias).

Edwards, Paul, ed. *The Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, 8 vols. Wollman, Butler, Psychology Reference.

Zalta, Edward N. ed. *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, online. <http://plato.stanford.edu>.