

17th and 18th Century Philosophy

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Office Hours: T, TH 12:30-1:45pm and by appointment

Required Texts

Recommended Texts
• Henry Allison, *Kant’s Transcendental Idealism*
• Robert Audi, ed., *The Cambridge Dictionary of Philosophy* (for technical definitions)
• Edward Craig, ed., *Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (succinct articles)
• Fredrick Copleston, *A History of Philosophy*, Vols. 4,5,6 (a broad and lucid survey text)
• Paul Edwards, ed., *The Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (succinct articles)
• Sebastian Gardner, *Kant and the Critique of Pure Reason*
• Ted Honderich, ed., *The Oxford Companion to Philosophy* (for technical definitions)
• A.P. Martinich, *Philosophical Writing* (a great book to help enhance your essay composition)
• Nicholas Rescher, G. W. Leibniz’s *Monadology, An Edition for Students*
• Bernard Williams, *Descartes: The Project of Pure Enquiry*
• Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (online): http://plato.stanford.edu/
• Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy (online): www.iep.utm.edu
• Further recommendations upon request

Course Outline

Ancient and Medieval Philosophy tended to regard ultimate reality as non-physical ideal forms or essences, and took the physical as imperfect copies of these ideals. The physical world was not regarded as key to understanding reality, and without instruments for observation and measurement, little could be learned. However, with the great advances in optics during the 17th Century, new instruments were developed that allowed for a far richer study of nature than was formerly possible.

Both the celestial and microscopic became available for careful study. Increasingly precise measurements could be taken, theories about physical laws could be systematically tested, and, as a result, a new metaphysics came into being... one that regarded the material world as the really real, composed of self-subsisting matter governed by universal laws. Philosophers (many of whom were during this period also scientists and mathematicians) recognized this paradigm shift and sought to explore the tensions between the metaphysical systems that were formerly dominant and the emerging modern scientific model of reality.

The purpose of this course is to study some of the key philosophical works that grappled with this paradigm shift. We will read texts with very different responses. As we shall see, some philosophers sought to bridge old and new. Others rebelled against the emerging model of reality and tried to create their own grand metaphysical systems. Some philosophers sought simplicity, some turned to skepticism, and some wanted to bring all forms of metaphysics to an end, including the metaphysics of the physical.
Schedule (subject to change)

Readings in parentheses are more difficult and students may prefer to read them after that day’s class. There will be no quizzes on this material, but still may be on exams.

**Descartes: Meditations on First Philosophy**
- January 17 - Synopsis and First Meditation: pg. 39-43 - Hyperbolic Doubt and Foundationalism
- January 22 - Second Meditation: pg. 43-45L - Cogito Argument
- January 22 - Third Meditation: pg. 47-49L - Types of ideas, immediate certainty
- January 24 - Third Meditation: pg. 49L-54 - Causal Proof of God
- January 31 - Fourth Meditation: pg. 54-58 - Cause of Error, Clarity and Distinctness, Voluntarism
- January 31 - Fifth Meditation: pg. 58-61 - Ontological Proof of God
- February 5 - Sixth Meditation: pg. 61-68 - External World Argument & Trusting the Senses

**Leibniz: Monadology**
- February 7 - Sections 1-13: pg. 275-276 - Argument for the Monad
- February 12 - Sections 14-28: pg. 276-277 - Features of the Monad: Perception and Appetition
- February 14 - Sections 29-36: pg. 278-278 - Truths of Reason and Truths of Fact
- February 14 - Sections 37-61: pg. 278-281 - Proof of God
- February 19 - Overflow or Section 62-87: pg. 281-283 - The Corporeal, Change and the Divine Order

**Spinoza: Ethics**
- February 21 - Book 1 -Defs and Axioms pg. 144-145 - Geometrical Method, Ontological Foundations
- February 21 & ( Book 1 - Propositions 1-15) pg. 145-151 - Substance/Monism/Pantheism
- February 26 - Overflow/Review
- February 28 - Test #1

**Locke: Essay Concerning Human Understanding**
- March 5 - Book I, Cpt 1 & Cpt 2: pg. 316-322 - Innate Ideas
- March 5 & Book II, Cpt 1 §1-5: pg. 322-324 - Origin of Ideas: Perception and Reflecton
- March 7 - Book II, Cpt 2 §1-3: pg. 328-329 - Simple Ideas
- & Book II, Cpt 12: pg. 340-342 - Complex Ideas
- March 12 (- Book III, Cpt 3) pg. 377-381 - Language and how we organize the world
- & Book II, Cpt 23, §1, 2, 4, 6, 37: pg. 359-61, 366-67 - Substance
- March 14 - Overflow

**Berkeley: Principles of Human Knowledge**
- March 26 - Introduction §11-25: pg. 441-446 - Argument against Abstract Ideas
- March 28 - Part I §1-15: pg. 446-450 - Arguments against External World
- April 2 - §16-33: pg. 450-453 - “Master Argument” & God’s Role in Experience
- April 4 - Overflow

**Hume: Inquiry Concerning Human Understanding**
- April 9 - §IV: pg. 542-548 - Doubts regarding Causality
- April 9 - §V, part I: pg. 548-551 - Account of how we come to have causal beliefs
- & §VII: pg. 556-564 - Origin of Idea of Necessary Connection
- April 11 - §XII: pg. 593-600 - Types of Skepticism

**APRIL 16 - ABSTRACT DUE**

**Kant: Critique of Pure Reason**
- April 16 - Introduction: pg. 724-729 - Types of Judgment & Nature of Mathematics
- April 16 - (- Space:) pg. 729-733 - Space as Form of Intuition and as a priori
- April 16 & (Pure Concepts:) pg. 739-742 - Cognition and Judgment
- April 18 & Phenomena/Noumena: B298-B315 (online) - Limits to what we can know (pdf online)

**April 23** - Review
**April 25** - Test #2
**April 30th** - Paper Consults
**May 2nd** - Paper Consults
Assignments

• Unannounced quizzes 100 points
  - approximately 10 brief multiple-choice quizzes will be given through the semester
  - each quiz will be weighed equally
  - questions will ask core comprehension questions about the day’s readings
  - notebooks but not primary sources may be used
  - missed quizzes cannot be made up and are worth 0 points
  - The two lowest quiz grades will be used as a bonus. (i.e. if we have 10 quizzes, the denominator will be 80, the lowest two grades will be retained in the numerator, then that value will be multiplied by 100). If you miss a quiz, your lowest grade will be a 0. Thus the bonus serves as an incentive to make sure you are rarely absent

• Tests 200 points
  - there will be two tests
  - each test is worth 100 points
  - the first will focus on Descartes, Spinoza and Leibniz
  - the second will focus on Locke, Berkeley, Hume and Kant
  - tests will be composed of True/False, fill in the blank, and short written-answer questions

• Final Paper 100 points
  - there will be one final paper with an abstract/overview paper due in advance.
  - a two page (~500 word) abstract is due by 5pm, April 16th and must be submitted via the online classroom in the drop box called “abstract”
  - Papers can be on any of the material we have studied up to the abstract due date
  - The abstract should provide an outline of the paper’s philosophical goals (its topic, its thesis, opposing views to be addressed, etc.).
  - The abstract is worth 20 points, while the final paper is worth 80.
  - The final paper is due by 5pm, May 9th and must be submitted via the online drop box called “final paper”. It should be 8-10 pages (~2000 words).
  - Both the abstract and paper must be submitted in MS Word (.doc, .docx) or pdf.
  - Careful, detailed commentary on primary sources is expected. Students are also encouraged to make use of secondary sources. In all cases, proper citation of material is required.

Total: 400 points

Grading Scale (for final grades): A=360-400, B=320-359, C=280-319, D=240-279, F=0-239

Policies

• Attendance will be checked. There is no direct penalty for poor attendance; however, the more classes you miss, the more quizzes you are likely to miss and quizzes cannot be made up. In addition, as the quizzes serve partially as an incentive for attendance, any student who takes a quiz then leaves for all or most of the remainder of the class will receive a 0 for that day’s quiz. Taking the quiz and just leaving immediately is unacceptable and excuses will not be considered. However, if a student needs to leave a little early, see me before class and the 0 for the quiz may be waived.
• Papers must be submitted typed, double spaced, 12pt font.
• Late assignments will be penalized at a rate of 5 points per day. This penalty may be waived (at the professor’s discretion) if given prior approval or in cases of a properly documented medical or family emergency.
• Students are expected to familiarize themselves with the University’s policy on academic integrity and scrupulously abide by it. Be warned that I will vigorously pursue any suspected violations and believe that the most stringent disciplinary action is almost always warranted.
• Official University Policies can be found in University Policy 2-0822, the “Oklahoma State University Student Rights and Responsibilities Governing Student Behavior” and the “Oklahoma State University Syllabus Attachment”