

Philosophy 2220: Modern Philosophy
Spring 2018
Course Syllabus

This course is a survey of Western philosophy in the 17th and 18th centuries. This period is marked by the development of a wide range of positions on the major issues in metaphysics, epistemology, ethics, and political philosophy. The philosophy of this period has shaped contemporary philosophy and continues to exert a profound influence on many aspects of culture. Readings are taken from works by influential philosophers of the period. We will focus on five issues: the metaphysics of the physical world, the nature of mind, freedom of the will, political obligation and the structure of government, and the rationality of morality.

Instructor: Prof. Derk Pereboom
Phone: 255-6825
E-mail: dp346@cornell.edu
Office: Goldwin Smith 323
Office hours: W. 2-3 and by appointment

Teaching Assistants:

Shao-Pu Kang, sk2888@cornell.edu
Timothy Kwiatek, tmk86@cornell.edu
Robert Wesley, rhw225@cornell.edu
Lu Zhou, lz446@cornell.edu

Class time: MWF 11.15-12.05
Classroom: Goldwin Smith 64, Kaufman Auditorium
Course website: Blackboard

Required work: A total of 100 points is possible:

- (1) Two short papers (7 pages/15 points each), due in class on:
Friday, February 16
Monday, April 23
- (2) Two exams, a midterm and a final (25 points each)
Midterm: Friday, March 9, in class
Final: TBA
- (3) Reading questions: each week, by Thursday at noon, e-mail a question you have about the readings for that week to your TA (15 points)
- (4) Attendance and participation (5 points)

Texts: The readings are available on-line.

Reference text: The most important of these is the on-line [Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy](#). It features many helpful articles on 17th and 18th century philosophy, as well as links to other resources.

Topics and Main Readings:

A. *Metaphysics and Epistemology*

René Descartes (1596-1650):

Jan. 24: Introduction.

Jan. 26-29: The epistemological project of the Meditations; Meditations 1 and 2;
<http://selfpace.uconn.edu/class/percep/DescartesMeditations.pdf>

Jan 31- Feb. 5: Arguments for the existence of God; Meditations 3 and 5.

Feb 7. The real distinction between me and my body; Meditation 6 (p. 28);
<http://selfpace.uconn.edu/class/percep/DescartesMeditations.pdf>. Correspondence with Princess Elizabeth, http://www.earlymoderntexts.com/assets/pdfs/descartes1643_1.pdf, pp.1-7.

Feb. 9-12: Rationalism and science: theory of causation, matter, and real qualities; Descartes, from *The Principles of Philosophy*, Part 2, paragraphs 1-36 and 64, and Part 4, paragraphs 187-207, at <http://www.earlymoderntexts.com>. Most of this, in standard translation, is at: <http://www.gutenberg.org/files/4391/4391.txt>,

Anne Conway (1631-1679):

Feb. 14: *Principles*, Chapters 7 and 8;
http://www.earlymoderntexts.com/assets/pdfs/conway1692_2.pdf

Baruch Spinoza (1632-1667):

Feb. 16: Monism; *Ethics*, Part I, Appendix;
<http://www.earlymoderntexts.com/authors/spinoza> and at
<https://www.gutenberg.org/files/3800/3800-h/3800-h.htm>.

Feb 19: Winter Break

Feb. 21: Rejection of free will; *Ethics*, Part II, Propositions 48 and 49, and Concluding Note (at the end of Part II); *Ethics*, Part III, note to Proposition 2.

Feb. 23: *Treatise on Theology and Politics*, Chapters 6 (Miracles) and 7 (Interpretation of Scripture); http://www.earlymoderntexts.com/assets/pdfs/spinoza1669_2.pdf

John Locke (1632-1704):

Feb. 26-March 2: Empiricism and ideas; *Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, Book II, i-iii; <ftp://ftp.dca.fee.unicamp.br/pub/docs/ia005/humanund.pdf>
Matter and solidity; *Essay* II, iv.
Primary and secondary qualities; *Essay* II, viii and xxxi; *Essay* IV, iii.

George Berkeley (1685-1753):

March 5-9: Idealism and the arguments against matter; Principles 1-24; <https://www.gutenberg.org/files/4723/4723-h/4723-h.htm>
and at:
<http://www.earlymoderntexts.com/authors/berkeley>

Three Dialogues between Hylas and Philonous, especially the First Dialogue; <https://www.gutenberg.org/files/4724/4724-h/4724-h.htm>
and also at: <http://www.earlymoderntexts.com/authors/Berkeley>

Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz (1646-1716):

Mar. 12-14: Matter, monadology, and idealism: *New System and Monadology*; <http://www.ahshistory.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/07/05-SUBSTANCE-LIFE-AND-ACTIVITY-LEIBNIZ.pdf>
<http://philosophyfaculty.ucsd.edu/faculty/rutherford/Leibniz/translations/Monadology.pdf>

March 16: Midterm Exam

David Hume (1711-1776):

Mar. 19: Philosophy of psychology; *Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding*, Sections II, III.

Mar. 21: Causation and induction; *Enquiry* IV, V, VII; <https://www.gutenberg.org/files/9662/9662-h/9662-h.htm>

Mar. 23: Personal Identity; *Treatise of Human Nature*, Book I, Part IV, Section VI; <https://www.gutenberg.org/files/4705/4705-h/4705-h.htm>

Compatibilism about free will; *Enquiry* VIII; <https://www.gutenberg.org/files/9662/9662-h/9662-h.htm>

Immanuel Kant (1724-1804):

Mar. 27-29: Transcendental idealism; *Critique of Pure Reason*, Preface to the Second edition, Bvii-xlii; Introduction to the Second Edition, B1-27; <http://strangebeautiful.com/other-texts/kant-first-critique-cambridge.pdf>

Mar. 31: Transcendental freedom, *Critique of Pure Reason*, A530-558.

Spring Break: April 2-6

B. Morality, Rationality, and the State

Thomas Hobbes (1588-1679):

April 9-16. Hobbes on human nature, the state of nature, and the social contract, *Leviathan*, Chapters 6, 13-21, 28-30; <https://www.gutenberg.org/files/3207/3207-h/3207-h.htm>

John Locke (1632-1704):

April 18-20. The state of nature, property, and democracy; *Second Treatise of Government*, Sections I-X; <http://www.gutenberg.org/files/7370/7370-h/7370-h.htm>

David Hume (1711-1776):

April 23-25: Ethics and practical rationality; *Treatise of Human Nature*, Book II, Part III, Section III, "Of the influencing motives of will;" <https://www.gutenberg.org/files/4705/4705-h/4705-h.htm>; *Treatise of Human Nature*, Book III, Part I; Sections I and II, "Virtue and vice in general."

April 27: Justice and government; *Treatise of Human Nature*, Book III, Part II; Sections I, II, and VII.

James Madison (1751-1836):

April 30: On republican government and the structure of government, *Federalist Papers* #10, #51; <http://www.let.rug.nl/usa/documents/1786-1800/the-federalist-papers/the-federalist-10.php>
<http://www.let.rug.nl/usa/documents/1786-1800/the-federalist-papers/the-federalist-51.php>

Immanuel Kant (1724-1804):

May 2-7: Ethics and practical rationality; *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*, Section II; <http://www.gutenberg.org/cache/epub/5682/pg5682-images.html>

Mary Wollstonecraft (1759-1797):

May 9: *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman*;
<http://www.gutenberg.org/cache/epub/3420/pg3420-images.html>