

# PHIL 3120: Early Modern Philosophy

Fall 2017

Utah State University

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**Overview.** In this course we will study European philosophical texts written over the period from 1596 to 1776 (that is, from the birth of Rene Descartes to the death of David Hume). The reason to focus on these texts, from such a specific time and place, is that they have had a disproportionate influence (for good and bad) on the concerns, questions, and range of possible answers in philosophy ever since. *Upshot:* if you are to be educated as a philosopher, you need to have these authors in your toolkit.

**Work.** You will be expected to write 5 papers, each of them 4-5 pages (approximately 1000 words). You will also participate in a panel discussion. The papers and the panel discussion are each worth 100 points. You are also expected to attend class and participate in class discussion and smaller group discussions.

**Policy for late assignments:** each assignment has a "Due" date and time; late assignments will be accepted up to the posted "Until" date, but with a 30% penalty. You may talk with me about turning in assignments after the "Until" date, but I might just say "No".

**Texts:** There are **four** required texts for the class: *The Rationalists* (Anchor), *The Empiricists* (Anchor), and volumes 4 and 5 of Copleston's *History of Philosophy* (Image). There will also be several readings made available on Canvas.

**Tests:** No tests.

**Topics we will cover:** the metaphysics and epistemology of Descartes, Spinoza, Leibniz, Hobbes, Locke, Hume, as well as some of the moral and political philosophies.

[More detailed syllabus on Canvas.]