PHIL 3120: Early Modern Philosophy
Fall 2017
Utah State University

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. This class will especially focus on careful reading and analysis, and clear writing.

Instructor: Charlie Huenemann, Main 208, phone 797-0254; office hours 1-3 on Wednesdays, but I'm also generally available on T/W/Th, and by appointment, email charlie.huenemann@usu.edu. I'm always happy to meet with you - really, I'm a friendly and encouraging fellow who enjoys talking with students - so please feel welcome to knock on my door. I have a blog if you are interested: huenemanniac.com. Also, on the subject of blogs, you may wish to check out usaphilosophy.com to keep informed of local philosophical happenings.

Texts: There are two required texts for the class: The Rationalists (Anchor), and The Empiricists (Anchor). There will also be many readings made available on Canvas.

Work: On most days there is one required reading assignment and one or two additional optional readings. I will try to discuss them all in class, but I do not expect everyone to read everything. I want to provide you with all the material necessary for making the class as challenging as you want it to be.

That being said, on three occasions you should read everything for the day and write a three-page response to the readings ("response papers"). Your response should show that you have read everything, and maybe not understood everything, but you have tried to get a good grip on the main ideas. Additionally, after writing the three response papers, you should write a longer and better developed response paper of at least five pages.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project</th>
<th>Due on or before</th>
<th>Worth</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Response paper 1</td>
<td>9/24</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Response paper 2</td>
<td>10/22</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Response paper 3</td>
<td>11/14</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Long response paper</td>
<td>12/10</td>
<td>30%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Attendance</td>
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<td>10%</td>
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Lateness in turning in work: Generally there should be none, but life packs surprises, and sometimes work has to be delayed. Be mature about this, and talk to me about it. If you need an extension, or need some alternative arrangement due to disability, please let me know, and we'll work something out. Generally, I don't count any work as late until I have graded everything that has been turned in. Once I'm through the initial supply of turned-in papers, anything received after that is late. The penalty is that your work will not receive a grade higher than a "B". If it's REALLY late (more than two weeks), it will not receive higher than a "C".
Cheating. In class - as in life - never try to pass off someone else’s work as your own. It is always okay to do some extra reading, and seek out more information on the internet. But when your writing is informed by what you learn from these sources, you should cite the information at the end of your writing. Every quotation should be indicated as a quotation, and cited appropriately.

**Schedule of topics:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>What we will discuss on that day, and what you should read for it: Readings in <strong>bold</strong> are required; the others are merely recommended</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8/27</td>
<td>What will this course cover? Why is it interesting or important? &lt;br&gt;&lt;em&gt;no reading&lt;/em&gt;</td>
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<td>8/29</td>
<td>What was the metaphysical picture offered by scholastic aristotelians? &lt;br&gt;&lt;em&gt;no reading&lt;/em&gt;</td>
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| 9/3  | How was magic understood in this period?  
• Lauren Kassell, "All Was This Land Full Fill'd of Faerie,' or Magic and the past in Early Modern England"  
• Lucy Mair, "Witchcraft, Spirit Possession and Heresy" |
| 9/5  | What new model of knowledge did Francis Bacon offer?  
• Francis Bacon, <em>The New Atlantis</em>  
• Doina-Cristina Rusu, "Virtues and Collaborative Research in Solomon's House"  
• Perez Zagorin, "Francis Bacon's Concept of Objectivity and the Idols of the Mind" |
| 9/10 | What was Descartes’s approach to knowledge?  
• Descartes, <em>Discourse on Method and Meditation I</em>  
• Daniel Garber, "Semel in Vita: The Scientific Background to Descartes's Meditations"  
• Robert Hanna, "Descartes and Dream Skepticism Revisited" |
| 9/12 | How did Descartes establish the primacy of the intellect and the existence of God?  
• Descartes, <em>Meditations II and III</em>  
• John Morris, "Descartes’ Natural Light" |
| 9/17 | How did Descartes understand the mind-body relation?  
• Descartes’s correspondence with Elizabeth  
• Daniel Garber, "Understanding Interaction: What Descartes Should Have Told Elizabeth" |
| 9/19 | What was Descartes’s metaphysical physics?  
• Descartes, <em>Meditation VI</em>  
• Daniel Garber, "How God Causes Motion"  
• Jacqueline Broad, "Women, Mechanical Science, and God in the Early Modern Period" |
| 9/24 | How did Spinoza change Descartes’s metaphysics to arrive at his own?  
• Spinoza, <em>Ethics</em>, Part I "Concerning God"  
• Charlie Huenemann, "God, as known by reason"  
• Yitzhak Melamed, "The Building Blocks of Spinoza's Metaphysics"  
• Response paper #1 due |
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<th>Date</th>
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| 9/26 | What was Spinoza’s view of God, nature, and mind?  
| 10/1 | Can Spinoza be a determinist and offer ethical advice?  
- Spinoza, *Ethics*, Part IV “Of Human Bondage or the Strength of the Emotions”  
- Steven Nadler, “The Lives of Others: Spinoza on Benevolence as a Rational Virtue”  
- Susan James, “Spinoza, the Body, and the Good Life” |
| 10/3 | How does traditional religion fit with Spinoza’s metaphysics?  
- Spinoza, *Theological-Political Treatise*, chapters 13 and 14  
- Susan James, “Creating Rational Understanding: Spinoza as a Social Epistemologist”  
| 10/8 | What was Hobbes’s view of people and politics?  
| 10/10 | What was Hobbes’s view of politics and religion?  
- E. M. Curley, “Calvin and Hobbes, or, Hobbes as an Orthodox Christian” |
| 10/15 | What is the basis of our knowledge of the world, according to Locke?  
- Locke, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, from beginning through Book 2, chapter 13 (pp. 7-40)  
- David Soles, “Locke’s Empiricism And The Postulation Of Unobservables” |
| 10/17 | (No class) |
| 10/22 | What was Locke’s view of persons? Do they have free will?  
- Locke, *An Essay...*, Book 2 ch. 21 - ch. 27 (pp. 40-75)  
- Ruth Boeker, “Locke on Personal Identity: A Response to the Problems of His Predecessors”  
- Ezio Mailati, “Leibniz on Locke on Weakness of Will” |
| 10/24 | How did Berkeley derive his system from Locke’s?  
- Berkeley, *Principles of Human Knowledge*, from preface through section 78 (pp. 135-182)  
- Margaret Atherton, “Corpuscles, Mechanism, and Essentialism in Berkeley and Locke” |
| 10/29 | What was Berkeley’s idealism?  
- Berkeley, *Principles*, section 79 - end (pp. 182-215)  
- Kenneth Pearce, “Berkeley’s Lockeian Religious Epistemology”  
- Margaret Atherton, “The Coherence of Berkeley’s Theory of Mind” |
| 10/31 | What was Leibniz’s metaphysics of monads? |
| 11/5 | What is the world, according to Leibniz?
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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Question</th>
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<tr>
<td>11/7</td>
<td>Did Leibniz believe in free will?</td>
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<td>11/12</td>
<td>How did Isaac Newton fit into early modern philosophy?</td>
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<td>11/14</td>
<td>What is the basis of knowledge according to Hume? What can we know?</td>
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<td>11/19</td>
<td>Is causation magic, according to Hume?</td>
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<td>11/21</td>
<td>Did Hume believe in free will?</td>
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<tr>
<td>11/26</td>
<td>Why did Hume attack belief in miracles?</td>
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| 12/3  | Big picture: why are Descartes, Spinoza, and Leibniz called “rationalists”?  
Maybe: Emily Grosholz, Plato and Leibniz Against the Materialists  
Maybe: Tom Lennon                                                   |
| 12/5  | Big picture: why are Locke, Berkeley, and Hume called “empiricists”?      |