

Modern Philosophy **Spring 2018**

21:730:307:01

M 2:30pm -3:50pm and W 1:00 pm-2:20pm
Conklin 319

Course Instructor: Dr Raffaella De Rosa

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Office phone: 973-353-1857.

Office hours: Monday 1:00 pm – 1:45 pm or by appointment

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Blackboard System: once you registered for the class you can go to Blackboard and select the course “Modern Philosophy, Phil 307.” The page will contain information on the course (syllabus, study questions, class notes, announcements, reminders, etc.)

Course description: The course is designed to present students with some central themes in early modern philosophy through the reading and examination of texts of Descartes and Locke. We will begin with (and spend quite some time on) the study of Descartes’ views on a number of different epistemological, metaphysical and psychological issues such as: (a) the nature and architecture of the human mind; (b) the nature of reality; (c) the relation between mind and body; and (d) the nature of ideas and their origin. Discussion of topics (a)-(d) in Descartes will set the stage for our study of the philosophy of Locke. Particular attention, however, will be given to Descartes’ and Locke’s different theories of mind and ideas.

Course objectives: The aim is to provide students not only with an introduction to metaphysical, epistemological and psychological issues in 17th century philosophy but also to provide students with an important background for further study of philosophy.

Each class will be a mixture of lecture and discussion. I will begin each class by laying out some of the issues, explain Descartes’ (or Locke’s) declared position on these issues and then guide the discussion as we proceed. It is **essential** that you read the assigned reading material.

Students will learn how to read and analyze primary texts closely and critically and will develop the ability to express philosophical ideas both in written form and publicly within the context of the classroom.

Required course-work: (1) *three in-class questionnaires* (2/5; 3/19; 4/11). The questions will be selected from the set of study questions posted on Blackboard; and (2) *two 6*

pages long papers (due on 2/19 and 4/30). Students will be required to attend classes and contribute to class discussion.

The class is an ideal forum for open discussion or for voicing your ideas on the issues being discussed and the arguments presented by the various philosophers.

The in-class quizzes are comprised of questions that are designed to test your comprehension and ability to analyze the arguments provided by the philosophers studied.

The two papers are designed to test your ability to critically evaluate the arguments provided by the philosophers studied in a context which gives you more creative freedom in expressing your own views and arguments on a specific topic.

Required texts

- Cottingham, Stoothoff, and Murdoch, *The Philosophical Writings of Descartes*, vols. II Cambridge University Press. CSM II.
- Locke, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, Edited with an introduction by Peter Nidditch, Clarendon Press, Oxford.

Tentative Schedule (Please notice that this schedule is tentative and so subject to change as the semester unfolds. **The list of readings indicates only some of the central texts we will cover.** A more detailed list of readings will be assigned during the semester as discussion of topics demands. I MAY ALSO ASSIGN ADDITIONAL READINGS FROM THE SECONDARY LITERATURE AND IN THAT CASE I WILL PROVIDE PDF FILES POSTED ON BB OR PHOTOCOPIES). So, *coming to class will keep you informed on the changes*)

| Date | Topics | Readings |
|----------|--|--|
| W Jan 17 | Introduction and Administrative Matters | |
| M Jan 22 | Descartes on Method and the Meditations. | Selections from the Discourse on Method (PDF File). Letter to the Sorbonne; Preface and synopsis; and First Meditation (CSM II 3-15). Suggested readings: Hatfield (PDF file) and Carriero on Med 1 (PDF file) |
| W Jan 24 | Discussion of Meditation One Cont. | First Meditation and selections from Third and Fifth sets of Objections and Replies CSM II 121; CSM II 179-180 and 241-242. |
| M Jan | Meditation Two | Meditation Two |

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| 29 | | |
| W Jan 31 | Discussion of the argument for mind-body dualism | Carriero (PDF file). Discussions of various objections and replies CSM II 122-124 and CSM II 180-193 and 241-249; CSM II 139-142 |
| M Feb 5 | First In-Class Quiz Further discussion of the argument for Dualism | Carriero (PDF file). Discussions of various objections and replies (CSM II 122-124) and CSM II 180-193 and 241-249. |
| W Feb 7 | Descartes' Causal Principle and Meditation Three. Material Falsity and the circularity Problem/The Cartesian Circle. Topics for First Paper distributed. | Meditation Three; Selections from Second, Third and Fourth Sets of Objections and Replies. 1. CSM II 89-90 and 100-105; 2.CSM II 126-133; 3. CSM II 150 and 171. Also article by Alan Nelson (PDF file) |
| M Feb 12 | Descartes' Causal Principle and Meditation Three. Material Falsity and the circularity Problem/The Cartesian Circle. | Meditation Three; Selections from Second, Third and Fourth Sets of Objections and Replies. 1. CSM II 89-90 and 100-105; 2.126-133; 3. 150 and 171. Also article by Alan Nelson (PDF file) |
| W Feb 14 | Descartes' Causal Principle and Meditation Three. Material Falsity and the circularity Problem/The Cartesian Circle. | Meditation Three; Selections from Second, Third and Fourth Sets of Objections and Replies. 1. CSM II 89-90 and 100-105; 2.126-133; 3. 150 and 171. Also article by Alan Nelson (PDF file) |
| <u>M Feb 19</u> | First Paper Due. Meditation Five—Descartes' Ontological Proof | Meditation Five. Selections from the First and Fifth Set of Objections (CSM II 70-72 and 221-223) and Replies (CSM II 82-84 and 261-262) |
| <u>W Feb 21</u> | Discussion of Meditation Five continued. | Meditation Five. Selections from the First and Fifth Set of Objections (CSM II 70-72 and 221-223) and Replies (CSM II 82-84 and 261-262) |
| <u>M Feb 26</u> | Discussion of the Proof for the existence of an external world; Descartes on the Mind-Body Union | Meditation Six; selections from Principles (to be selected from PDF file), Passions of the Soul CSM I 339-340, photocopies provided), Sixth Replies (CSM II 297-299) and Fifth Set of Objections (CSM II 235-240) and Replies (CSM II 265-267) |
| <u>W Feb 28</u> | Discussion of the Proof for the existence of an external world; Descartes on the Mind-Body Union | Meditation Six; selections from Principles (to be selected from PDF file), Passions of the Soul CSM I 339-340, photocopies provided), Sixth Replies (CSM II 297-299) and Fifth Set of Objections (CSM II 235-240) and Replies |

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| | | (CSM II 265-267) |
| <u>M Mar 5</u> | Descartes' Nativism and theory of Mind | Selections from Comments on a Certain Broadsheet (photocopies). Gorham article (PDF File) |
| <u>W Mar 7</u> | Descartes' Nativism and theory of Mind. Locke's attack on nativism. | Locke's Essay Book I chs 1, 2 and 4. |
| <u>M Mar 12</u> | Spring Recess | |
| <u>W Mar 14</u> | Spring Recess | |
| <u>M Mar 19</u> | Descartes' Nativism and theory of Mind. Locke's attack on nativism. Second In-Class quiz | Locke's Essay Book I chs 1, 2 and 4. |
| <u>W Mar 21</u> | Locke's arguments and the question of the Innateness of sensory ideas. | Essay Book II chs 1-12 and Gorham's article (PDF) and Jerry Fodor (PDF) |
| <u>M Mar 26</u> | Locke's arguments and the question of the Innateness of sensory ideas (Cont.) and Locke on the origin of simple and complex ideas. | Essay Book II chs 1-12 |
| <u>W Mar 28</u> | Locke on the origin of Knowledge: ideas of primary and secondary qualities; simple and complex ideas. | Essay Book II chs 1-12 |
| <u>M Apr 2</u> | Locke on complex ideas: Infinity and Substance; Mind and Body. | Selections from Essay Book II |
| <u>W Apr 4</u> | Locke on complex ideas: Infinity and Substance; Mind and Body. | Selections from Essay Book II |
| <u>M Apr 9</u> | Locke on Personal Identity | Selections from Essay Book II. Weinberg article (PDF file) |
| <u>W Apr 11</u> | Locke on Personal Identity. Third-In Class Quiz | Selections from Essay Book II. Weinberg article (PDF file) |
| <u>M Apr 16</u> | Locke on nominal and real essences | Selections from Essay Book II and III. |
| <u>W April 18</u> | Topics for second paper distributed Locke on nominal and real essences | Selections from Essay Book II and III. |
| <u>M Apr 23</u> | Locke on the Degrees, Extent and Reality of Knowledge | Selections from Essay Book IV |
| <u>W Apr 25</u> | Empiricism vs Rationalism/Nativism | Discussions of texts/articles TBA |
| <u>M Apr 30</u> | Second paper due Empiricism and rationalism | Discussions of texts/articles TBA |

Weekly lecture notes will be placed on Blackboard shortly *after* each class together with sets of study questions designed to help you understand and think about the course material you are reading.

Websites (on-line dictionary of philosophical terms and on-line encyclopedia of philosophy):

The Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy (<http://www.utm.edu/research/iep/>)

Meta-Encyclopedia of Philosophy (<http://www.ditext.com/encyc/frame.html>)

Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (<http://plato.stanford.edu/contents.html>)

Class Policies:

Class attendance: I will take attendance in each class. Unexcused absence from more than 10 percent of the scheduled class sessions will result in having the grade lowered by a half grade.

Class participation: class participation is strongly encouraged since (a) it makes the course more instructive and enjoyable and (b) gives me a sense of whether you are doing the readings and have a good grasp of the material. In class, I will ask you either to outline some of the assigned reading material or to express your thoughts on the arguments presented in the assigned readings. Notice that good class participation will affect your final grade: if you are on the borderline, your grade will be pushed up by good class participation and pushed down by poor class participation. For example, if your grade is between a B+ and an A and you have very often contributed to class discussion in one way or another (i.e., by raising interesting points, by answering one of the questions I ask the class, by elaborating on a point made by me or one of your classmates, etc.) your grade will be pushed up to an A. Otherwise, it will be pushed down to a B+.

Classroom etiquette: Students are expected to: 1. Arrive on time. 2. Not to talk to each other while I am lecturing, answering questions or leading the discussion of a topic. 3. Not to text or email. You can use your laptop to take notes, look at the readings and notes but not to check your email, browse the Internet or writing on Facebook.

In-Class Quizzes: No Make-up Quizzes are given. The only accepted reasons for missing a quiz are: (1) illness documented by a doctor's note; (2) a university sponsored activity taking place at the time the assignment is due; (3) death or family crisis with proper documentation provided.

Papers must be handed in on the due date. **No extension** will be granted.

No possibility of **Extra-Credit** work will be granted.

Plagiarism and Academic Integrity: It is the responsibility of every student at Rutgers University to adhere to the policy on academic integrity. The Rutgers University Academic Integrity Policy defines plagiarism as the representation of the words or ideas of another as one's own in any academic work. Intentionally committing plagiarism is a serious offense with severe consequences. Instructors are required to report students who intentionally violate this policy to the department chairperson and to the Office of Student Judicial Affairs. The most common forms of plagiarism are:

- Quoting directly or paraphrasing without acknowledging the source (this includes copying or paraphrasing material from a web site without providing a proper citation for the site)
- Presenting the work of another as one's own
- Plagiarizing major portions of a written assignment
- Submitting purchased materials such as term papers

The Rutgers University Academic Integrity Policy establishes levels of violations and recommends sanctions. Depending upon the severity of the case and the level of the violation, the sanctions for these violations include: a failing grade for the assignment, failure in the course, mandatory participation in a series of noncredit academic integrity workshops, academic probation, and/or suspension.

If you are in doubt as to what constitutes plagiarism or are concerned that you are misappropriating someone's words or ideas, speak immediately with me. For more information, please consult the University Code of Student Conduct or the Student Judicial Affairs website <http://judicialaffairs.rutgers.edu>

HONOR PLEDGE

Please place the following honor pledge on all exams and assignments: "On my honor, I have neither received nor given any unauthorized assistance on this examination (assignment)."

Course Assessment:

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| <u>Quizzes</u> | <u>40% (1st quiz: 10%; 2nd and 3rd quizzes: 15% each)</u> |
| <u>1st paper</u> | <u>30%</u> |
| <u>2nd paper</u> | <u>30%</u> |

Grading:

Your quizzes will be assigned points out of 50 which will translate into letter grades as follows:

50-46 = A (50 is a full A; 46 is a A-/B+)
45-40 = B (45 is a B+ and 40 is a B-/C+)
39-34 = C (39 is a C+ and 34 is a C-/D+)
33-28 = D (33 is a D+ and 28 is a D-)
27 or below= F

Your papers will be assigned points out of 100 which will translate into letter grades as follows:

100-91 = (100 is a full A; 91 is A-/B+)
90-80 = B (90 is a B+ and 80 is a B-/C+)
79-68 = C (79 is a C+ and 68 is a C-/D+)
67-56 = D (67 is a D+ and 57 is a D-)
55 or below= F

After grading individual assignments using a percentage, I will average the percentages at the end of classes, taking into account the weight of each grade, by using Microsoft Excel. The percentage-to-letter grade conversion for the final (total) grade for the course is:

100-91 = (100 is a full A; 91 is A-/B+)
90-80 = B (90 is a B+ and 80 is a B-/C+)
79-68 = C (79 is a C+ and 68 is a C-/D+)
67-56 = D (67 is a D+ and 57 is a D-)
55 or below= F

Grading criteria for papers: A philosophy paper is an *argumentative* essay. An argumentative essay is an essay where you provide evidence not only of your mastery and understanding of the material but also of your critical skills and ability to argue for the view you want to defend.

The **content** of the essay will be the main deciding factor (85%) in the determination of the final grade. The content of the essay is determined by: (1) Accurate interpretation of the texts; (2) Introduction must state thesis and summarize the argument you are going to give in the body of the paper. (3) Clear conclusion (or thesis); (4) Clear argumentation in favor of your own thesis and against possible objections to your own thesis/interpretation.

Other contributing factors (15%) in the determination of the final grade are: (1) spelling; (2) sentence construction and grammatical errors.

Disability Accommodations

Rutgers abides by the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, the Americans with Disabilities Act Amendments (ADAA) of 2008, and Sections 504 and 508 which mandate reasonable accommodations be provided for qualified students with disabilities and the accessibility of online information. If you have a disability and may require some type of instructional and/or examination accommodation, please contact me early in the

semester so that I can provide or facilitate in providing accommodations you may need. If you have not already done so, you will need to register with the Office of Disability Services, the designated office on campus to provide services and administer exams with accommodations for students with disabilities. The Office of Disability Services is located in the Robeson Student Center. I look forward to talking with you soon to learn how I may be helpful in supporting your academic success in this course.

For more information on disability services at Rutgers, go to <http://disabilityservices-uw.rutgers.edu/>

By remaining in this class after the first class meeting, you acknowledge that you have read and understood all of the above, and you agree to abide by the rules listed above.

IMPORTANT REMINDER: The last day to drop a class without a “W” grade is January 23. The last day to withdraw from a class with a “W” grade is March 26. The last day to withdraw from College with a “W” grade is May 16.