

History of Modern Philosophy
(non-traditional)
Spring 20XY

Instructor: Dr. Graham Clay

Student Hours: Tuesdays at a time decided by class (survey due on Friday, Jan. 19)

Student Hours Location: Zoom (click on link on Canvas Module page)

Office Hours: by appointment (via Canvas message or email)

Office Location: in person and on Zoom (same as above; click on link on Canvas Module page)

Class Location: to be determined

Course Description:

The social and scientific progress in the West culminating in the 17th and 18th centuries ushered in a bold new era of philosophical ideas and systems. Spanning roughly from 1600 to 1800, this era is what we now call "modern philosophy." While the modern philosophers had much to contribute to other domains, we will focus on their innovations in epistemology, philosophy of mind, metaphysics, and ethics. In particular, we will examine their views on skepticism(s), mind-body interaction, personal identity, mental representation, happiness, and the origins and demands of morality. Understanding the positions of the modern philosophers in these domains is crucial because many contemporary philosophical debates take them as starting points.

Course Goals:

By the end of this course, you should expect to have:

- Improved your ability to read philosophical texts, and especially historical texts
- Improved your ability to evaluate philosophical arguments and positions
- Improved your philosophical writing abilities
- Learned about the positions of some of the philosophers of the early modern period
- Learned some of the basic tools of logic
- Be prepared to take more advanced seminars in philosophy

Texts and Materials:

All texts and other course materials will be provided directly in Canvas. No texts need to be purchased or acquired outside of what is linked on the Canvas homepage.

Feedback and Communication:

Beyond my initial welcome email, all of my electronic communication will occur via announcements on Canvas or via the course materials linked on the Canvas Home page. I (Dr. Clay) will strive to grade all assignments within a week of their due dates, although the major assignments may take up to a week longer, depending on the circumstances.

Academic Integrity:

Academic dishonesty includes all forms of unethical or illegal behavior which affects a student's academic standing, including, but not limited to, cheating on exams, plagiarism, forgery of academic documents, falsification of information on academic documents, or unauthorized access to computer files containing academic information. Academic dishonesty may result in sanctions ranging from a grade of 0 on a particular assignment to an "F" in the class and report submitted to the university. Please see the university's policy on Academic Integrity for more information.

TurnItIn Plagiarism Software:

Plagiarism occurs when someone presents the ideas or work of another person as their own, without giving proper credit. Self-plagiarism means reusing work you have already published or submitted in a class. Written assignments in this course will undergo a similarity assessment by Turnitin, which is software used to detect these acts and reinforce best practices when using and citing the work of others or oneself. By taking this course, students acknowledge and give their consent that these papers will be submitted to Turnitin and might be included in a secure repository, used for comparison to papers submitted by others in the future. All Turnitin submissions will take place within Canvas, which is also where students can access any reports generated by Turnitin. Please visit turnitin.com for copies of policies, including proprietary rights, privacy, security, and FERPA compliance.

Reach out for Success:

College students encounter setbacks from time to time. If you encounter difficulties and need assistance, it's important to reach out. Consider discussing the situation with an instructor, academic advisor, peer support office, or counselor. I (Dr. Clay) am always available for you, so please reach out.

Grading:40% - Weekly Tasks0% - Group Discussion Board Posts

You will be in a three- or four-person Canvas group with two or three of your classmates all semester. Every week, there will be an open discussion board available for you to post questions, thoughts, and otherwise interact with your groupmates, if you want to. Think of this space as like chatting with your friends about the class in person before and after class meetings (or while you study). [This is not a graded assignment.]

0% - Student Hours

Every Tuesday starting January 23, there will be an optional period (at a time decided by the class in a poll due Friday, January 19 at 11:59 PM) for you to come on Zoom, ask me (Dr. Clay) about course content and assignments, talk with your classmates about the course, or just listen to what other people are saying. [This is not a graded assignment.]

10% - Verbal Contributions During Lectures

Philosophy is a contact sport. This class is training for a life of doing philosophy, so you must engage with me (Dr. Clay) and your classmates during class by asking questions and responding to others' claims. If you ask a question or make a comment on average at least once a week, you will get a perfect score.

6% - Activities [2% each]

During the first two weeks of class, there will be three self-guided activities due on Canvas at 11:59 PM on the days assigned. The goal of these activities is to guide you through important course concepts with the assistance of some interactive activities, demonstrations, and tutorials. Your task is to read all the slides, mentally engage with the activity, and submit any answers requested. If you earnestly complete this task on a given Wednesday by 11:59 PM, you will get a perfect score for that day. [Your activities will be graded based on completion. You will not get instructor feedback on these assignments.]

12% - Hypothesis Contributions [1% each]

Every Tuesday starting on January 23, you must turn in two Hypothesis annotations on the reading for the day by the start of class. Hypothesis is a social text annotation plugin for Canvas. Your task is to both (a) annotate the reading to ask a substantive question about it and (b) respond substantively to others' questions or responses. (a) and (b) are the two annotations I (Dr. Clay) expect of you. The goal of these assignments is to practice thinking and interacting in a philosophical way with your classmates by jointly annotating the readings for that day. If you earnestly complete this task by the start of class, you will get a perfect score for that day. [Your annotations will be graded based on completion and effort. You will not get instructor feedback on these assignments. Your lowest annotation score will be dropped.]

6% - Writing Assignments [1% each]

Every other Thursday starting on January 18, there will be a writing assignment on the readings for that day. The goals of these writing assignments will evolve over the course of the semester from simple comprehension checks to opportunities for you to express your own views on the readings. I will give some comments on your responses, but you should come to office hours if you are running into trouble. The assignments will be posted and received on Canvas. [Your writing will be graded based on completion and effort. You will get instructor feedback on these assignments. Your lowest score will be dropped.]

6% - Review Quizzes [1% each]

Every other Thursday starting on January 25, there will be a review quiz on the readings for that day. The goal of these quizzes is to check your understanding of the readings listed. [You will not get instructor feedback on these assignments. Your lowest score will be dropped.]

62% - Unique or Irregular Tasks2% - Bonus Syllabus Annotation

Until Friday, January 19 at 11:59 PM, you can annotate the class syllabus (this document) on Hypothesis for bonus points. You will get full bonus points if you both (a) annotate the syllabus to ask a substantive question about it and (b) make a substantive comment about an aspect of the course (feel free to make your comment an answer to one of your classmate's questions if you know the answer). [Your annotations will be graded based on completion. I (Dr. Clay) will answer all the questions in class on Tuesday, January 23.]

16% - Mid-Term Essay

Topics for this 4-6 page essay—due Thursday, March 8—will be supplied several weeks in advance and will concern the modern philosophers discussed prior to the mid-term break. [You will receive instructor feedback on this assignment.]

4% - Meeting with Dr. Clay about Final Essay

By Friday, April 27 at 11:59 PM, you must meet with me (Dr. Clay) to discuss your ideas about, plans for, and/or drafts of your final essay. It is your responsibility to schedule this meeting via the Canvas Calendar link provided on Canvas. If none of the days/times on the Canvas Calendar work for you, it is your responsibility to email me to find a day/time that is mutually acceptable. [This task will be graded based on completion.]

20% - Final Essay

Topics for this 4-6 page essay—due Thursday, May 10 on Canvas at the start of the Final Exam—will be supplied several weeks in advance on Canvas and will concern the modern philosophers discussed after the mid-term break. [You will receive instructor feedback on this assignment.]

20% - Final Exam

Your final exam—taking place in person on Thursday, May 10—will be a mixture of short answer questions and essay questions. All of the topics of the course will be fair game, as it is a comprehensive exam. You will have the full time to complete the exam, but it should only take 2/3 of the time. [You will not receive instructor feedback on this assignment.]

Late Policy:

All assignments turned in late will lose 10% from their earned grade for each day that they are late. So, for instance, if you were to turn in a paper 19 hours after the deadline, and if you would have earned a 99% on it, you would lose 10% to end with a grade of 89%.

Grading Scale by Percentage:

A	94-100
A-	90-93

B+	87-89
B	83-86
B-	80-82
C+	77-79
C	73-76
C-	70-72
D+	67-69
D	63-66
D-	60-62
F	0-59

Class Schedule

(subject to change depending on pace, class interests, etc.)

Color Key:

- : Readings (ungraded)
- : Student Hours, Student Hours Survey (ungraded)
- : Writing Assignments, Quizzes, Hypothesis Annotations, Activities, Meetings with Dr. Clay, Papers, Exams (graded)
- : Bonus Syllabus Annotation Activity, Mid-Term Survey (extra credit)

Note:

All items are listed on the day that they are due (or should be completed by). Everything **graded** or **extra credit** is due by class time on the day that it is listed, unless it is due on a day that class does not meet, in which case it is due at the time specified on Canvas.

Tuesday, January 16 - *Introductions, Course Details, Preliminaries*

Unit 1: Epistemology – Scepticisms and Responses

Thursday, January 18 - *Descartes + Hobbes*

- Reading #1:** - Excerpts from *Meditations on First Philosophy* (Letter of Dedication, Preface to the Reader, Synopsis, and Meditations 1, 2).
 - Excerpts from *Third Set of Objections and Replies* (Objections I-IV).
 - Excerpts from *The Principles of Human Knowledge* (I.66-I.71).

Writing Assignment #1 (on Reading #1)

Friday, January 19 -

Activity #1
BONUS Syllabus Annotation Activity
Student Hours Survey

Tuesday, January 23 - Zera Jacob + Walda Heywat

Reading #2: - Excerpts from Jacob's *Treatise* (Chapters 1-5).
 - Excerpts from Heywat's *Treatise* (Chapters 5-6).

Hypothesis #1 (on Reading #2)
Activity #2
Student Hours

Thursday, January 25 - Descartes

Reading #3: - Excerpts from *Meditations* (Meditations 2-4).
 - Excerpts from *Second Set of Replies* (Definitions I-IV and Axioms III-V).

Quiz #1 (on Descartes + Hobbes + Zera Jacob + Walda Heywat)
Activity #3

Tuesday, January 30 - Hume

Reading #4: - Excerpts from *Enquiry* (Sections I-IV).

Hypothesis #2 (on Reading #4)
Student Hours

Thursday, February 1 - Hume

Reading #5: - Excerpts from *Enquiry* (Sections V, VII)

Writing Assignment #2 (on Reading #5)

Tuesday, February 6 - Kant

Reading #6: - Excerpts from *Prolegomena to Any Future Metaphysics* (Preamble Sections 1-5).
 - Excerpts from *Critique of Pure Reason* (B Introduction).

Hypothesis #3 (on Reading #6)
Student Hours

Thursday, February 8 - Kant

Reading #7: - Excerpts from *Prolegomena* (First Part Remarks II-III; Second Part Sections 21a-23, 27-33).
 - Excerpts from *Critique* (B Aesthetic).

Quiz #2 (on Hume + Kant)

Tuesday, February 13 - Reid

Reading #8: - Excerpts from *An Inquiry into the Human Mind on the Principles of Common Sense* (Letter of Dedication; Chapters I, VI)

Hypothesis #4 (on Reading #8)
Student Hours

Thursday, February 15 - Reid

Reading #9: - Excerpts from *An Inquiry into the Human Mind on the Principles of Common Sense* (Letter of Dedication; Chapters I, VI)

Writing Assignment #3 (on Reading #9)

Unit 2: Philosophy of Mind/Metaphysics – Mind-Body

Tuesday, February 20 - Descartes

Reading #10: - Excerpts from *Meditations* (Meditations 5, 6).
- Excerpts from *Second Set of Replies* (Definitions V-VII).
- Excerpts from *Principles* (I.51-I.53, I.60, II.4)

Hypothesis #5 (on Reading #10)

Student Hours

Thursday, February 22 - Elisabeth + Arnauld

Reading #11: - Excerpts from Elisabeth's correspondence with Descartes.
- Excerpts from *Fourth Set of Objections and Replies*.

Quiz #3 (on Elisabeth + Arnauld)

Tuesday, February 27 - Amo

Reading #12: - Excerpts from *The Apathy of the Human Mind* (Chapters 1-2).

Hypothesis #6 (on Reading #12)

Student Hours

Thursday, March 1 - Conway

Reading #13: - Excerpts from *Principles* (Chapter 6).

Writing Assignment #4 (on Reading #13)

Tuesday, March 6 - Cavendish

Reading #14: - Excerpts from *Grounds of Natural Philosophy* (Chapters 1-8, Appendix).

Hypothesis #7 (on Reading #14)

Student Hours

Thursday, March 8 - Cavendish

Reading #15: - Excerpts from *Grounds of Natural Philosophy* (Chapters 10-19).

Quiz #4 (on Amo + Conway + Cavendish)

Mid-Term Essay

Tuesday, March 13 - Mid-Term Break (NO CLASS)

Thursday, March 15 - Mid-Term Break (NO CLASS)

Unit 3: Philosophy of Mind – Representation

Tuesday, March 20 - *Locke + Leibniz*
Reading #16: - Excerpts from *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*
 (Book I, Chapters ii-iv).
 - Excerpts from *New Essays Concerning Human Understanding*
 (Book I, Chapters ii-iii).
Hypothesis #8 (on Reading #16)
Student Hours

Thursday, March 22 - *Locke*
Reading #17: - Excerpts from *An Essay* (Book II, Chapters i-vii, xii-xvii)
Writing Assignment #5 (on Reading #17)

Friday, March 23 -
Mid-Term Feedback Survey due at 11:59 PM

Tuesday, March 27 - *Locke*
Reading #18: - Excerpts from *An Essay* (Book II, Chapter xxiii).
Hypothesis #9 (on Reading #18)
Student Hours

Thursday, March 29 - *Hume*
Reading #19: - Excerpts from *Enquiry* (Sections II-III).
Quiz #5 (on Locke + Leibniz + Hume)

Tuesday, April 3 - *Malebranche*
Reading #20: - Excerpts from *Search for Truth* (Book 3, Part 2, Chapters 1-5).
 - Excerpts from *Search* (Elucidation 10).
Hypothesis #10 (on Reading #20)
Student Hours

Unit 4: Ethics – Happiness and Morality

Thursday, April 5 - *du Châtelet*
Reading #21: - Excerpts from "Discourse on Happiness" (Pages 349-359).
Writing Assignment #6 (on Reading #21)

Tuesday, April 10 - *du Châtelet*
Reading #22: - Excerpts from "Discourse on Happiness" (Pages 359-365).
Hypothesis #11 (on Reading #22)
Student Hours

Thursday, April 12 - *Elisabeth + Descartes*
Reading #23: - Excerpts from Elisabeth's correspondence with Descartes.
Quiz #6 (on du Châtelet + Elisabeth + Descartes)

Tuesday, April 17 - *Leibniz*
Reading #24: - Excerpts from "Meditation on the Common Concept of Justice."
 - Excerpts from "Happiness."
Hypothesis #12 (on Reading #24)
Student Hours

Thursday, April 19 - *Trotter*
Reading #25: - Excerpts from *Remarks Upon Some Writers and Defence of Mr Locke's Essay.*
Writing Assignment #7 (on Reading #25)

Tuesday, April 24 - *Conway*
Reading #26: - Excerpts from *Principles.*
Hypothesis #13 (on Reading #26)
Student Hours

Thursday, April 26 - *Astell*
Reading #27: - Excerpts from *Letters Concerning the Love of God.*
Quiz #7 (on Leibniz + Trotter + Conway + Astell)

Friday, April 27 -
Deadline to Meet with Dr. Clay about Final Essay

Tuesday, May 1 - *Catch Up Day, Summary of Semester*
Student Hours

Thursday, May 10 - *Final Exam + Final Essays Due*
Final Essay (due on Canvas by the start of the Final Exam)
Final Exam (in exam room at the assigned time)