

PHILOSOPHY 32: PHILOSOPHY AND THE RISE OF MODERN SCIENCE

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Lectures: MWF 10-10:50am MOS 0204

Discussion Section 1: M 11-11:50 HSS 2150

Discussion Section 2: M 12-12:50 HSS 2150

Final Exam: Friday, March 22, 2024 8am-11am (location TBA)

Office Hour (Johnson): W 2-3pm RWAC – Arts and Humanities (Bldg. 1) Office #0451

Office Hour (Zellmer): TBA

Course Description: This course introduces philosophy through a close reading of three masterpieces of early modern philosophy, each focused on a different conception of scientific knowledge, its foundations and implications. We will begin by reading the six *Meditations* (1641) of Rene Descartes (1596-1650), an attempt to set modern science on a new rationalistic foundation, based on proofs for the existence of the human soul and god, from which may be inferred principles for modern scientific inquiry. We will also examine Descartes' reply to Thomas Hobbes' (1588-1679) *Objections* to his *Meditations*. Next we will read Hobbes' *Human Nature* (1640), his own very different attempt to set modern science (especially political science) on a new empiricist foundation, a work in which he claims to derive laws of nature from a materialist account of human nature. Finally, we will examine David Hume's (1711-1776) *Enquiry concerning Human Understanding* (1748), a skeptical investigation of human nature and the empiricist account of human knowledge.

Textbooks: The textbooks for the course have been selected from among those in the public domain by the Professor and uploaded to the Canvas website in PDF format. Students are required to download and read these textbooks (and encouraged to print them out for ease of reference during lectures and discussions), and must quote and cite from these provided texts in all graded discussion posts and exams.

Schedule of required meetings: All registered students are required to attend the discussion section for which they are registered and all meetings below [except where noted].

Week	M	W	F
1	Introduction	<u>Descartes</u> , <i>Meditation 1</i>	<i>Meditation 2</i>
2	[No class, no discussion]	<i>Meditation 3</i>	<i>Meditation 4</i>
3	<i>Meditation 5</i>	<i>Meditation 6</i>	<i>Reply to Objection III</i>
4	Midterm Oral Exam	Midterm Oral Exam	Midterm Oral Exam
5	<u>Hobbes</u> , <i>Human Nature 1</i>	<i>Human Nature 2-3</i>	<i>Human Nature 4-6</i>
6	<i>Human Nature 7-10</i>	<i>Human Nature 11-13</i>	<i>Human Nature 14-15</i>
7	[No class, no discussion]	<i>Human Nature 16-19</i>	<u>Hume</u> , <i>Inquiry 1</i>
8	<i>Inquiry 2-3</i>	<i>Inquiry 4-5</i>	<i>Inquiry 6-7</i>
9	<i>Inquiry 8</i>	<i>Inquiry 9</i>	<i>Inquiry 10-11</i>
10	<i>Inquiry 12</i>	Review	Final Oral Exam
11	[No class, no discussion]	No class	Final Oral Exam (8-11am)

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Evaluation: Students may earn points on weekly discussion boards (up to 5 points each week for a maximum of 50 points), and on oral examinations (up to 20 points per exam), and for participation during lecture or discussion sections (up to 10 points). Final grades: A (\Rightarrow 90); B (\Rightarrow 80); C (\Rightarrow 70); D/P (\Rightarrow 60); F/NP ($<$ 60). Penalties for absences applied to final grades: 3-4 absences (-1 letter grade), 5-6 absences (-2 letter grades), 7-8 absences (-3 letter grades), 9+ absences (automatic F/NP).