

17th Century Philosophy
Philosophy 305
Fall 2008

Instructor: Philip M. Mouch

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Where: MacLean 165

When: MW 1:30-2:45

Office Hours: M: 10:30-1, 3-4:30, T 10-11:30

W 10:30-1, H 10-11:30 and by appointment

Course Overview: In this course, we will be looking at three of the major figures in philosophy from the 17th century: René Descartes, John Locke, Baruch Spinoza, and Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz. This period marks a shift in the approach to acquiring knowledge about our world from the medieval period of philosophy. We will be focusing, in this class, on questions of epistemology and metaphysics. Each of our three philosophers will have quite a bit to say about these topics, and we can see foreshadowed in their works questions that philosophers are concerned with today.

Reading Assignments and Texts: You should read the assignments before coming to class. The schedule below will give you an idea of when we will be reading each philosopher. You should read through the assignments at least a couple of times. Finally, be sure to bring the text to class. The required texts for this class are:

Descartes *Selected Philosophical Writings* (Cambridge 1988)
Locke *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, abridged (Hackett 1996)
Spinoza *The Essential Spinoza: Ethics and Related Writings* (Hackett 2006)
Leibniz *Discourse on Metaphysics and Other Essays* (Hackett 1991)
Leibniz & Clarke *Correspondence* (Hackett 2000)

Evaluation:

(1) There will be four papers due. These papers are to be 4-6 pages typed and double-spaced. These papers will constitute 90% of your final grade.

(2) There will be informal writing (reading questions and the like) worth 10% of your grade.

Policies:

(1) Plagiarism will not be tolerated. Any failure to properly cite a source you use in your paper will result in a failing grade for that paper, and possibly failing the course and/or reporting the incident to the Student Conduct Committee. If you are unsure what constitutes plagiarism, please come talk to me.

(2) You are responsible for all assignments to be handed in. Late assignments will be penalized. Excuses such as you handed in the paper to my mailbox, slid it under my door, or gave it to a friend to hand in are unacceptable. I will take such papers, but if the paper never showed up for whatever reason, it will count as late. You should be in class to hand in all assignments; otherwise you take the risk of not getting credit for your work.

(3) You are expected to be in class and have done the reading for the day. It is simple courtesy to be in class on time and in your seat. If you have to be late for some reason, please enter the room and take your seat quietly, so as not to disturb the class. PLEASE TURN OFF ALL ELECTRONIC EQUIPMENT (INCLUDING CELLPHONES, PAGERS, AND IPODS). Do not engage in text messaging during class. Finally, do not stand up and walk out in the middle of the class period. This is distracting and rude to the other students and me. If you must leave early for some reason, please talk to me before class and sit near the door.

Students with disabilities who believe they may need an accommodation in this class are encouraged to contact Greg Toutges, Coordinator of Disability Services at 477-5859 (voice) or 1-800-627-3529 (MRS/TTY), CMU 114 as soon as possible to ensure that accommodations are implemented in a timely fashion.

Schedule: These dates are tentative. I may have to make changes to these dates as the semester goes on. I will make any necessary changes in class.

Date	Assignment
August 25	Introduction
August 27	Descartes - Rules for the Direction of the Mind (pp. 1-19)
September 1	Labor Day
September 3	Descartes - Principles of Philosophy, Part One, 1-31
September 8	Descartes - Principles of Philosophy, Part One, 32-62
September 10	Descartes - Principles of Philosophy, Part One, 63-76
September 15	Descartes - Principles of Philosophy, Parts Two and Four
September 17	Descartes - Passions of the Soul
September 22	Descartes Wrap-Up
September 24	Locke - Book I: §1-4
September 29	Locke - Book II: §1-12
October 1	Locke - Book II: §20-21
October 6	Locke - Book II: §23-27
October 8	Locke - Book III: §2-6
October 13	In-Service
October 15	Locke - Book IV: §1-3
October 20	Locke - Book IV: §9-11
October 22	Spinoza - Treatise on the Emendation of the Intellect
October 27	Spinoza - Ethics, Part One, through Proposition 5
October 29	Spinoza - Ethics, I P6-P11
November 3	Spinoza - Ethics, I P12-29
November 5	Spinoza - Ethics, I P30-Appendix
November 10	Spinoza - Ethics, Part Two, through Proposition 21
November 12	Spinoza - Ethics, II P22-P49
November 17	Leibniz - Discourse on Metaphysics §1-20
November 19	Leibniz - Discourse on Metaphysics §21-37
November 24	Leibniz - Monadology
November 26	Thanksgiving
December 1	Leibniz & Clarke (pp. 1-35)
December 3	Leibniz & Clarke (pp. 36-66)
December 8	Leibniz & Clarke (pp. 66-87)
December 10	Study Day