

17th Century Philosophy
Philosophy 305
Fall 2012

Instructor: Philip M. Mouch

Office: MacLean 279R

Office Phone: 477-2331

E-Mail: mouch@mnstate.edu

Where: MacLean 165

When: T&H 3:00-4:15

**Office Hours: T&H: Noon-2:30, W: Noon-3
M: Noon-2 (email only), 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.

Learning Outcomes (General):

1. Explain central ideas and themes that characterize Western metaphysics in the 17th century.
2. Explain central ideas and themes that characterize Western epistemology in the 17th century.
3. Compare and contrast the metaphysical and epistemological positions of Descartes and Locke.
4. Critically evaluate the metaphysical and epistemological position of Descartes.
5. Critically evaluate the metaphysical and epistemological position of Locke.
6. Explain the historical development of Western philosophy in the 17th century.

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 *Ethics, Treatise on the Emendation of the Intellect, and Selected Letters* (Hackett 1992)
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 3-5 pages typed and double-spaced. These papers will constitute 90% of your final grade.

(2) Every day with a reading assignment, you will turn in (to my mailbox or by email) a substantial question on that day's reading. These are due to me by Noon (before the class meets) and will be worth 10% of your final 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. 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, Director of Disability Services at 477-4318 (Voice) or 1-800-627-3529 (MRS/TTY), Flora Frick 154 as soon as possible to ensure that accommodations are implemented in a timely fashion. Information regarding Disability Services is available at <http://web.mnstate.edu/disability/>

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	Papers
August 28	Introduction	
August 30	Descartes - Rules for the Direction of the Mind (pp. 1-19)	
September 4	Descartes - Principles of Philosophy, Part One, 1-31	
September 6	Descartes - Principles of Philosophy, Part One, 32-62	
September 11	Descartes - Principles of Philosophy, Part One, 63-76	
September 13	Descartes - Principles of Philosophy, Parts Two and Four	
September 18	Descartes - Passions of the Soul	
September 20	Descartes Wrap-Up	Paper #1 Assigned
September 25	Locke - Book I: §1-4	
September 27	Locke - Book II: §1-12	Paper #1 Due
October 2	Locke - Book II: §20-21	
October 4	Locke - Book II: §23-27	
October 9	Locke - Book III: §2-6	
October 11	Locke - Book IV: §1-3	
October 16	Fall Breather - No Class	
October 18	Locke - Book IV: §9-11	Paper #2 Assigned
October 23	Spinoza - Treatise on the Emendation of the Intellect	
October 25	Spinoza - Ethics, Part One, through Proposition 5	Paper #2 Due
October 30	Spinoza - Ethics, I P6-P11	
November 1	Spinoza - Ethics, I P12-29	
November 6	Spinoza - Ethics, I P30-Appendix	
November 8	Spinoza - Ethics, Part Two, through Proposition 21	
November 13	Spinoza - Ethics, II P22-P49	Paper #3 Assigned
November 15	Leibniz - Discourse on Metaphysics §1-20	
November 20	Leibniz - Discourse on Metaphysics §21-37	Paper #3 Due
November 22	Thanksgiving - No Class	
November 27	Leibniz - Monadology	
November 29	Leibniz & Clarke (pp. 1-35)	
December 4	Leibniz & Clarke (pp. 36-66)	
December 6	Leibniz & Clarke (pp. 66-87)	Paper #4 Assigned
December 11	Last Day of Class	
December 13	Final Paper Due @ 3:00 pm	Paper #4 Due