

**Philosophy 210 A01: Introduction to Early Modern Philosophy**  
**(Winter Session 2016-2017, Second Term [Spring])**  
**Section: A01 (CRN: 22404)**

**General Course Information, Recommended Supplementary Reading, Schedule**

**1. General Course Information**

<u>Location &amp; Time:</u>	CLE A203; 10:00 a.m. – 11:20 a.m.
<u>Instructor:</u>	Dr. David Scott
<u>Instructor's Office:</u>	CLE B320
<u>Office Hours:</u>	Mon. & Thurs. 12:00 p.m. – 1:00 p.m. (by appointment only)
<u>Telephone &amp; Email:</u>	250-721-7517; djfscott@uvic.ca

ABOUT THIS COURSE:

Over the course of our intellectual history there have been periods of philosophical activity that have stood out in terms of their profundity and rich variety. Perhaps the three most famous periods are those of the ancient Greece of Socrates, Plato and Aristotle, the medieval Islamic and Christian era, and the early modern period (spanning roughly from Descartes to Kant). This course focuses on the latter era, and in particular on what has been called the distinction between rationalist philosophers (Descartes, Spinoza, Malebranche, Leibniz) and empiricist philosophers (Hobbes, Locke, Berkeley Hume). Though we will not be studying all of these philosophers, you will be introduced to a sufficiently broad selection of writings to permit you to obtain an overall perspective on this important philosophical era.

TEXTS AND COURSE MATERIAL:

*Early Modern Philosophy: Essential Readings With Commentary*, ed. A. P. Martinich, Fritz Allhoff, and Anand Jayprakash Vaidya (Wiley-Blackwell 2007), ISBN-13: 978-1405135672.

Supplementary material (posted on CourseSpaces) on the philosophy of John Locke (concerning knowledge and personal identity), and on the philosophy of David Hume (concerning knowledge and personal identity).

MARKING SCHEME:

In-class test (15%); take-home essay (25%); in-class test (25%); final exam (35%).

Letter grades correspond to the following marks: A+ = 90 - 100, A = 85 - 89, A- = 80 - 84, B+ = 77 - 79, B = 73 - 76, B- = 70 - 72, C+ = 65 - 69, C = 60 - 64, D = 50 - 59, F = 0 - 49.

CRITERIA FOR EVALUATION:

In this course you can assume that all essay or exam topics are intended to test you on *the material covered in class*. You are of course permitted and encouraged to supplement class discussion of the subject with outside material, but the minimum expectation is that you deal with the material covered in class, and that you address the points raised there about that material. This does not mean that for tests and essays you are expected merely to repeat the in-class proceedings. Rather, it means that you are expected to take account of or do justice to in-class discussion. The reason for this requirement is that the tests and essays for this course constitute part of a continuous whole with the lectures and in-class discussions. They do not float free of the work done in the classroom, though of course the tests and especially the essays also provide you with room to explore topics outside of the classroom confines. Roughly speaking, “B+” and “A-“ papers take account of and rise to the level of the class discussion; “A” and “A+” papers take that discussion to a higher/deeper level.

Criteria for evaluation: The criteria I use to evaluate essays are, I believe, criteria which common sense would suggest in the assessment of a philosophy essay. Primarily my concern is with content or

substance. In indicating these evaluation criteria I emphasize that philosophy is an *arts* or *humanities* subject, which means that assessing the merits of a philosophy paper ultimately requires qualitative evaluation or judgment on my part. Therefore, I do not assign precise numerical values to the following assessment criteria; nor is there a mathematical formula I can employ to judge the quality of philosophical writing. However, as a rough guide I employ a list of relative priorities, presented here in ascending order of importance:

- spelling/grammar
- organization & clarity of expression
- accuracy of exposition
- use of examples reflecting understanding of the subject
- breadth of analysis, i.e. number of points covered
- depth of analysis, i.e. how far into the issue analysis is pushed
- resourcefulness, originality and imagination
- tightness, rigor or logical coherence of analysis
- overall degree of philosophical insight

I stress that the order of these criteria is not absolute. Thus, sometimes less important criteria will be given more weight than more important ones. For instance, a student's use and analysis of examples might be so good that I am led to conclude that that student has an excellent understanding of the subject. In such a case the value I attach to the use of examples might increase significantly, and I might overlook the fact that, for instance, the student has failed to cover as many points as other students.

Academic Honesty: Cheating of *any* kind, including collusion (working with others too closely) and plagiarism from (i) books and/or articles, (ii) other students' papers, and (iii) papers or other material on the internet, is a serious academic offence. University regulations also prohibit students from submitting the same work for two different courses; in other words, plagiarizing or "recycling" one's own work is not permitted. If detected, cheating can result in dismissal from this course (with an "F"), and dismissal from the university.

#### SUBMITTING AND RETURNING GRADED WORK:

(a) All essays must be *typed (12-font, Times), double-spaced, paginated, and contain the word-count on the front cover*. Essays should be stapled, *not* paper-clipped. I will not accept essays submitted as email attachments; nor will I accept essays that exceed the maximum word limit. In cases where I think the word limit has been exceeded, I will require an electronic copy to check. I'm afraid I will not be available to discuss test or essay questions on the day before or on the day they are due to be submitted, as I need to avoid being swamped by last-minute enquiries.

(b) In general, I will return your graded work during class time, within two weeks of its having been submitted. If you are not there to receive your work when I return it in class, you can pick it up either from me in my office or, if you are willing to sign a waiver form, from the "Returned Work" box outside the departmental office. The Protection of Privacy Act prevents me from placing your work in that box unless you have signed the waiver form.

(c) When graded work is returned to you it will frequently be annotated with comments. If you wish to discuss your work with me, please read those comments first. To give you a chance to do this, as a matter of policy I do not discuss work on the same day as it is returned.

#### LATE ASSIGNMENTS / MISSED TESTS:

Late assignments will not accepted without penalty unless justified by a medical or other academically legitimate reason, for which documentation of some kind (e.g., a medical certificate) will generally be required. Late assignments will be accepted with a penalty of 5% per day (or part-day, including weekend days or part-days), for a maximum of 4 days (20%). After four days, no late assignments will be accepted.

### OFFICE HOURS:

Because of demand (especially near test days or essay due-dates), if you wish to see me during my office hours you need to make an appointment. Appointments are limited to about fifteen minutes per student, so it's best to come prepared with specific questions.

### MISCELLANEOUS NOTES AND CLASS POLICIES:

(a) Class discussion & participation: In general, my classes tend to involve lots of discussion. I encourage and greatly value your in-class contributions, and I can assure you that other students do too. It is a frequently unacknowledged fact of the classroom that if you have a question or comment, it's likely that others have the same one too. So go ahead and ask your question, or make your comment: it helps me, you, and your classmates. And the more you talk, the less I talk, and surely that is a good thing! If, however, you are more shy or reserved but still have comments or questions, please either write me with your questions/comments or come see me during office hours.

(b) Emailing me: Because of problems with SPAM and viruses transmitted by email, I have to request that whenever you email me you make sure to put something in the "subject" line of your email to identify you as a student in this course. If you don't do this, and I don't recognize your name, I will delete your email without opening it. In addition to this, I would greatly appreciate it if you observed the (still) standard courtesy of beginning your emails with a salutation, e.g. "Dear ...", "Hello Dr. XX", etc. This piece of social etiquette is rooted in the recognition that people are not simply inanimate objects (like ATM machines), but should be addressed before being spoken to.

(c) Coming late to class: The classroom is a work environment, and it can be a distraction when people arrive walk in late. So please try to be on time.

(d) If a person not registered in this class wishes to attend a lecture to check it out, that person needs to receive prior permission.

(e) Use of computers & hand-held media/communication devices, etc., in the class: For the purpose of taking notes, you are welcome to use laptops with quiet keyboards in the classroom. Please do not attend to computers or hand held-devices for obviously or apparently non-academic purposes, e.g., watching films, surfing the web, texting, etc.

## 2. Class Schedule\*

### **WEEK 1: (Jan. 5)**

Thurs. Jan. 5 - Course Introduction:

### **WEEK 2 (Jan. 9, 12)**

Mon. Jan. 9 - Science, Skepticism, Method.

Thurs. Jan. 12 - Science, Skepticism, Method.

### **WEEK 3 (Jan. 16, 19)**

Mon. Jan. 16 - Science, Skepticism, Method.

Thurs. Jan. 19 - Science, Skepticism, Method.

### **WEEK 4 (Jan. 23, 26)**

Mon. Jan. 23 - Science, Skepticism, Method. Essay topic Assigned.

Thurs. Jan. 26 - Test #1 (15%)

### **WEEK 5 (Jan. 30, Feb. 2)**

Mon. Jan. 30 - Descartes & Critics.

Thurs. Feb. 2 - Descartes & Critics.

### **WEEK 6 (Feb. 6, 9)**

Mon. Feb. 6 - Descartes & Critics.

Thurs. Feb. 9 - Descartes & Critics.

### **WEEK 7 (Feb. 13, 16)**

Mon. Feb. 13 - Mid-term break: no classes.

Thurs. Feb. 16 - Mid-term break: no classes.

### **WEEK 8 (Feb. 20, 23)**

Mon. Feb. 20 - Empiricists. Descartes essay due (25%)

Thurs. Feb. 23 - Empiricists.

### **WEEK 9 (Feb. 27, March 2)**

Mon. Feb. 27 - Empiricists.

Thurs. March 2 - Empiricists.

### **WEEK 10 (March 6, 9)**

Mon. March 6 - Empiricists

Thurs. March 9 - In-class test (25%).

### **WEEK 11 (March 13, 16)**

Mon. March 13 - Rationalists

Thurs. March 16 - Rationalists

### **WEEK 12 (March 20, 23)**

Mon. March 20 - Rationalists

Thurs. March 23 - Rationalists

### **WEEK 13 (March 27, 30)**

Mon. March 27 - Rationalists

Thurs. March 30 - Rationalists

### **WEEK 14 (April 3)**

Mon. April 3 - Rationalists. Last class of term. Review.

**FINAL EXAM PERIOD FOR THIS SEMESTER:** April 7 – 25.

**\* This schedule is subject to revision, as occasionally the discussion and flow of ideas in class require us to spend more time on certain subjects, less time on others, than originally anticipated.**