

PHILOSOPHY 210 (A01)

INTRODUCTION TO EARLY MODERN PHILOSOPHY (CRN: 22565)

SPRING 2023

1. GENERAL COURSE INFORMATION:

Instructor: David Scott
Classroom Location: DSB C126
Class Times: Mon. & Thurs. 11:30 a.m. – 12:50 p.m.
Instructor's Office: CLE B320
Office Hours: Mon. & Thurs. 2:30 – 3:30 (by Zoom appointment only)
Telephone: 250-721-7517
Email: djfscott@uvic.ca

ABOUT THIS COURSE:

Over the course of Western intellectual history there have been periods of philosophical activity that have stood out in terms of their variety and profundity. Perhaps the three most important 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 period, which corresponds roughly with what are referred to as the “Scientific Revolution” and the “Age of Enlightenment”. Our focus will be on two prominent philosophical movements within this period: rationalism, as represented by Descartes, Spinoza, and Leibniz; and empiricism, as represented by Locke, Berkeley, and Hume. Studying these movements will hopefully afford you an overall perspective on this important philosophical era.

TEXTS AND COURSE MATERIAL:

Early Modern Philosophy: An Anthology, edited by Lisa Shapiro and Marcy P. Lascano (Broadview Press 2021). ISBN: 9781554812790.

MARKING SCHEME:

(a) in-class test (25%); (b) take-home essay (35%); (c) final exam (40%).

All grading in this course will done by the course instructor (not by teaching assistant).

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.

MAIN EVALUATION CRITERIA:

The criteria I use to evaluate essays are, I believe, criteria which common sense would suggest in the assessment of philosophical writing. Primarily my concern is with content or substance, i.e., the course material; and in this respect the guiding question is the extent to which a student has understood the material. Of course, this does not mean that form or style count for nothing (and indeed it may not ultimately be possible to divorce form from content).

In indicating the evaluation criteria for this course, I emphasize that philosophy is an arts or humanities subject, which means that assessing the merits of philosophical writing 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 your work. However, as a rough guide I employ a list of relative priorities, presented here in ascending order of importance:

- 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 quality of philosophical insight and expression

I emphasize that, with the exception of the last criterion—that of overall quality of philosophical insight and expression—in practice the ranking 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 lay less emphasis on the fact that the student has failed (for instance) to cover as many points as other students.

CLASS ATTENDANCE:

Under the heading of "Attendance", UVic's Undergraduate Calendar states the following: "Students are expected to attend all classes in which they are enrolled." The full policy statement in the calendar is here:

https://www.uvic.ca/calendar/undergrad/index.php#/policy/ryNResf_E?bc=true&bcCurrent=03%20%20Attendance&bcGroup=Undergraduate%20Academic%20Regulations&bcItemType=policies.

In this course class attendance is a requirement for students wishing to discuss class content during office hours. While students are welcomed and encouraged to come to office hours to discuss class content, to do so students need first to have attended class, or

at least to have listened to the recordings of the relevant missed class(es) that are posted on Brightspace. Student use of office hours should function primarily as supplement to classroom lecture and discussion. Office hours are not intended as private tutorial time with the course instructor, as such a service is not provided by UVic.

Class attendance is *extremely important* in this course when it comes to evaluation, because all forms of testing adopted in this course focus on the material covered in class. The minimum expectation in all forms of evaluation 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 your assignments are expected merely to repeat the in-class proceedings; nor does it mean that you cannot look to external sources for guidance. What it does mean is that in all assignments you need to take explicit account of the texts and passages covered in class and do justice to the in-class discussions of them. Obviously, the best way to ensure that you meet those requires is to attend class. As for use of external sources (i.e., secondary literature), this will be regarded as beneficial to your work only *if* the class-based material has been addressed.

Overall, then, the various assignments 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 class, but are deliberately constructed to incorporate what goes on there. Assignments that fail to incorporate important points arising out of class discussion will be penalized accordingly. At the same time, essays can also provide you with room to explore topics more deeply than they have been treated in class, and good essays do precisely that. Overall, then, “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.

If you happen to miss a class, a recording of the class will be posted on Brightspace shortly thereafter (usually within 24 hours).

IN-CLASS DISCUSSION AND 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 highly 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. If, however, you are more reserved but still have comments or questions, please come see me during office hours.

CLASSROOM CONDUCT:

a) The University of Victoria is committed to promoting critical academic discourse while providing a respectful and supportive learning environment. All members of the university community have the right to this experience, and the responsibility to help create, such an environment. The University will not tolerate racism, sexualized violence, or any form of discrimination, bullying or harassment.

Please be advised that by logging into UVic's learning systems and interacting with online resources, and by attending class, you are engaging in a university activity.

All interactions within this environment are subject to the university expectations and policies. Any concerns about student conduct, may be reviewed and responded to in accordance with the appropriate university policy.

To report concerns about online student conduct: onlineconduct@uvic.ca

b) Coming late to class: The classroom is a work environment, and when students arrive late this can be a distraction. So please try to be on time.

c) Visits to the classroom by non-registered students: As the instructor for this class I am duty-bound to ensure that a work environment is preserved in the course. Both students and I can find it a distraction for strangers to walk into the classroom. It takes some students time before they gain confidence to participate in the class proceedings, and the presence of a stranger can be disruptive in that regard. If, as sometimes happens, you wish to invite a friend to attend my class to check it out, please ask permission ahead of time.

d) Use of computers in the class: For the purpose of taking notes, you are of course welcome to use laptops with quiet keyboards in the classroom. Watching films and other distracting uses of computers are prohibited.

e) For further information concerning classroom conduct, please refer to the Tri-Faculty Code of Professional Behaviour for Students:

<https://www.uvic.ca/services/advising/assets/docs/tri-fac-student-code-of-conduct.pdf>.

EMAILING ME:

Because of problems with SPAM and viruses transmitted by email, I request that whenever you email me you make sure to put something in the subject line of your email that identifies 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 Dr. Scott", "Hello Dr. Scott", etc. (as opposed to, e.g., "Hey Dave" or "Dude", which is too informal). Use of formal salutation is social etiquette rooted in the recognition that people are not simply inanimate objects (like ATM machines), but should be addressed before being spoken to. After all, unlike ATM machines, humans have the option to respond, so it's wise to ask them nicely.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY:

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. Here is a link to the University’s Academic Integrity policy:

<https://www.uvic.ca/students/academics/academic-integrity/index.php>

EDITING:

The university has a strict view about seeking the help of others for editing: “An editor is an individual or service, other than the instructor or supervisory committee, who manipulates, revises, corrects or alters a student’s written or non- written work. The use of an editor, whether paid or unpaid, is prohibited unless the instructor grants explicit written authorization. The instructor should specify the extent of editing that is being authorized. Review by fellow students and tutoring that do not include editing are normally permitted. In addition to consulting with their instructors, students are encouraged to seek review of and feedback on their work that prompts them to evaluate the work and make changes themselves.”

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. Submission of your essays will be either through Brightspace or as a hard copy (or both), and the method of submission will be indicated on each assignment. In general, I do not accept essays submitted as email attachments. I will not be available to discuss test or essay questions on the day before or on the due date of submission, as I need to avoid being swamped by last-minute enquiries.

b) Your graded work will be returned either through Brightspace or in class (in person), within two weeks of its having been submitted. (Because I do not use graduate students to grade your assignments, returning your work often takes longer than it does in courses in which graduate students are used as graders.)

When your graded work is returned to you it will frequently be annotated with comments. If you wish to discuss your graded 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.

In cases when I return graded work in class (in person), it is *up to students* to claim their work: I am not responsible for tracking students down to deliver their work. Normally I will bring graded papers to class three times in a row, where students have the opportunity to claim it. After that, any unclaimed assignments can be obtained from me in person, by appointment.

LATE ASSIGNMENTS / MISSED TESTS:

Late assignments will not be accepted without penalty, unless justified by a medical or other academically legitimate reason. 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:

Office hours will be conducted on Zoom, and there will be a total of two office hours per week dedicated specifically to this course. Because of demand (especially near test days or essay due dates), if you wish to see me during office hours you need to make an appointment ahead of time. To get the most out of your appointment, you should come prepared with specific questions based on class content. If for some reason you cannot meet me in my posted office-hour times, please contact me to arrange an alternative time.

While you are strongly encouraged to come to office hours to discuss class content, to do so you need first to have attended class, or at least to have listened to the recordings of the relevant missed class(es) that are posted on Brightspace. Your use of office hours should function primarily as supplement to classroom lecture and discussion. Office hours are not intended as private tutorial time with the course instructor, as such a service is not provided by UVic.

INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY OF MATERIAL ON LMS WEBSITE:

Intellectual property of materials on the LMS website: Please note that all assignments for this course and all materials posted to the LMS website are the intellectual property of myself and the University of Victoria. Do not circulate this material or post it to note-sharing sites without my permission. Posting course materials to note-sharing sites or otherwise circulating course materials without the permission of your instructor violates the Policy on Academic Integrity

https://www.uvic.ca/calendar/undergrad/index.php#/policy/Sk_0xsM_V?bc=true&bcCurrent=08%20-%20Policy%20on%20Academic%20Integrity&bcGroup=Undergraduate%20Academic%20Regulations&bcItemType=policies

Any evidence you are circulating materials without permission will be referred to the Chair of the Philosophy Department for investigation.

COPYRIGHT NOTICE:

All course content and materials are made available by instructors for educational purposes and for the exclusive use of students registered in their class. The material is protected under copyright law, even if not marked with a “©”. Any further use or distribution of materials to others requires the written permission of the instructor, except under fair dealing or another exception in the Copyright Act. Violations may result in disciplinary action under the Resolution of Non-Academic Misconduct Allegations policy (AC1300).

2. CLASS SCHEDULE*

WEEK 1 (Classes 1 & 2: Jan. 9 & 12)

Mon (01.09) - Course Introduction. Aristotle (medieval period) vs. Plato (Renaissance)

Thurs (01.12) - Science, Skepticism, Method. Empiricism vs. Rationalism.

WEEK 2 (Classes 3 & 4: Jan. 16 & 19)

Mon (01.16) - Bacon & Descartes: skepticism.

Thurs (01.19) - Descartes: Method as response to skepticism.

WEEK 3 (Classes 5 & 6: Jan. 23 & 26)

Mon (01.23) - Descartes: Defending the method: mind & body.

Thurs (01.26) - Descartes: Defending the method: mind & body.

WEEK 4 (Classes 7 & 8: Jan. 30 & Feb. 2)

Mon (01.30) - Descartes: Defending the method: mind & body.

Thurs (02.02) - Locke: Innate Ideas.

WEEK 5 (Classes 9 & 10: Feb. 6 & 9)

Mon (02.06) - Locke: Substance

Thurs (02.09) - Locke: Identity and difference

WEEK 6 (Classes 11 & 12: Feb. 13 & 16)

Mon (02.13) - **In-class test**

Tues (02.14) - **Essay assigned. Due: Fri (23.03.17)**

Thurs (02.16) - Berkeley (immaterialism)

WEEK 7 (No Classes: Feb. 20 & 23)

Mon (02.20) - **No Class** (Reading Break)

Thurs (02.23) - **No Class** (Reading Break)

WEEK 8 (Classes 13 & 14: Feb. 27 & March 2)

Mon (02.27) - Berkeley (immaterialism)

Thurs (03.02) - Spinoza (pantheistic monism)

WEEK 9 (Classes 15 & 16: March 6 & 9)

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Mon (03.06) - Spinoza (pantheistic monism)
Thurs (03.09) - Leibniz (idealistic pluralism)

WEEK 10 (Classes 17 & 18: March 13 & 16)

Mon (03.13) - Leibniz (idealistic pluralism)
Thurs (03.16) - Leibniz (idealistic pluralism)
Fri (03.17) - **Essay due.**

WEEK 11 (Classes 19 & 20: March 20 & 23)

Mon (03.20) - Leibniz (idealistic pluralism)
Thurs (03.23) - Hume (high empiricism as skepticism)

WEEK 12 (Classes 21 & 22: March 27 & 30)

Mon (03.27) - Hume (high empiricism as skepticism)
Thurs (03.30) - Hume (high empiricism as skepticism)

WEEK 13 (Classes 23 & 24: April 3 & 6)

Mon (04.03) - Hume (high empiricism as skepticism)
Thurs (04.06) - Last class: Kant (Prolegomena).

Final exams for this term begin on April 11 and end on April 26.

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