
Phil 2220

Modern Philosophy

Time and Place: TR 10.10-11.25, GSH 132

Instructor: Nate Bulthuis

E-Mail: neb67

Office: GSH 320

Office Hours: Monday, 2-3, or by appt.

Website: philosophy.natebulthuis.com/phil2220

Website password: monads

Course Description

This course is a survey of Western philosophy in the 17th and 18th centuries. Readings are taken from works by influential philosophers of the period. We will primarily focus on the relationship between philosophy and the development of the sciences in the early modern period.

Teaching Assistants

Vivek Mathew (vsmathew@gmail.com)

Section: Thursday, 2.30-3.20, Uris Hall G26,
Office: Goldwin Smith Hall 223
Office Hours: Tuesday, 9-10

Matt Sailer

Section: Friday, 12.20-1.10, Rockefeller Hall 103
Office:
Office Hours:

Avi Appel (aa2263@cornell.edu)

Section: Friday, 1.25-2.15, Goldwin Smith Hall G24
Office: Goldwin Smith Hall 344
Office Hours: Friday, 2.25-3.25

Readings

All required texts for this course can be accessed on the **course website**. Most of the texts are taken from <http://www.earlymoderntexts.com/texts>.

Course Requirements

Section Attendance and Participation: 15%

Reading Responses: 15%

Essay 1: 10%

Essay 2: 20%

Mid-term Exam: 20%

Final Exam: 20%

Attendance and Participation: Attendance is mandatory for all course lectures and sections. Exceptions will only be made in the case of university-approved absences. Moreover, participation is expected in class discussion of the material.

Readings: To engage in a given philosophical topic at hand, one must first be acquainted with the substance of that topic. This is especially true of material taken from the history of philosophy. Reading philosophy involves active, engaged reading of a text. One cannot be a passive observer, but must think about the claims made in a text, how those claims fit in the larger argument, and whether those claims—or the inference an author draws from them—are justified or justifiable.

Reading Responses: By Thursday, 8.00am, please submit two questions you have about the week's material to your TA: one question pertaining to the material covered on Tuesday, and one question pertaining to the material covered on Thursday.

Essays: Two essays will be assigned in this course, with the second due during exam week.

Exams: Exams are non-cumulative. The first will be held approximately halfway through the semester, and the second will be held on the last day of class.

Course Accommodations

In recognition that people learn in a variety of ways and that learning is influenced by multiple factors (e.g., prior experience, study skills, learning disability), resources to support student success are available on campus. Students who think they might benefit from these resources can find out more about:

- Course-level support (e.g., faculty member, departmental resources, etc.) by asking me and/or your TA.
- University-level support (e.g., tutoring/writing services, Disability Services) by visiting the SDS (420 Computing and Communications Center) or by going to sds.cornell.edu/index.html.

Students who believe that, due to a disability, they could benefit from academic accommodations are encouraged to contact Disability Services at 607.254.4545 or visit the Student Disability Services. Confidentiality will be observed in all inquiries. Course instructors support student accommodation requests when an approved letter from Disability Services has been received and when students discuss these accommodations with the instructor after receipt of the approved letter.

Academic Integrity

Three words about academic dishonesty: Don't. Do. It. It is immoral (it's a form of theft). It also doesn't pass the risk-reward test. It's incredibly easy for us to catch, and the penalties are severe – up to and including expulsion from the university.

If you aren't sure what constitutes academic dishonesty, see <http://plagiarism.arts.cornell.edu/tutorial/index.cfm>, or ask me and/or an instructor.

Other Important Information

- Use of electronic devices during class time is not permitted (exception: a letter from disability services indicating a student's use of a laptop/tablet is necessary for learning purposes). Use of smartphones (for texting or anything else) during class will adversely affect your attendance/participation grade. If some emergency requires you to use your phone, please step outside the classroom to take your call/text.
- There is a course website! You can find a copy of all the information about the class, readings, assignments, as well as various announcements on the website.
- If you are absent or miss some part of a class, it is your responsibility to make sure you get any information you missed (e.g., lecture notes, upcoming assignments, announcements, etc.)

Date	Notes	Reading	Topics
Week 1 1.28			<i>Introduction</i> Introduction
Week 2 2.2 2.4		Meditations 1 Meditations 2	<i>Cartesian Skepticism</i> Skepticism: Tearing It All Down Skepticism: Getting It Back (?)
Week 3 2.9 2.11		Meditations 3 & 4 Meditations 5	<i>Cartesian Arguments for God</i> Arguments for God's Existence More arguments for God's Existence
Week 4 2.16 2.18	Break	Meditations 6, et al.	<i>Substance Dualism</i> Substance Dualism
Week 5 2.23 2.25		Leviathan (selections), et al. Three Dialogues, Dialogue 2	<i>Alternatives to Substance Dualism</i> Martha Cavendish and Thomas Hobbes Bishop Berkeley
Week 6 3.1 3.3		Principles of Phil. (Pt. 2), et al. Principles of Phil. (Pt. 4)	<i>The New Natural Philosophy</i> Rationalism and Science The Princess Elizabeth Correspondence
Week 7 3.8 3.10		Metaphysical Disputations 15 Metaphysical Disputations 23	<i>The Old Natural Philosophy</i> Suarez on Substantial Form Suarez on Final Causation
Week 8 3.15 3.17	First Exam	Origin of Forms (§§6-10)	<i>Rejecting Substantial Form</i> Against Substantial Forms
Week 9 3.22 3.24		<i>De gravitatione</i> (§§2-6, 14) <i>De gravitatione</i> (§§7-8, 10-13)	<i>Newtonian Physics</i> The Trouble with Cartesian Physics Habeas Corpus: Newton on Space
Week 10 3.29 3.31	Spring Break Spring Break		
Week 11 4.5 4.7		Dialogue on Meta., 7-8; 10-11 Theodicy (sel.); New Essays (sel.)	<i>Occasionalism and Its Detractors</i> Malebranche's Occasionalism Leibniz and Pre-Established Harmony
Week 12 4.12 4.14		The Principles, Chs. 1-6 The Principles, Chs. 7-9	<i>Anne Conway's Platonism</i> God, Freedom and Change Minds and Bodies
Week 13 4.19 4.21		Monadology (selections) Monadology (selections)	<i>Monadology</i> Problems for Standard Accts. of Body Monads
Week 14 4.26 4.28		Enquiry, §§5-7 Prolegomena, Preface; §§27-40	<i>Humean and Kantian Empiricism</i> Hume on Causation Kant's "Answer to Hume"
Week 15 5.3 5.5		Critique of Pure Reason, B37-46 Critique of Pure Reason, B406-27	<i>Empirical Realism / Transcendental Idealism</i> The Concept of Space The Nature of the 'I'
Week 16 5.10	Second Exam		

