

**Modern Philosophy
Philosophy 3110**

**University of West Georgia
Spring 2012**

Meeting Time/Location: MW 2:00-3:20 in Pafford 109

Instructor: Dr. Riker

Office hours: MWF 9:00-9:50, MW 3:30-5:00, and by appointment
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All email communication will be conducted through your official UWG email account. Check your email account on a regular basis and make sure that your mailbox does not become too full to accept messages.

Course Description:

This course in the history of Western philosophy examines the metaphysical and epistemological theories of influential 17th and 18th century philosophers. We will focus on works by Rene Descartes (1596-1650), John Locke (1632-1704), David Hume (1711-1776), and Immanuel Kant (1724-1804). We will also examine work in feminist philosophy that responds to the moderns and their influence on contemporary thought in the West.

Course Learning Outcomes

- Each student will recognize some of the major philosophical problems that confronted philosophers in the early modern period (roughly 1600-1800);
- critically evaluate some important philosophical texts from the modern period;
- differentiate philosophical ideas and philosophical texts.

These course-specific learning outcomes contribute to the departmental learning outcomes of the Philosophy Program by enabling students better to

- discuss the general historical development of the discipline of philosophy;
- discuss three major historical figures of philosophy;
- incorporate a philosophical position in oral and written communications;
- critically outline and analyze philosophical issues;
- exhibit critical thinking skills.

Course Requirements:

1. Paper 1	20%
2. Paper 2	30%
3. Question Sets	30%
4. Final Exam	20%
5. Participation	+/-
6. Attendance	Special

Final Grade Scale: A (90% or above); B (80 to 89%); C (70 to 79%); D (60 to 69%); F (59 or below)

1-2. Two Papers. 4-5 pages each. Assignment sheet with instructions and topics to be passed out later. Paper 1 due February 13. Paper 2 due April 16.

3. Question Sets. A set of 3-5 questions will be posted about the reading for each class day. These questions are meant to provide some guidance through the reading, by highlighting key issues or questions. In some cases you will be asked to briefly identify or describe an idea or position. In other cases you will be asked for your opinion on some issue.

You must bring written answers to these questions with you to class each day. Turn this in at the start of class. Bring a second copy for yourself if you want to refer to or correct your answers during class.

Approximately 30 Question Sets will be posted. You must successfully complete 25 sets to get full credit for this course requirement. You will get full credit on a question set if (a) you make a good faith effort to complete all of the questions, and (b) your answers mostly correct and/or thoughtful. Late Question Sets will not be accepted. This part of the course is worth 30% of your final course grade.

I read and assess Question Sets, but do not correct them, because we will discuss the answers to the questions in class. You should make corrections to your own copy if you want a corrected copy to use later.

4. Comprehensive Final Exam. Some combination of short answer and essay. Short answer questions may come straight from the Question Sets.

5. Participation. Come to class prepared (e.g., read assigned material before class starts, bring something to take notes with, and so on). Contribute thoughtful comments and questions from time to time. Use the discussion board. Exemplary participation can raise a student's final grade. Poor participation can lower a student's final grade.

6. Attendance. You are expected to attend all scheduled classes. However, you can miss four classes without penalty. Each absence after that will reduce your final course grade by 3%. Please be on time. Three late arrivals counts as one absence.

Honors Conversions:

Any student wishing to receive honors credit for this course must get the approval of the professor and complete all the necessary paperwork within the first two weeks of class. Honors forms will not be signed after this point. Possible honors conversion projects: presenting course paper to class; leading class through part of one day's reading assignment; submitting course paper to a conference.

Cheating and Plagiarism:

The Department of English and Philosophy defines plagiarism as “taking personal credit for the words and ideas of others as they are expressed in electronic, print, and verbal sources.” The Department expects that students will accurately credit sources in all assignments. It is equally dishonest to make up sources or facts. Cheating (including plagiarism) is grounds for failing an assignment and sometimes the course.

Emergencies, Impairments, and Disabilities:

Students who have a disability that requires course adaptations or accommodations should make an appointment with the Office of Disability Services to discuss their specific needs and schedule an appointment with me during office hours.

Required Texts:

- Roger Ariew and Eric Watkins, ed. *Modern Philosophy: An Anthology of Primary Sources*. Indianapolis, IN: Hackett, 2009.
- Articles on Course Den.

Reading Schedule

Jan 2: Introduction to course.

Jan 4: Innovation and Orthodoxy (CD)

Jan 9: Feminist History of Philosophy (CD)

Jan 11: Descartes, Letter, Preface, Synopsis, and Med I, pp. 35-43

Jan 16: MLK Day.

Jan 18: Descartes, Med II, pp. 43-47

Jan 23: Descartes, Med III, pp. 47-54

Jan 25: Descartes, Med IV, pp. 54-58

Jan 30: Descartes, Med V, pp. 58-61

Feb 1: Descartes, Med VI, pp. 61-68

Feb 6: Elizabeth of Bohemia (CD)

Feb 8: Can Feminists be Cartesians? (CD)

Feb 13: Locke, Innate Ideas, pp. 316-322; **Paper 1 due**

Feb 15: Locke, Origin of Ideas, pp. 322-342

Feb 20: Locke, More on Origins, pp. 342-367

Feb 22: Locke, Words and Substances, pp. 377-386

Feb 27: Locke, Knowledge, pp. 386-403

Feb 29: Locke, Knowledge, pp. 403-410

Mar 2: Last day to withdraw with a grade of "W".

Mar 5: Locke, Knowledge, pp. 411-421

Mar 7: Hume, Ideas and Skeptical Doubts, pp. 533-548

Mar 12: Hume, Skeptical Solution, pp. 548-556

Mar 14: Hume, Necessary Connection, pp. 556-564

Mar 19: Spring Break

Mar 21: Spring Break

Mar 26: Hume: The Reflective Woman's Epistemologist? (CD)

Mar 28: Reconceptualizing Reasoning....: The Case of David Hume. (CD)

Apr 2: Kant, Synthetic A Priori, pp. 717-729

Apr 4: Kant, The Aesthetic, pp. 729-737

Apr 9: Kant, The Analytic, pp. 737-756

Apr 11: Kant, The Analytic, pp. 756-783

Apr 16: Kant, Limits of Understanding (Antinomies); **Paper 2 due**

Apr 18: Feminist Rationality Debates: Rereading Kant (CD)

Apr 23: Final Exam, 2:00-4:30