

PHIL 004-001
History of Modern Philosophy
Spring 2016

Course Description

This course is an introduction to a few central themes in philosophy in the 17th and 18th centuries, and to some of the crucial thinkers who addressed those themes. Topics to be covered may include, among others, the nature of the human being (including the human mind), the relationship between God and the created world, the nature of freedom, and the relations among natural sciences, philosophy and theology in this rich period of human history.

This semester, our topics will be (a) *reality and appearance* and (b) *autonomy*. We will study writings by René Descartes, Elisabeth of Bohemia, Gabrielle Suchon, John Locke, Mary Astell, Catherine Trotter Cockburn, David Hume and Immanuel Kant in order to address these themes. Some of the questions these thinkers grappled with are: What is the true nature of the created world, and can we even know this? Why does the world *appear* to us to be different than it really is? Are we sometimes (mis)educated to view certain people in a specific way, which may be quite different from how they actually are? What impact can our misperception of the real natures of people have on human lives, including human autonomy? What does it mean to lead an autonomous life, and how does this relate to authenticity on the one hand, and morality on the other hand?

We will grapple with these and other questions related to our two themes while reading some of the most original and interesting philosophical texts of the early modern period.

Texts

The following texts are required and are available at the Penn Book Center, 130 S. 34th Street (34th and Sansom):

- Descartes, *Selected Philosophical Writings*, translated and edited by Cottingham, Stoothoff, and Murdoch (Cambridge University Press)
- Hume, *An enquiry concerning human understanding : a critical edition*, edited by Tom L. Beauchamp. (Oxford University Press)
- Kant, *Prolegomena to Any Future Metaphysics*, 2nd edition, edited and translated by Gary Hatfield (Cambridge University Press, 2004)

Other texts will be available on Canvas in pdf form under the relevant weekly module.

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Schedule of topics and readings for lectures

13 January: Introduction

- no required readings
- recommended background reading for next week: *Discourse on the Method* (pp. 20-56)

18 January: MLK Day

- NO CLASS MEETINGS

Descartes

20 January: Descartes' method: things are not always as they appear to be

- Meditations: Synopsis, Med I (pp. 73-9)

25 January: I think; I exist

- Med II (pp. 80-6); *Principles*, I, §9-10 (pp. 162-3); Objections and Replies (pp. 126-31)

27 January: truth and certainty; theory of ideas; God's existence

- Med III (pp. 86-98); O&R (pp. 139-43)

1 February: autonomy, compulsion, and indifference

- Med IV (pp. 98-105)

3 February: the existence of God; the distinction of mind and body

- Med V-VI (pp. 105-116 paragraph ending "... the totality of things bestowed on me by God"); O&R (pp. 135-9 and 143-50); *Discourse*, Part V (pp. 40-6); *Principles*, Part I, §14-16 and 51-65 (pp. 164-5 and 177-83)

8 February: mind-body unity and why things are not always as they appear to be

- Med VI (pp. 116 paragraph starting "There is nothing that my own nature..."-122); *Discourse*, Part VI (pp. 46-56); *Principles*, Part I, §65-76 and Part IV, §187-99 (pp. 183-9 and 199-206)

Descartes and Elisabeth

10 February: indifference, autonomy and morality I

- *Discourse*, Part III (pp. 31-35)
- selections from correspondence between Descartes and Elisabeth (on the website)

Suchon

15 February: women's lives in 17th century Europe: women's true (versus apparent) natures

- *On the Celibate Life Freely Chosen*, selections (on the website)

17 February: indifference, commitment and autonomy

- *On the Celibate Life Freely Chosen*, selections (on the website)

22 February: Suchon's proto-existentialism

- *On the Celibate Life Freely Chosen*, selections (on the website)

Locke, Astell, Cockburn

24 February: the "thinking matter" controversy, how we know, and what we cannot know about reality I

- selections from John Locke's *Essay* (website)
- selections from Mary Astell's *Christian Religion* (website)

29 February: the "thinking matter" controversy, how we know, and what we cannot know about reality II

- selections from Catharine Cockburn's *Defence of the Essay* (website)

Hume

2 March: a science of human nature

- *Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding*, §1-3 (pp. 87-107)
- recommended: Beauchamp, Editor's Introduction (pp. 3-21)

week of 7 March: spring break

- NO CLASS MEETINGS

14 March: the justification of knowledge

- *Enquiry*, §4-6 (pp. 108-33)
- recommended: Beauchamp, Editor's Introduction (pp. 21-33)

16 March: necessary connection and causation; how things appear and the limits to human knowledge

- *Enquiry*, §7 (pp. 134-47)
- recommended: Beauchamp, Editor's Introduction (pp. 33-8)

21 March: instructor out of town; guest lecturer TBA

- readings TBD

23 March: instructor out of town; guest lecturer TBA

- readings TBD

25 March: human freedom

- *Enquiry*, §8 (pp. 148-64)
- recommended: Beauchamp, Editor's Introduction (pp. 38-44)

NB: this is a Friday, and the instructor will lecture during recitations to make up for time lost on 21st and 23rd March

28 March: naturalism I: introduction

- *Enquiry*, §9-10 (pp. 165-86)
- recommended: Beauchamp, Editor's Introduction (pp. 44-51)

30 March: naturalism II: science and religion

- *Enquiry*, §11 (pp. 187-198)

Kant

4 April: introduction

- *Prolegomena to Any Future Metaphysics*, preface, preamble, general questions (pp. 5-26); *Critique of Pure Reason*, introduction (pp. 154-55)
- recommended: Hatfield, translator's introduction (ix-xxxiv)

6 April: synthetic a priori judgments; and "how is pure mathematics possible?"

- *Prolegomena*, First Part, §5-13 (pp. 27-38); *CPR*, Aesthetic, Transcendental Logic, and Transcendental Doctrine of Method (pp. 156-63 and 195-97)

11 April: Kant's theory of cognition; and Hume and Kant on perception

- *Prolegomena*, First Part, Notes I-III (pp. 38-45), and appendix (pp. 123-130 only); *CPR*, B preface (pp. 139-147 [B vii-xxiv] only)

13 April: idealism; and "how is pure natural science possible?"

- *Prolegomena*, Second Part, §14-26 (pp. 46-62); *CPR*, on judgment, categories, synthesis, deduction; idealism (pp. 161-71 and 189-91)

18 April: natural science continued: removing Hume's doubt

- *Prolegomena*, Second Part, §27-39 (pp. 62-78), *CPR*, introduction to the deductions (pp. 166-71 [review])

20 April: review of Kant so far; and the faculty of pure reason

- *Prolegomena*, Third Part, §40-52 (pp. 79-94)

25 April: psychological and cosmological ideas

- *CPR*, First Antinomy (pp. 192-94)

27 April: human freedom; bounds of pure reason

- *Prolegomena*, Third Part, §53-6, Conclusion, Solution, Appendix (pp. 94-134); *CPR*, B preface (pp. 139-53 [some of this is review])