

Philosophy 218
Early Modern Philosophy
Amherst College

BASICS:

Instructor: Joshua M. Wood
Location: Webster 220
Times: M/W/F 11:00–11:50
Term: Spring 2014

INSTRUCTOR'S CONTACT INFORMATION:

Office: Cooper House 302
Office hours: M/W/F 9:30–10:30 and by appointment
Email: jowood@amherst.edu

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

In this course we will examine the fundamental distinction between mind and matter as it is initially proposed by Descartes and later challenged by Leibniz; the argument against the existence of matter as it appears in Berkeley; skepticism about the very nature of substance, whether material or spiritual, as it occurs in Locke and Hume; and, finally, the conceptions of mind, particularly as this concerns rationality and selfhood, which are developed by each of these thinkers. We will also read contributions to these issues from women philosophers such as Cavendish, Conway, Masham, and Shepherd.

COURSE MATERIALS:

Atherton, Margaret (ed). *Women Philosophers of the Early Modern Period*. Hackett, 1995. ISBN 0872202593
Berkeley, George. *Principles of Human Knowledge and Three Dialogues*. Edited by Robinson. Oxford, 2009. ISBN 9780199555178
Descartes, René. *Selected Philosophical Writings*. Edited by Cottingham, et al. Cambridge, 1988. ISBN 0521358124
Hume, David. *Treatise on Human Nature*. Edited by Nidditch. Oxford, 1978. ISBN 0198245882
Leibniz, G. W. *Discourse on Metaphysics and Other Essays*. Edited by Garber and Ariew. Hackett, 1991. ISBN 0872201333
Locke, John. *Essay Concerning Human Understanding*. Edited by Nidditch. Oxford, 1979. ISBN 0198245955

GRADES:

The final grade for this course will be based on five academic tasks: participation, two in-class exams, and two papers. Each of these has a total of 100 possible points. However, the scores received on each of these assignments are weighted differently in calculating the student's final grade.

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| 1. Participation: | 10% (of final grade) |
| 2. First exam: | 15% |
| 3. Second exam: | 20% |

4. Short paper (3-4 pages): 25%
5. Long paper (6-7 pages): 30%

To calculate the point total on which the student's final grade is based, adjust each of the above scores according to their weight (multiplying by the relevant percentage) and then add the five adjusted scores together. The scale for final grades is as follows:

A+ = 98-100	C = 74-77
A = 94-97	C- = 71-73
A- = 91-93	D+ = 68-70
B+ = 88-90	D = 64-67
B = 84-87	D- = 61-63
B- = 81-83	F = ≤ 60
C+ = 78-80	

COURSE POLICIES:

Class meetings: All *laptops* must remain closed and put away. All *cellphones* must be silenced and put away.

Attendance: There is no attendance policy for this course. However, attendance is strongly encouraged, since (i) there is a participation grade for the course and (ii) lectures are designed to help students do well on graded materials.

Participation: Be on time for class and be prepared to discuss the assigned reading. Note that students will be expected to read an average of 50 pages per week. Course discussion is expected to be conducted respectfully and constructively. The participation grade is worth a total of 100 possible points. Regular contributions to class discussion will ensure that the student receives a high participation grade. On the other hand, being late for class or falling asleep in class will negatively affect the student's participation grade.

Exams: Each exam is worth a total of 100 points, will be conducted in-class, and will consist of multiple short answer questions. Exams will also be non-cumulative, that is, they will relate to a specific section or sections of the course. If the student misses an exam without evidence of being absent for a good reason, then the student will receive zero points for the exam and *will not* be given the opportunity to make up the exam.

Papers: Paper assignments will be handed out two weeks in advance of the due date and will provide students with several topics from which to choose. Students must obtain the instructor's written permission to write on a topic other than those provided on the assignment. Paper assignments will not require the student to consult any sources other than the assigned readings. The short paper will be collected at the beginning of class on **Wednesday, March 12** or by email prior to this date. Any paper that is handed in or sent in via email after the beginning of class on this date will count as late and will have its score reduced by five points (out of 100 total possible points). Late papers will be given the same penalty for every day that they are late (including weekends and holidays).

Note that the rule for late papers *only applies to the short paper*. The long paper *will not* be accepted late. It is due by 5:00 pm on **Monday, May 12** or by email prior to this date. Any paper turned in after this deadline will receive zero points.

Incomplete grades: No incomplete grades will be given unless a student can prove that extreme circumstances were responsible for his or her inability to complete a significant amount of the course requirements. Students experiencing such circumstances are encouraged to get in touch with me as soon as possible.

Disability: “Students with documented disabilities may receive assistance in a variety of ways, depending on the nature and extent of the limitations imposed by the disability, as well as specific course content and mode of testing. Reasonable accommodation is determined after review of the submitted documentation, follow-up conversations with the student and, in some cases, consultation with the student's faculty.

“To discuss needs for accommodations based on a documented disability, please contact Dean Boykin-East. Supporting medical information should be forwarded directly to the Dean of Students Office, not to professors. All records are held and retained in a confidential manner within the Dean of Students Office” (cf. Accessibility Services on the Amherst College website).

Academic integrity: Plagiarism on a paper assignment and cheating on an exam are serious academic offenses. Any student who is found to have plagiarized a paper (or a significant portion of a paper) or to have cheated on an exam will receive a failing grade for the course.

COURSE SCHEDULE:

F. 01/24	Syllabus overview	
1. Descartes		
M. 01/27	class canceled	
W. 01/29	<i>Meditations</i> , pp. 73-105	
F. 01/31	<i>Meditations</i> , pp. 105-122	
M. 02/03	<i>Objections and Replies</i> , pp. 123-143	
W. 02/05	<i>Objections and Replies</i> , pp. 143-159	
F. 02/07	<i>Principles</i> , pp. 160-189	
M. 02/10	<i>Principles</i> , pp. 189-212	
W. 02/12	Arrive on time for in-class exam	► First Exam
2. Cavendish		
F. 02/14	<i>Philosophical Letters</i> , pp. 24-45	
3. Conway		
M. 02/17	<i>Principles</i> , pp. 48-61	
W. 02/19	<i>Principles</i> , pp. 61-76	
4. Leibniz		
F. 02/21	<i>Discourse</i> , pp. 1-20	
M. 02/24	<i>Discourse</i> , pp. 20-41	
W. 02/26	<i>Monadology</i> , pp. 68-74	
F. 02/28	<i>Monadology</i> , pp. 74-81	
5. Masham		
M. 03/03	<i>Correspondence</i> , pp. 77-95	
6. Locke		
W. 03/05	<i>Essay</i> , pp. 48-65 and 84-103	
F. 03/07	<i>Essay</i> , pp. 104-132	
M. 03/10	<i>Essay</i> , pp. 295-317	
W. 03/12	<i>Essay</i> , pp. 317-348	► Short Paper
F. 03/14	<i>Essay</i> , pp. 362-384	
M. 03/24	<i>Essay</i> , pp. 384-401	
W. 03/26	<i>Essay</i> , pp. 436-471	
F. 03/28	<i>Essay</i> , pp. 538-562	
M. 03/31	<i>Essay</i> , pp. 562-591	
7. Berkeley		
W. 04/02	<i>Principles</i> , pp. 7-23	

F. 04/04	<i>Principles</i> , pp. 24-37	
M. 04/07	<i>Principles</i> , pp. 37-61	
W. 04/09	<i>Principles</i> , pp. 61-85	
F. 04/11	<i>Principles</i> , pp. 85-95	
8. Shepherd		
M. 04/14	<i>Essays</i> , pp. 149-159	
W. 04/16	Arrive on time for in-class exam	► Second Exam
9. Hume		
F. 04/18	<i>Treatise</i> , pp. 1-25	
M. 04/21	<i>Treatise</i> , pp. 26-39 and 66-68	
W. 04/23	<i>Treatise</i> , pp. 69-94	
F. 04/25	<i>Treatise</i> , pp. 94-124	
M. 04/28	<i>Treatise</i> , pp. 124-155	
W. 04/30	<i>Treatise</i> , pp. 155-179	
F. 05/02	<i>Treatise</i> , pp. 180-218	
M. 05/05	<i>Treatise</i> , pp. 219-251	
W. 05/07	<i>Treatise</i> , pp. 251-274 and 641-662	
M. 05/12	Long papers accepted until 5:00 pm	► Long Paper