

Seventeenth Century Philosophy

PHIL 307, Syllabus (v1)

Course Info

Instructor: Richard Fry, r fry@siue.edu

Meeting Time: M/W, 3:00-4:15P, Peck Hall 0302

Office Hours: Monday/Wednesday 1:30-2:30PM, Peck Hall 3210 and by appointment

Course Description:

The 17th century represents a sea-change in the history of Western philosophy. In this course we will look at key philosophical texts from the period, examining the problems they raise and the solutions they offer. We will examine these texts both in dialogue with each other and with our contemporary ways of thinking. This course is reading-intensive and emphasizes philosophical writing, so you will be expected to write regularly and well. For the final paper, you will produce an original interpretive or philosophical paper about one of the authors and issues we have discussed.

Required Texts:

Descartes, *Selected Philosophical Writings*, tr. Cottingham, Smoothoff, and Murdoch

Hobbes, *Leviathan*, tr. Curley

Spinoza, *Ethics*, tr. Shirley

Locke, *Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, ed. Nidditch

Leibniz, *Philosophical Essays*, tr. Ariew and Garber

Policies

Academic Misconduct and Plagiarism: You are expected and required to uphold SIUE's standards of academic honesty in this course. Plagiarism of ideas or words is unacceptable. In effort to uphold this university's high standards, confirmed academic dishonesty will result in automatic failure of the course. Familiarize yourself with what counts as plagiarism and SIUE's policies:
<http://www.siue.edu/lovejoylibrary/services/instruction/plagiarism.shtml>,
<http://www.siue.edu/policies/3c2.shtml>

Preparedness, Attitude: You are expected to prepare for class and comport yourself in an appropriate manner. This includes reading assigned material, thinking about it so that you can ask questions, arriving on time, participating actively in discussion—both asking and answering questions—and treating other members of the class with respect and courtesy.

Readings and Laptops: You are expected to bring the assigned reading to each class meeting. Laptops/tablets will only be permitted when readings are distributed electronically.

Due Dates: You are responsible for turning in your work on time. Each 24 hours or portion thereof that a piece of written work is late will result in a deduction of 3.33%.

Extensions: If you need an extension for written work, email me *as soon as possible* with a brief description of your situation and—if I approve an extension—we will work out an appropriate timeframe. Extensions must be requested at least 24 hours before the assignment is due.

Completion of Assignments: All of the work assigned for this course is essential. If any assignments are not complete before the end of course, *you will receive a failing grade for the course*.

Grade Appeals: If you believe the work you submitted deserves a different grade than it received, you may ask *in writing* for reconsideration. Your request must be submitted within one week, but no sooner than one full day after the assignment is returned. Your written request must explain why you believe the work deserves a different grade. Please note that *if* a change is made, the new grade may be either higher or lower.

Changes: I reserve the right to change any part of this syllabus at any time. Changes will be announced in class and a new version of the syllabus posted to Blackboard.

Assignments and Assessment

Reading Quizzes (20%)

There will be ten short quizzes to evaluate your reading and understanding of the material over the course of the semester. They will not be announced beforehand. Only seven will count for your final grade.

Short Writings (20%)

Over the course of the semester, you'll be given two short (4-5p) writing assignments. These will help develop the skills needed for the final paper by developing your ability to interpret and engage with texts.

Outline for Final Paper (10%)

Several weeks before the final paper is due, you will submit an outline of your final paper to me for approval and comments. This outline will substantively illustrate the main points you will make in the final paper and serve as a template for completing it.

Final paper (30%)

At the end of the semester, you'll write an 10-12 page paper that considers a substantive interpretive or philosophical problem related to the texts we've discussed in the course. This paper will be due during the time scheduled for the final exam.

Participation/Comportment (20%)

20% of your final grade will be determined by participation. Participation should be understood broadly: be involved and attentive in class. You can get your participation points by making comments or asking questions in class, coming to office hours, or emailing me. You'll lose points for looking at your phone, sleeping, failing to bring assigned readings, arriving consistently late, &c. Further, note that it is very hard to participate in class when you are not in attendance.

Course Calendar

Date	Material	Content	Reading	Assn
12 Jan	Introduction	—	—	
14	Bacon	Idols	<i>New Organon</i> Preface, §1-58*	
21		Yeah, Science!	<i>New Organon</i> §59-77*	
26	Descartes	Skepticism, Cogito	<i>Meditations</i> 1-2	
28	& Elizabeth	Responses	<i>Correspondence</i> through 01 July 1643*	
02 Feb		God, Truth	<i>Meditations</i> 3-4	
4		God (again), The World	<i>Meditations</i> 5-6	
9	& Montaigne	Animals	<i>Discourse</i> 5 (AT55-60), <i>Apology</i> *	
11	Hobbes	Sense & Imagination	<i>L Leviathan</i> , Ch.1-5	SW1
16		Knowledge	<i>L Leviathan</i> , Ch.6-9	
18		The State of Nature	<i>L Leviathan</i> , Ch.13-14, 17	
23	& Boyle	Response to Hobbes	<i>Grounds for ... Mechanical Philosophy</i> *	
25	& Cavendish	Response to Hobbes	<i>Philosophical Letters</i> §30-37	
02 Mar	Spinoza	Substance	<i>Ethics</i> through Ip14	
4		Monism	<i>Ethics</i> through Ip29	
16		Structure	<i>Ethics</i> through I.app	
18		Cognition	<i>Ethics</i> IV.app	
23	Locke	Innate Ideas	<i>Essay</i> I.ii, I.iv.20-25,	SW2
25		Ideas	<i>Essay</i> II.i-iii	
30		Faculties	<i>Essay</i> II.ix-xi	
01 Apr		Terms	<i>Essay</i> III.ii-iii, III.vi.1-20	
6		Identity	<i>Essay</i> II.xxvii	
8	& Cockburn	Identity/Souls	<i>Defense</i> 69-92 (Birch)*	Out.
13	Leibniz	Basics	<i>New System, Principles of Nat. & Grace</i>	
15		Greatest Hits	<i>Monadology</i> §1-48	
20		Deep Cuts	<i>Monadology</i> §48-90	
22	& Locke	Animals	<i>New Essays</i> II.ix-xi*	
27	Presentations	—	tbd.	
29		—	tbd.	

Resources

Philosophical Resources

The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy: <http://plato.stanford.edu>

Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy: <http://www.iep.utm.edu>

Philpapers.org: <http://philpapers.org>

Tips on Writing a Philosophy Paper: <http://goo.gl/iDzgFb>

Academic Resources

Disability Support Services: Student Success Center, Room 1270

<http://www.siue.edu/dss/> and disabilitysupport@siue.edu

Provides accommodations to disabled students. DSS also has services which students can use to increase skills in learning, time management, and test-taking.

Instructional Services:

<http://www.siue.edu/is/>

Provides instructional support unit for the students, faculty and staff. Helps the underprepared to prepare, the prepared to advance, and the advanced to excel.

Writing Center: in the Academic Advancement Center

<http://www.siue.edu/is/writing/>, 618-650-2045

The writing center assists you as you analyze your paper and explore ways to improve it. Our primary concern is to help you become a better writer. To do this, we challenge you to learn more about composition and the conventions of Standard English.

Health and Wellness Resources

Counseling Services: Student Success Center room 0222

<http://www.siue.edu/counseling/>

Provides individual counseling, counseling groups, healthy living workshops, consultations, and referrals. Special attention is paid to the ongoing issues affecting college students.

Student Health Clinic Services: Student Success Center room 0222

<http://www.siue.edu/healthservice/clinic/index.shtml>