17th Century Philosophy
SYLLABUS (v1)

Course Info
INSTRUCTOR: Richard Fry, rfry@siue.edu
MEETING TIME: M/W, 12:00-1:15PM, Peck Hall 2412
OFFICE HOURS: M/W 1:30-2:30PM, Peck Hall 3210

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.

COURSE GOALS
This course has several goals:
• Introduce you to classic texts in the history of Western philosophy
• Introduce you to perennial philosophical issues related to cognition, skepticism and science
• Improve your analytical reading and writing skills
• Develop skills essential to academic research, particularly in philosophy
• Develop essential life skills such as time management, communication when encountering difficulties, and thoughtful engagement with others

REQUIRED TEXTS
• Descartes, Selected Philosophical Writings, tr. Cottingham, Smoothoff, and Murdock
• Hobbes, Leviathan, tr. Curley
• Spinoza, Ethics, tr. Shirley
• Locke, Essay Concerning Human Understanding, ed. Nidditch
• Leibniz, Philosophical Essays, tr. Ariew and Garber

Other readings will be posted to Blackboard throughout the semester.
Policies

ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT AND PLAGIARISM

- You are expected and required to uphold SIUE’s standards of academic honesty
- **Plagiarism of ideas or words is unacceptable.**
- 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/lovejoylibrary/services/instruction/plagiarism.shtml)
  - [http://www.siue.edu/policies/3c2.shtml](http://www.siue.edu/policies/3c2.shtml)

PERSONAL CONDUCT

- You are responsible for arriving on time, being prepared, and comporting yourself in an appropriate manner. This means treating your classmates with respect and courtesy.
- **You are responsible for helping to foster a safe and productive learning environment.**
  - Some of the topics we will address this semester may provoke powerful emotions, so be mindful of how topics under discussion may differently impact members of the class.

PREPAREDNESS AND ATTENDANCE

- Preparedness includes reading and **brining** the assigned material and participating actively—both asking and answering questions—in discussion.
- **You are expected to bring the assigned reading to each class meeting.** Laptops/tablets will only be permitted when readings are distributed electronically.

GRADES

- **LATE WORK:** For each 24 hours late after the due date for a piece of written work is submitted, 3% will be subtracted from whatever grade it earns.
  - All work more than a week late will receive an F.
- **EXTENSIONS:** If you need an extension, email me with a brief description of your situation.
  - 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.
- **GRADE APPEALS:** If you believe your work deserves a different grade than it received, you may ask in writing for reconsideration.
  - Submit this request within one week but no sooner than one day after work 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

More details about these assignments will be distributed online and in class throughout the semester.

**Reading Engagement (20%)**

- A 200-300 word summary of a single argument from the texts assigned for that meeting
- Should also include a single, clear question about the course content for the day
- Due each Monday, starting January 28th
- You will determine which argument to address and how to best capture it
- Your worst two attempts will not count toward your final grade

**Short Writings (25%)**

- Two short (1200-1500 word) writing assignments asking you to explain arguments in depth and consider objections
- These papers build on the skills from the reading engagement papers and help you develop the skills needed for the final paper, enhancing your ability to interpret and engage with texts
- The best of these will count for 15% of your final grade, the other one for 10%

**Final Paper and Its Outline (30% + 10%)**

- Final paper:
  - Due at the end of the semester, a 10-12 page paper that considers a substantive interpretive or philosophical problem related to the texts we’ve discussed in the course
  - This paper is worth 30% of your final grade
- Outline:
  - A few weeks before the end of the course, submit an outline of your final paper
  - I will approve your topic and give comments
  - This outline will substantively illustrate the main points you will make in the final paper and serve as a template for completing the final paper
  - This outline is worth 10% of your final grade

**Presentation Report (5%)**

- A 200-300 word summary of a presentation by a professional philosopher of Modern
- May 3rd and 4th, the *Early Modern—Saint Louis* conference takes place in downtown STL
- Conference sessions are one hour and run Friday afternoon and all day Saturday
- We’ll discuss these during the time allotted for the final exam.

**Participation and Comportment (10%)**

- This grade includes reading and bringing assigned material, arriving on time, and participating
- You can also participate by coming to office hours or emailing me
- Not coming to class, sleeping, not bringing assigned readings, arriving late, acting disrespectfully to me or your peers (by, e.g., having your phone out), &c., will lose you points
You are expected to read this material before the class-day it is listed under.

**1: INTRODUCTIONS**

14 Jan - Intro to the Course
   Scruton - History of Philosophy (BB)

**2: INTERACTIONISM AND RESPONSES**

16 Jan - Skepticism and the Cogito
   Descartes, *Meditations* 1-2

23 Jan - God, Truth and the World
   *Descartes, Principles* (selections)

28 Jan - Objections to Interactionism
   *Elizabeth of Bohemia, Correspondence with Descartes* through 01 July 1643

30 Jan - Materialism
   Hobbes, *Leviathan*, Ch.1-5, 7

04 Feb - Mechanism
   *Boyle, Grounds for ... Mechanical Philosophy*
   **Short Writing #1 due before 11:59PM**

06 Feb - Panpsychism
   *Cavendish, Philosophical Letters* (selections)

11 Feb - Monism
   Spinoza, *Ethics* through Ip14

13 Feb - Monism
   Spinoza, *Ethics* through Ip29

18 Feb - Mutability
   *Conway, Principles of the Most Ancient and Modern Philosophy* (selections)

20 Feb - True Unities
   Leibniz, *New System of Nature*

25 Feb - Monads
   Leibniz, *Monadology* through §48

**27 Feb - Occasionalism**
   *Malebranche, Search After Truth* (selections)

**3: THE ROLE OF WOMEN IN SOCIETY**

04 Mar - Women's Nature
   *de Pizan, The Book of the City of Ladies* (selections)

06 Mar - Equality
   *De Gournay, “The Equality of Men and Women”*

18 Mar - Patriarchy
   *Tarabotti, Paternal Tyranny* (selections)

20 Mar - Women's Opportunities
   *Suchon, “On the Celibate Life Freely Chosen”*

25 Mar - Women's Education
   *Astell, A Serious Proposal to the Ladies* (selections)

**4: EPistemology and Psychology**

27 Mar - Innate Ideas Refuted
   Locke, *Essay Concerning Human Understanding* I.ii, i.iv.20-25
   **Short Writing #2 due before 11:59PM**

01 Apr - Original of Ideas
   Locke, *Essay* II.i.1-10, 20-25; II.ii-iii

03 Apr - Psychological Faculties
   Locke, *Essay* II.ix-xi

08 Apr - Words
   Locke, *Essay* III.ii-iii, III.vi.1-20

10 Apr - Identity
   Locke, *Essay* II.xxci, II.i.10-20
15 Apr - Identity/Souls
  *Cockburn, Defence of Mr. Locke's Essay (selections)

5: ANIMALS

17 Apr - Credulity
  *Montaigne, Apology for Raymond Sebond (selections)

22 Apr - Skepticism
  *Descartes, Discourse on the Method (selections)

24 Apr - Explanation
  *Bayle, Dictionary Historical and Critical, ‘Rorarius’ (selections)
  Outline for Final Paper due before 11:59PM

29 Apr - ‘Reasoning’
  Locke, Essay, II.ix.-xi
  *Leibniz, New Essays, II.ix-xi

6: WRAP UP

01 May - Wrap up
  no new reading

  Discussion of EM—STL to be held at the time scheduled for the final exam
Resources

**PHILOSOPHICAL RESOURCES**

Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy: [http://www.iep.utm.edu](http://www.iep.utm.edu)
Philpapers.org: [http://philpapers.org](http://philpapers.org)
Tips on Writing a Philosophy Paper: [http://goo.gl/iDzgFb](http://goo.gl/iDzgFb)

**ACADEMIC RESOURCES**

**Disability Support Services**: Student Success Center, Room 1270
[http://www.siue.edu/dss/](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/](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/](http://www.siue.edu/is/writing/)
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/](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,