

Modern Philosophy

CRN: 2302

Instructor: Patricia Thornton

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Office Hours: MW 12:15-1:45 pm, by appointment

Location: N1070 (Main Building, tenth floor, north side)

Required Texts

John Henry, *The Scientific Revolution and the Origins of Modern Science* (Digital Edition)

ISBN: 978-0230574380

All other course texts will be provided electronically on Blackboard.



Course Description

Credits: 3 Class: 3 Lab: 0

Prerequisite(s): Credit or enrollment in ENG 1301.

An historical survey of the development of philosophic thought from Descartes through Kant with emphasis on the rationalists and empiricists. (PHIL 2317)

Course Learning Outcomes

Graduates who earn a BA in Philosophy will be able to:

Read and understand a philosophical text

Construct and analyze a philosophical text

Do basic secondary research in philosophy

Write a well-reasoned essay

Demonstrate mastery of a general knowledge of the history of philosophy

Think through perspectives other than their own

Communicate and exchange ideas verbally

Grading Information

Final grades will be determined according to the following (%= percentage of your final grade each assignment is worth):

Test 1: 25%

Test 2: 25%

Test 3: 25%

Responses: 20%

Pop quizzes (dependent on participation): 5%

Although not *required* for full credit in the course (and so cannot hurt your final grade), I will take into account the following in deciding if a raise to your final grade is warranted:

- (1) Regular attendance (there is one exception to this – see the section titled “Statement on attendance” below)
- (2) Thoughtful, regular, and on-topic participation
- (3) Improvement throughout the course

That is, (1)-(3), if met, can potentially (and almost certainly will) help your final grade. Consider these your extra credit opportunities.

Major Assignments

You will be required to complete responses on the assigned readings **2 hours** before each class meeting (on which there is a new reading) on Blackboard. I will pick a few responses to discuss during each class. The easiest way to do a response is to come up with two or three questions you have about the reading (citing the appropriate passages in the reading), and then, using the reading as your basis, attempt to answer those questions.

The tests will either consist of essay questions or a combination of essay questions and short answers. All tests will be open note. The first two tests will be completed in class, and you will have the option of completing the test on your personal computer via Blackboard or written in a Bluebook/Greenbook. The third test will be completed on your own time via Blackboard.

A small portion of your grade may be determined by pop quizzes; this will be fully determined by class participation. If class participation is strong, no pop quizzes will be given, and everyone will receive full credit for the portion allotted to pop quizzes. If class participation is weak, pop quizzes will be given as an alternative to gauging engagement with the readings. See the section titled “Other Expectations,” below.

Other Expectations

You are to come to class fully prepared. This means you have completed the assigned reading before class. This also means you are prepared to answer questions on the assigned readings. If I suspect that a majority of students have not completed the assigned reading (i.e., if no one answers questions during class), then I may resort to pop quizzes as an alternative to gauging student engagement with the readings.

Personal attacks directed toward other students will not be tolerated.

Be respectful of your fellow classmates. I will also take any measures necessary to eliminate distractions and disruptions. Do not bring children to class. I may ask you to take your delicious-smelling food elsewhere (please try to eat outside of class). If you are expecting an important call during class, sit by the door so you can leave without disrupting others. If you know you cannot resist checking Facebook or other content unrelated to class material, you, too, should sit at the back. If you are actively listening to music or watching videos during class, I will ask you to leave.

Calender of topics / assignments

1/14 – Syllabus/Introduction

1/16 – Galileo, “Corpuscularianism”; Descartes, *Discourse on Method*, Parts 1-5; Boyle, “The Grounds for and Excellence of the Corpuscular or Mechanical Philosophy”

1/21 – Martin Luther King Jr. Day, no class

1/23 – Henry, chapters 1&2

1/28 – Henry, chapter 3

1/30 – Henry, chapters 4&5

2/4 – Henry, chapters 6, 7&8

2/6 – Descartes, *Meditations* 1-4

2/11 – Descartes, *Meditations* 4-6

2/13 – Hobbes, *Leviathan*, Introduction & Part 1, Chapters 1-5

2/18 – Hobbes, Third Objections to the Meditations (Hobbes) and Replies (Descartes) (in *Objections to the Meditations and Descartes’s Replies* pp. 42-53)

2/20 – Catch up day/Review for Test 1

2/25 – Test 1

2/27 – Leibniz, *Monadology*

3/4 – Locke, *Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, Book 1 Chapters 1&2, Book 2 Chapters 1-8

3/6 – Leibniz, *New Essays on Human Understanding*, Preface

3/11 – Spring break, no class

3/13 – Spring break, no class

3/18 – Berkeley, *Principles of Human Knowledge*, Introduction, Part 1 Sections 1-33

3/20 – Berkeley, cont’d (no new reading)

3/25 – Catch up day/Review for Test 2

3/27 – Test 2

4/1 – Hume, *Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding*, Sections 1-3

4/3 – Hume, *Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding*, Section 4

4/8 – Hume, *Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding*, Sections 5-6

4/10 – Wrap up Hume, no new reading

4/15 – Kant, *Prolegomena* pp. 1-16

4/17 – Kant, *Prolegomena* pp. 16-44

4/22 – Kant, *Prolegomena* pp. 45-60

4/24 – Kant, *Prolegomena* pp. 60-77

4/29 – Wrap up Kant, no new reading

5/1 – Review for Test 3

5/6 – Test 3 due by end of day

Statement on Academic honesty

All students are subject to UH-Downtown's Academic Honesty Policy and to all other university-wide policies and procedures as they are set forth in the UH-Downtown University Catalog and Student Handbook.

In addition:

Any instances of plagiarism will result in an automatic F for the course. All written work will be checked for plagiarism.

If you represent another's words or work as your own, you are plagiarizing. If you plagiarize on any work you complete for the course, you will fail. This is why it is crucial you cite properly when you use outside resources.

Statement on attendance

Attendance will be taken at every class meeting via a sign-in sheet. While there are no formal attendance requirements for the completion of this course (except for that listed below), your final grade may, and most certainly will, be improved by attending class regularly.

In addition:

Your failure to attend class (face to face or hybrid), engage course material (Online only); or make contact with faculty to adequately explain your absence by the 10th class calendar day of the semester will result in your being administratively dropped from this course. Being dropped from this course may affect your enrollment status and/or your financial aid eligibility.

Statement on Disability Services

The University of Houston-Downtown complies with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, pertaining to the provision of reasonable academic adjustments/auxiliary aids for students with a disability. In accordance to Section 504 and ADA guidelines, UHD strives to provide reasonable academic adjustments/auxiliary aids to students who request and require them. If you believe that you have a documented disability requiring academic adjustments/auxiliary aids, please contact the Office of Disability Services, One Main Street, Suite GSB314, Houston, TX 77002. Office: 713-221-5078; Website: <https://www.uhd.edu/student-life/disability/Pages/disability-index.aspx>; Email: disabilityservices@uhd.edu.