

Philosophical Classics 2 -- Early Modern Philosophy
PHIL 202 – Spring, 2017
Professor Horst
Wesleyan University

Professor: Steven Horst, Department of Philosophy

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Office Location: Russell House 207a

Office Hours: Tuesday, 10:30-noon, Wednesday 1:30-3:30

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General Description of Course:

PHIL 202 is designed as an introduction to major texts in early modern European philosophy, covering works out of the Rationalist (Descartes, Spinoza, Leibniz) and Empiricist (Locke, Hume) traditions, and the Kantian synthesis. The course will particularly focus on the interplay between ideas connected to the emergence of modern "mechanical" science in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, and philosophical reflections on the nature of knowledge, the human mind as knower, and its relation to the world described by science.

Assignments and Grading

There will be essays for each of three sections of the course. The later essays will be larger and weighted more heavily, as they will also involve comparisons and connections with previous sections of the course. Early in the course, there will also be a short assignment involving close reading of a text. This is also intended as an early diagnostic exercise to test (and refine) skills at philosophical writing. As such, it will receive intensive feedback and be graded according to strict standards, but will count only as 10% of the final grade.

Papers should be sent by email with “phil202” in the Subject header, and your last name in the document title. MS Word format is preferred.

Regular attendance is expected. Professor reserves the possibility of taking attendance at his discretion.

Assignment type	Weight	Due
Close reading exercise	10%	2/17 (11:59 pm)
Rationalism Paper	20%	3/10 (11:59 pm)
Empiricism Paper	25%	4/28 (11:59 pm)
Final Paper	30%	5/17 (11:59 pm)
Class attendance and participation	15%	

Texts

Modern Philosophy: An Anthology of Primary Sources. Edited by Roger Ariew and Eric Watkins (at the bookstore)

Horst manuscript for textbook on Early Modern Philosophy (chapters will be available through Moodle)

A few additional readings (available on Moodle)

Draft online text:

I am working on a textbook for courses like this one. The assigned secondary reading will be primarily from chapters of the draft material for this text, as there are areas (like developments in early modern *science*) that are not adequately discussed by alternative textbooks. (Many of which are also outrageously expensive, in my opinion.) I'll be posting the latest drafts to Moodle about a week before each class. I would appreciate any feedback you may have on the text, including errors, unclarities, and suggestions for further material. If you would like to provide feedback, you may do so as you think best, though written is more helpful to me. (Anonymous feedback is fine!)

Cautionary Note on Taking a (First) Philosophy Course

Like any academic discipline, philosophy has its own methods and standards, and part of the process of taking a philosophy course is to learn to master these. However, I have found that, whereas people go into, say, a physics or mathematics course understanding that there are new skills they will need to learn in order to succeed, many do not realize that this will be true of philosophy courses as well. As a consequence, they are often surprised to receive a grade lower than they are used to receiving on their first paper(s). (It is not unusual, for example, for a good third of the grades on first papers in this course to receive grades of B- or below.) It is for this reason that I weight the first paper for the course considerably lighter than the others, and also try to provide more feedback on the first paper. There is a Writing Tutor assigned for this class who is available to work with you on drafts, and this is also something I am available for during office hours. People who receive C-range grades or below are particularly encouraged to do this (and will receive higher priority for receiving feedback), and those who have done so in the past have generally seen dramatic improvements in their philosophical writing (and as a consequence, their grades) over the course of the semester.

Policy on Use of Laptops and Other Electronic Devices

You may use laptops and smartphones in class *for class-related purposes* such as taking notes. However, **you may not use them for recreational browsing, instant messaging, emailing or other non-course-related activities**. Abuse of this policy may result in banning the use of such devices for everyone.

Initial Schedule

(Note: Any adjustments to schedule due to snow days and the like will be reflected at the course Moodle site, which will also list the readings and provide downloads 1-2 weeks ahead of class meetings.)

	Date	Topic	Readings
1	1/26		
2a	1/31	The Medieval World and Early Modern Science	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Horst reading online on “The Medieval World View” and “Method, Matter and Mechanism” (pp. 1-22)
2b	2/2	Descartes, Meditation 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Descartes, Meditation 1 [in AW, p. 39] • Horst, “Descartes”, 1-10 [Moodle]
3a	2/7	Meditation 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Descartes, Meditation 2 [AW] • Horst, “Descartes”, 11-16 [Moodle]
3b	2/9	Meditation 2, cont’d	
4a	2/14	Meditation 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Descartes, Meditation 3 [AW] • Horst, “Descartes”, 16-23 [Moodle]
4b	2/16	Meditation 4 Paper 1 (Close reading) due 2/17	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Descartes, Meditation 4 [AW]
5a	2/21	Meditation 5 and Rationalist science	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Descartes, Meditation 5 [AW] • Descartes, Excerpts from <i>Principles of Philosophy</i> on matter, space, and vacuum [Moodle]
5b	2/23	Meditation 6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Descartes, Meditation 6 [AW] • Horst, “Descartes”, 28-45 [Moodle]
6a	2/28	Meditation 6, cont’d, Descartes wrap-up	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •
6b	3/2	Spinoza	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Horst, “Spinoza” [Moodle] • Spinoza, <i>ethics</i>, Part I [AW 144-164, <i>old 129-149</i>], Part II selections: [AW 164-187, <i>old 162-172</i>]
7a	3/7	Leibniz	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Horst, “Newton and Leibniz” 1-16 [Moodle] • Leibniz, <i>A New System of Nature</i> [AW: 269-275, <i>old 229-234</i>] • Leibniz, <i>Monadology</i>, [AW: 275-284, <i>old 235-243</i>]
7b	3/9	Transition: Newton and Leibniz Paper 2 (Descartes/Rationalism) due 3/10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Horst, “Leibniz and Newton” 16-end [Moodle] • Newton readings from General Scholia to the 2nd ed of the <i>Principia</i> [AW 284 – 294, <i>old 244-249</i>] • Leibniz-Clark Correspondence [AW 294-303, <i>old 249-258</i>]
Spring Break			
8a	3/28	Locke’s Critique of Innate ideas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Locke, <i>Essay Concerning Human Understanding</i> Book I [AW 316-322, <i>old</i>]

			<p>270-276 – note that these are “Book” numbers (in ROMAN numerals in the book), not the little subdivisions with Arabic numerals!)]</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Horst, “Locke”, 1-5 • Leibniz, <i>New Essays</i>, [AW 422-433, <i>old 375-385</i>]
8b	3/30	Locke: ideas, qualities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Locke, <i>Essay</i> : Book II (Chapters 1-12 [AW 322-341, <i>old 281-295</i>]) • Reread section of Descartes <i>Meditation 2</i> on the wax • Horst, “Locke”, sections up until “Locke on Qualities and Real Essences” (6-10)
9a	4/4	Locke: nominal and real essences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Essay</i>: Book II (Chapters 21 [AW 348-356, <i>old 301-310</i>], 23 [AW 312-329, <i>old 312-329</i>]) • Book III (Selections in AW: 377-386 [<i>old 333-339</i>] (esp. on “real vs. nominal essences”)) • Horst, “Locke”, pp. 10-12
9b	4/6	Locke: Knowledge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Locke, <i>Essay</i>: Book IV (Chapters 1-4, (10), 11) • Horst, “Locke”, section “Locke on Knowledge” (pp. 12-end)
10a	4/11	Hume: Ideas and Impressions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hume, <i>Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding</i> Chapters 1-3 [AW: 533-542, <i>old 491-499</i>] • Horst, “Hume”
10b	4/13	Hume: Skepticism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hume, <i>Enquiry</i> 4 – 6 [AW: 542-556, <i>old 499-514</i>]
11a	4/18	Hume: Necessity and Freedom	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hume, <i>Enquiry</i> 7 – 8 [AW: 556-575]
11b	4/20	Kant’s Framework	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kant: <i>Prolegomena to Any Future Metaphysics</i>, Preface [AW 661-665, <i>old 579-583</i>], Preamble [A665-672, <i>old 583-590</i>] • Horst, “Kant”, (pp 1-6)
12a	4/25	Kant on Mathematics Paper 3 (Empiricism) Due 4/28	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Prolegomena</i>, [673-679, <i>old 591-597</i>] • Horst, “Kant” pp. 6-11
12b	4/27	Kant on Natural Science	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Prolegomena</i>, [679-695, <i>old 597-612</i>] • Horst, “Kant” pp 11-22
13a	5/2	Kant on Metaphysics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Prolegomena</i>, [695-716, <i>old 612-633</i>] • Horst, “Kant”, pp 22-end
13b	5/4	These slots intentionally left open	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •
14a	5/9	For snow days and catch-up	