

## INTRODUCTION TO EARLY MODERN PHILOSOPHY PHIL 200

COURSE DESCRIPTION	<p>The early modern period is one of great philosophical creativity, sparked in part by the religious turmoil and rapid scientific progress of the day. In response, early modern philosophers developed an extraordinary variety of responses to central philosophical questions about knowledge, God, mind, matter, language, and ethics. The goal of this course is to become acquainted both with a good representation of the canonical philosophers of the period and with a wide range of philosophical topics. Along the way, we will work hard at learning to read in a way that is both charitable and critical and at learning to write clearly and cogently.</p>
READINGS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Descartes. <i>Meditations on First Philosophy</i>.</li><li>• Locke. <i>An Essay concerning Human Understanding</i>.</li><li>• Leibniz. <i>Theodicy</i>.</li><li>• Hume. <i>A Treatise of Human Nature</i>.</li></ul> <p>Excerpts from additional texts will be provided on the course website.</p>
COURSE REQUIREMENTS	<p><i>Weekly preparation:</i> You should read all the assigned readings before the class in which we discuss them. Many of the texts we will read are difficult and will seem alien to you; hence, you should be prepared to reread them until they start making sense. In turn, I will keep readings at a reasonable length and, for some of the longer readings, will direct your attention to the most relevant bits.</p> <p><i>Quizzes:</i> There will be regular in-class quizzes on the readings. I will not count your lowest two quiz scores for the final grade.</p> <p><i>Short papers:</i> There will be two short papers (4–8 pages). For the first paper, the emphasis will be on careful, charitable interpretation of a short passage from one of our readings. For the second, the emphasis will be on a critical evaluation of an argument from one of our readings.</p> <p><i>Term paper:</i> Building on the skills cultivated in the shorter papers, you will write a longer paper (8–14 pages) that will require both interpretative and evaluative work. The paper will be written in two drafts, the first of which will be returned with comments that you need to take into account when preparing the final draft. Your grade will be based not only on the quality of the final draft, but also on the first draft and on how well you address the comments on the first draft.</p>
GRADING	<p>Class attendance and participation — 10%</p> <p>Quizzes — 20%</p> <p>Short papers — 15% each</p> <p>Term paper — 40%</p>

TENTATIVE SCHEDULE	Date	Readings (and Topics)
	Week 1	Descartes, <i>Meditations on First Philosophy</i> , Dedicatory Letter, Preface, and Meditation I (introduction to early modern philosophy; scepticism)
	Week 2	Ibid., Meditations II and III, along with the relevant objections and replies from the Third Set ( <i>cogito, ergo sum</i> ; mind; God's existence)
	Week 3	Ibid., Meditations IV–VI (Cartesian circle; substance dualism)
	Week 4	Hobbes, <i>Leviathan</i> I.13–15; Pufendorf, <i>On the Duty of Man and Citizen</i> , Preface and I.1–3 (state of nature; natural law)
	Week 5	Spinoza, <i>Ethics</i> Part I, Propositions 1–15 and Appendix; Boyle, <i>A Disquisition about Final Causes</i> , excerpts (monism; final causes)
	Week 6	Malebranche, <i>Dialogues on Metaphysics and on Religion</i> , I–II and VII (ideas in God; occasionalism)
	Week 7	Locke, <i>An Essay concerning Human Understanding</i> I, excerpts ( <i>catching up session</i> ; blank slate)
	Week 8	Ibid., II.i, ii, viii, xii, and xxi (ideas; primary/secondary qualities; free will)
	Week 9	Ibid., II.xxiii and III.i–iv and vi (substance; language; nominal/real essence)
	Week 10	Berkeley, <i>A Treatise concerning the Principles of Human Knowledge</i> , excerpts ( <i>finish Locke</i> ; idealism)
	Week 11	Leibniz, <i>Theodicy</i> , excerpts ( <i>finish Berkeley</i> ; faith and reason)
	Week 12	Leibniz, <i>Theodicy</i> , excerpts, and <i>Monadology</i> (theodicy; monads)
	Week 13	Leibniz, 'Preface to the <i>New Essays</i> '; Hume, <i>A Treatise of Human Nature</i> I.1 (innatism; ideas)
	Week 14	Hume, <i>A Treatise of Human Nature</i> I.3, excerpts, and I.4, excerpts (causation; scepticism)
	Week 15	Butler, <i>Fifteen Sermons Preached at the Rolls Chapel</i> , I and II (sociability; pleasure)