

PHI 365: MODERN PHILOSOPHY, 4 CR.  
 FALL 2019  
 MONDAYS AND WEDNESDAYS 10:00 AM – 11:50 AM  
 NOTRE DAME HALL 246

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#### INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION

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#### COURSE DESCRIPTION

The 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries in Europe faced great scientific, religious, and political revolutions. During this time, philosophers transformed ideas regarding knowledge, experience, and morality in ways that are still at stake today. Our course will trace responses to this period of upheaval by exploring the works of thinkers such as Descartes, Elisabeth of Bohemia, Locke, Hume, Spinoza, and Kant. We will address questions such as What is the relation of mind and body? What is free will? Can we have knowledge of God? What is the nature of experience? Are human beings fully rational? Students should expect

to develop their abilities and reasoning skills to analyze texts critically, engage in thoughtful discussions, and to evaluate the application of these positions in everyday situations as we examine both what defined the modern period and what implications these texts and thinkers have for today.

#### LEARNING GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

We will build on the following primary learning goals and objectives throughout the term. At the end of the course, students, you will be able to:

- understand key questions and themes in modern philosophy,
- explain philosophical positions regarding knowledge, certainty, and identity,
- identify, explain, and pose thoughtful questions of several philosophical theories,
- place different theories in conversation to synthesize particular themes,
- articulate and argue well for a position in class and in written assignments,
- appreciate philosophy's larger social and historical contexts,
- critically engage and evaluate philosophical texts and traditions,
- and cultivate the intellectual virtues of epistemic humility, intellectual curiosity, and open-mindedness.

#### TEXTBOOK AND MATERIALS

Ariew, Roger and Eric Watkins, eds. *Modern Philosophy: An Anthology of Primary Sources*. Third Edition. Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, Inc., 2019. ISBN 9781624668050

Other texts will be posted on Canvas. You must bring the assigned text with you each class period in a format with which you can actively read.

#### MOUNT MARY UNIVERSITY MISSION

Mount Mary University, an urban Catholic university for women sponsored by the School Sisters of Notre Dame, provides an environment for the development of the whole person. The University encourages leadership, integrity, and a deep sense of social justice arising from a sensitivity to moral values and Christian principles.

Mount Mary commits itself to excellence in teaching and learning with an emphasis on thinking critically and creatively. The baccalaureate curriculum integrates the liberal arts with career preparation for women of diverse ages and personal circumstances; the programs at the graduate level provide opportunities for both men and women to enhance their professional excellence.

#### MOUNT MARY UNIVERSITY VISION STATEMENT

Mount Mary University is recognized as a diverse learning community that works in partnership with local, national and global organizations to educate women to transform the world.

### DIVERSITY AND ACCESSIBILITY STATEMENT

Mount Mary University and the Department of Philosophy are committed to an educational environment that affirms the uniqueness, diversity, and integrity of all students. Similarly, the well-being and success of each student in this course are important to me. I will do my best to reduce any course barriers to ensure that students from all backgrounds and perspectives will be served equitably. The diversity that students bring to this class will be viewed as a resource, strength, and benefit. It is my intent to present materials and activities that are respectful and inclusive of the many identities of students in terms of gender, sexual orientation, disability, age, socioeconomic status, ethnicity, race, culture, perspective, and other background characteristics. Thus, I encourage students registered in the course to discuss their learning styles and comprehension requirements with me.

Mount Mary University complies with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 which stipulates that the University will make reasonable accommodations for persons with documented disabilities. If you have a disability that may have some impact on your work in this class and for which you may require accommodations; please see me or

- Sarah Olejniczak, Vice President for Student Affairs
- [olejnics@mtmary.edu](mailto:olejnics@mtmary.edu)
- 414-930-3372

If you require any particular accommodations, please meet with me by **as soon as possible** so we can work together to make optimal arrangements. All information will be held in the strictest of confidence.

### BASIC NEEDS STATEMENT

Doing philosophy is challenging, and can be especially challenging if we have difficulty meeting basic needs, too. Any student who faces challenges securing their food, transportation, or housing and believes this may affect their performance in the course is urged to contact Sarah Olejniczak, Dean of Student Affairs for support. Furthermore, please notify me if you are comfortable in doing so. This will enable me to provide any resources that she may possess.

### ASSIGNMENTS AND ASSESSMENT

In addition to formal assignments listed below, there are a few other requirements:

- ***Come to every class.***
  - Attendance is mandatory. There may be legitimate reasons to miss class, but there can be no more than three absences without impacting your final grade.
- ***Come to class on time.***
  - Late arrivals are disruptive and jeopardize your own ability to follow the class. Three late arrivals count as an absence
- ***Come prepared.***
  - Before class, read the text carefully and make note of any questions or ideas. Have your textbook, notes, and something to write with ready at the start of class. I will do

my best to help you understand the material, but you must make a good faith effort to do the work.

- ***Be respectful.***
  - Being respectful means listening attentively and making a good effort to engage with your classmates and me. Please wait for opportunities for group work instead of having side conversations. There is no excuse for rude, disruptive, aggressive, or dismissive behavior toward your classmates or me even if you have a differing opinion. Cell phones must be out of sight during class unless arranged otherwise.
- ***Strive for open communication.***
  - We have a joint responsibility to make the class the best it can be. If you're having difficulties or have other concerns or recommendations, please come to my office hours or make an appointment with me as soon as possible. If something is working well, let me know that, too!
- ***Practice intellectual virtues***
  - Epistemic humility: Question your own certainty in ways that enable you to revise your views, even regarding convictions central to your worldview
  - Intellectual curiosity: See out diverse experiences and perspectives to test, complicate, and enrich existing knowledge.
  - Make an effort to hear and respect others' testimonies, try to inhabit their perspectives, and consider multiple perspectives at once
- ***Practice self-care***
  - Some of the themes we will cover this term will be challenging, including issues of race, gender, sexuality, ability, class, national origin, colonialism, or violence. Readings and discussions might trigger strong feelings—anger, discomfort, anxiety, confusion, excitement, humor, and even boredom. Some of us will have emotional responses to the readings; some of us will have emotional responses to our peers' understanding of the readings; all of us should feel responsible for creating a space that is both intellectually rigorous and respectful. Above all, be mindful of the ways that our identities position us in the classroom.

I expect everyone to come to class prepared to discuss the readings in a mature and respectful way. If you are struggling with the course materials, here are some tips: read the syllabus so that you are prepared in advance. You can approach me ahead of time if you'd like more information about a topic or reading. If you think a particular reading or topic might be especially challenging or unsettling, you can arrive to class early and take a seat by the door so that you can easily exit the classroom as needed. If you need to leave or miss class, you are still responsible for the work you miss. If you are struggling to keep up with the work because of the course content, you should speak with me and/or seek help from the counseling center.

1. In-class Performance	10%
2. Class Facilitator	10%
3. ARRs	15%
4. Philosophical Salon	20%
5. Essays	25%
6. Final Project	20%

### 1. IN-CLASS PERFORMANCE

This course will be conducted more as a seminar, so participation from everyone is imperative. When you contribute to discussion, other students' learning is enhanced. I expect students to come to class having completed the assigned readings and with the texts in hand. Participation means not simply speaking for the sake of speaking, but contributing to the development of class discussion on comments or questions. As a fairly shy person, I understand that it can be difficult to participate verbally. I urge you to try anyway and I will also make a special note of active listening. Please also remember that participation includes respect, so disruptive behavior such as talking out of turn, arriving late or leaving early, and the use of cell phones won't be tolerated. Pop quizzes may be given in class occasionally and will count toward the participation grade.

### 2. CLASS FACILITATOR

Because this course will follow more of a seminar format, each student will be responsible for facilitating the class discussion for one day. It's great to hear explanations and questions from one another. The facilitation should last for at least twenty minutes and needs to cover only one section of the text. The facilitator should both clarify ideas and raise questions for discussion. It is better to facilitate a detailed, close discussion of one element of the text rather than trying to summarize the entirety of the reading in twenty minutes.

Each student will provide a one- to two-page discussion document for the class. You must email me the document by 6 p.m. the night before the presentation so I can make copies for the class. The document should

1. introduce the day's reading,
2. explain key philosophical concepts and ideas of the thinker or text assigned,
3. refer directly to quotations and passages in the text, and
4. raise at least three questions for class discussion. These questions can be to clarify, challenge, assess significance, etc., of the reading.

You are welcome to show video clips, provided they do not comprise your entire twenty minutes. It can be interesting to try to connect the material to contemporary issues, too. Any outside sources used in preparing the document must be cited.

**Each student must meet with me to discuss her presentation at least two days ahead of time.** A schedule will be determined in class.

### 3. ARRs (ACTIVE READING RESPONSES)

It is important that you develop the habit of “active” reading. This assignment is designed to help you do that. As you read, I urge you to highlight significant passages and even include in the margins of the text questions and ideas you have about what you are reading. These texts will be challenging, but will also be rewarding through active reading and discussion. This assignment enables you to prepare better for class by working through the text ahead of class to determine both what you understand and where you have questions. Thus, the responses are a *shared responsibility* between the students and me. Instructions for the responses are on e-Learning. Responses should be 350-500 words.

The class will be divided in half. One group’s papers will be due Mondays, the second group’s on Wednesdays. No papers will be due the first week or the weeks essays are assigned. The lowest ARR will be dropped.

**Responses must be submitted to Canvas by 8am the day they are due.** No late responses will be accepted except in unique circumstances, such as a family emergency, and with prior arrangement.

### 4. PHILOSOPHICAL SALON

In the Early Modern world, salons were social gatherings, most often hosted by women, of artists, philosophers, poets, and other intellectuals to share in conversation and the exchange of ideas. Many Early Modern philosophical texts develop through correspondences and social events like salons with other thinkers. Yet, most of what is presented as the “canon” of modern philosophy includes only a handful of thinkers and most of the ones included are white European men. For the past few years, many scholars and students are working to bring more attention to those voices that have been neglected. This is your opportunity to contribute to this important work and help extend our view of the Modern World. Each student will choose one philosopher, to research and discuss over the course of the semester. You may choose any philosopher from 1500-1750, in any part of the world, in any language in which you have at least substantial reading ability. You may also choose thinkers who are on the syllabus, except for Descartes, Leibniz, Locke, Hume, and Kant. Different pieces of the project will be due at different times over the course of the semester. Our final class session will be a salon to share our research. More details will be given in class.

### 5. ESSAYS

The essays will be critical analysis and response papers of 1100-1500 words (approximately 4-6 pages), typed and double-spaced. The essays provide you the opportunity to demonstrate familiarity with the texts by answering a particular prompt, which I will provide you. Students are welcome to come up with their own prompt, but it must receive my approval ahead of time. This assignment connects to learning goal of being able to identify, explain, and pose thoughtful questions of several philosophical theories; compare and distinguish substantively among at least two theories; •place different theories in

conversation to synthesize particular themes,; and articulate and argue well for your own position in written assignments. Because the aim is to develop your voice and your argument in relation to the texts, we will have writing workshops prior to the final submission. Participating in the workshop, as well as a draft, and a reflection on the revision process, will count toward the essay grade. More specific guidelines for the essays will be discussed in class. **Please be sure to include your ID number, but not your name, to facilitate anonymous grading.**

N.B.: Online sources can be helpful for preliminary background research, but they will not help you significantly beyond this. You'll need to demonstrate original thought and provide your own analysis of different arguments. Have confidence in your own abilities, and if you need more help, see me. All sources, including those consulted for background absolutely must be cited properly.

## 6. FINAL PROJECT

The final project is your opportunity to provide an answer to a question regarding early modern philosophy. It is up to you what question you address and you may draw on your philosophical salon work. To answer your question, you have the opportunity either to

1. create a work (an artwork, piece of music, podcast, dialogue, short story, video, etc.) and provide a 1800-2200 word written analysis and explanation of the work that, drawing on the theories we discussed this semester, demonstrates how the work answers that question. Or,
2. write a 2800-3200 word research paper on a topic in modern philosophy of your choosing. This paper should deal directly with texts discussed in class, but must also incorporate scholarly secondary sources.

Both project formats require a proposal for the project (paragraph length is sufficient), which must be submitted via Canvas by **Wednesday, Nov. 20th**. The proposal should articulate the question you will be asking, some suggestions of how you will answer it, and which project format you have chosen.

Final projects are due by **Monday, December 9th**. Students may include a photograph, video, or audio file of their works if they wish to retain the original.

Presentations should be 2-5 minutes long. The written component will be graded according to the rubric provided for writing assignments.

### Project Breakdown for Option 1:

Proposal	10%
Creative work	25%
Paper	65%

### Project Breakdown for Option 2:

Proposal	10%
Paper	90%

## GRADING STANDARDS

- A, Excelling: The work primarily demonstrates especially skillful and in-depth understanding, analysis, synthesis, and insight
- B-A/B, Achieving: The work primarily demonstrates competent understanding, analysis, synthesis, and insight with some depth
- C-B/C, Improving: The work primarily demonstrates basic understanding, analysis, synthesis, and insight, but requires further development
- D. Developing: The work primarily demonstrates incomplete or inaccurate understanding, analysis, synthesis, and insight;

Please also see the detailed rubrics on our course site to see how the essays and final paper assignments will be assessed.

Your grades will be recorded on Canvas. I am happy to discuss outcomes and strategies for maintaining or improving your development in the course in person. If you have a question about a particular grade, I ask that you first read through my comments and criteria and then schedule an appointment with me to discuss it.

#### LATE WORK

RATs, ARR, and FRRs may not be made up, except in very particular circumstances. For other written assignments, you have a one-day free extension, no questions asked, and it is up to you when you use it. After two days, if I have still not received your work, we must meet together to discuss your ideas and put a plan for completion in place. Late work without that meeting will not be accepted.

#### COMMUNICATION

Students are expected to check their Mount Mary email accounts regularly. The best way to contact me is via email. I will generally respond to all emails within twenty-four hours, except possibly on weekends. I will respond to emails before 8pm, so do not wait until the last minute to contact me.

Emails between us, as well as among your classmates, are professional correspondences and should reflect that degree of formality. Please be sure to include a subject line, greeting, and signature. Remember, too, that a “thank you” goes a long way. I am more than happy to answer questions or bounce around ideas, but try first to verify whether your questions have already been answered in the syllabus or other course materials. So, before you send an email, ask yourself, 1) Did I already check the syllabus?, 2) Did I check Canvas?, 3) Have I asked a classmate, or can I ask at the beginning of the next class meeting? If your question is more substantive, please send it along.

Grades may not be discussed via email, so please come by office hours or set up an appointment instead. Appointments for office hours are not necessary and you’re strongly encouraged to drop in to see me, if even to just say hello.



### ELECTRONICS POLICY

Electronic devices in and of themselves are neutral. What matters is how they are used. Our challenge is to determine how best to use technology in developing our philosophical community. Handheld devices, such as tablets and e-readers, may be used, but should be kept flat on the desk during class in order to facilitate face-to-face discussion and not to distract neighbors. The same etiquette applies to using these devices as it does the rest of the class: the devices should not be disruptive, distracting, or prevent you from participating, both in terms of speaking and listening. Use should be limited to class activities and all devices should be silenced. If there is a serious need to accept a phone call, such as in the case of a family emergency, please leave your phone on vibrate and excuse yourself outside to take the call. You are adults and responsible for your behavior, but if I or your classmates find your use to be problematic, we may ask you to put your device away. If you use an electronic version of the text, be sure that you can read and annotate it carefully and thoroughly.

Photos and videos are not allowed to be taken during class without explicit permission.

### ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Mount Mary is an academic community dedicated to the intellectual and social and ethical development of each of its members. As members of this community we all are responsible for maintaining an atmosphere of mutual respect and honesty.

Standards for academic integrity provide a structure for the creation of an academic environment consistent with the values of the School Sisters of Notre Dame and the mission. In keeping with these goals, all students are expected to strive for integrity, in academic and non-academic pursuits. Acts that involve any attempt to deceive, to present another's ideas as one's own, or to enhance one's grade through dishonest means violate the integrity of both the student and University.

Academic dishonesty in any form has a negative impact on the essential principles of the Mount Mary Community. Therefore, such acts are treated as a serious breach of trust.

A faculty member has the right and authority to deal with academic dishonesty in his or her classroom; however, a student who commits multiple violations against academic integrity shall be subject to administrative disciplinary action as described in the Academic Honesty and Integrity Policy and Procedures.

*Copies of the full Academic Honesty and Integrity Policy and Procedures are available through the office of the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs. The policy and procedures are included in the Mount Mary Student Handbook, the Undergraduate Bulletin and online at [mtmary.edu/handbook.htm](http://mtmary.edu/handbook.htm) and [my.mtmary.edu](http://my.mtmary.edu)*

## COURSE CALENDAR

Please complete assignments before the date listed. Be sure to bring all texts to class. All page numbers refer to *Modern Philosophy: An Anthology of Primary Sources* unless otherwise indicated.

WEEK 1, Aug. 26, 28

Monday

- What is modern philosophy?

Wednesday

- Read: Michel de Montaigne, "Apology for Raymond Sebond" 1-15  
Jack A. Goldstone, "The Problem of the 'Early Modern' World" on Canvas
- Consider: Montaigne presents a number of skeptical doubts. Are there ways out of doubt? Goldstone argues that "early modern" is a problematic concept. What are the different historical, sociological, and philosophical issues at stake?

WEEK 2, Sept. 2, 4

Monday

- Labor Day, no class

Wednesday

- Read: René Descartes, *Meditations* Dedication-Meditation Two 35-47
- Consider: What is Descartes' project? Is his method of doubt the same as Montaigne's? Can we know anything? What would be the basis for knowledge?

WEEK 3, Sept. 9, 11

Monday

- Read: Descartes, *Meditations* Three-Four, 47-58
- Consider: Why is it necessary for Descartes to prove that God exists? If God does exist, can God be deceiving Descartes?

Wednesday

- Read: Descartes, *Meditations* Five-Six, 58-68
- Consider: Has Descartes secured the foundation he was seeking? Is certainty possible? What is the relation between the mind and the body?

WEEK 4, Sept. 16, 18

Monday

- Read: Elisabeth and Descartes *Correspondence* 93-99  
Christia Mercer, "Descartes is Not our Father" on Canvas
- Consider: What are Elisabeth's objections to Descartes? Does she conceive of the body and mind similarly or differently? On what basis?

Wednesday

- Read: Anton Wilhelm Amo, *On the Apathy of the Human Mind*, 332-334  
Dwight K. Lewis, "Anton Wilhelm Amo" on Canvas
- Consider: Amo also takes issue with Descartes' account. Are his reasons the same as Elisabeth's? Is Descartes able to answer these concerns?
- Prepare: **Philosophical Salon Figure due**

WEEK 5, Sept. 23, 25

Monday

- Read: Margaret Cavendish, *Philosophical Letters*, 143-153
- Consider: Cavendish also raises a number of questions about material and immaterial bodies. How can or should we understand motion? How do we come to have knowledge of sensations?

Wednesday

- Read: Anne Conway, *The Principles of the Most Ancient and Modern Philosophy*, 154-164
- Consider: Conway raises many objections similar to Elisabeth's and Cavendish's, but hers take the form of a treatise rather than correspondence. Is there a connection between philosophical form and content?
- Prepare: **Peer Review Workshop**

WEEK 6, Sept. 30, Oct. 2

Monday

- Read: Baruch Spinoza, *The Ethics*, 117-119, 172-188
- Consider: What is the geometrical method? Why does Spinoza use it?

Wednesday

- Read: Spinoza, 192-198, 202-208, 216-223
- Consider: Spinoza tries to avoid the problems of dualism found in Descartes. How does he attempt this? Is he successful? How does philosophy lead to a good life?
- **Essay One Due**

WEEK 7, Oct. 7, 9

Monday

- Read: Zera Jacob, selection from *The Treatise*, Canvas  
Dag Herbjørnsrud,, "The African Enlightenment" on Canvas
- Consider: Jacob presents an account of a good life. What are the elements? What role does philosophy play in developing a good life?

Wednesday

- Read: Émilie du Châtelet, "Discourse on Happiness" on Canvas

- Consider: Du Châtelet also presents an account for the good life, but it seems that philosophy takes on a great role. How come? She also discusses different expectations regarding men and women. Do you think these expectations have changed?
- Prepare: **Philosophical Salon Biography due**

#### WEEK 8, Oct. 14, 16

##### Monday

- Read: Gottfried Leibniz, *Monadology*, 225-227, 303-311
- Consider: What is a monad? How is Leibniz's account of God and creation dependent on the monad? How might this answer questions about dualism?

##### Wednesday

- Read: Lady Masham and Leibniz, *Correspondence*, 452-462
- Consider: Masham is particularly interested in Leibniz's ideas regarding pre-harmony. What are her questions and objections? Does Leibniz respond convincingly?
- Prepare: **Philosophical Salon Primary Works Bibliography due**

#### WEEK 9, Oct. 21, 23

##### Monday

- Read: John Locke, Locke, *Essay*, I.I-II, 335-336, 316-22  
Selection from "Second Treatise on Government" on Canvas
- Consider: Whereas many of the other thinkers we've looked at doubt the senses, Locke believes we can actually gain a lot of knowledge from them. How does he think sensation occurs? Does all knowledge come from the senses?

##### Wednesday

- Jean- Jacques Rousseau, "Discourse on Origin of Inequality" on Canvas
- Consider: Rousseau gives us an account of the state of nature. What are the differences between the state of nature and civilized society? What does he think the basis of inequality is?

#### WEEK 10, Oct. 28, 30

##### Monday

- Read: Thomas Hobbes, selections on the Social Contract, Canvas
- Consider: What does Hobbes mean by the "social contract"? Why is such a contract necessary? What are its features?
- Prepare: **Peer Review Workshop**

##### Wednesday

- Read: Justin E. H. Smith, selection from *Nature, Human Nature, & Human*

*Difference Race in Early Modern Philosophy on Canvas*

- Consider: Smith outlines many of the attitudes toward indigenous people and slaves of the Americas and Africa. How are these attitudes rooted in different philosophical beliefs? Can we separate personal or political beliefs from philosophical ones?

WEEK 11, Nov. 4, 6

Monday

- Read: Bartolomé de las Casas, selection from *A Short Account of the Destruction of the Indies*, Canvas
- In class: Film, *Aguirre, the Wrath of God*
- Prepare: **Essay Two Due**

Wednesday

- Read: Mary Astell, "Selections from *A Serious Proposal to the Ladies*" on Canvas
- Consider: What is Astell's "serious proposal"? What sort of education does she think is necessary for women? What does she think the role of emotion is?

WEEK 12, Nov. 11, 13

Monday

- Read: George Berkeley, *A Treatise Concerning the Principles of Human Knowledge*, 475-493
- Consider: What does Berkeley mean by the idea that to be is to be perceived? What does the perception of God have to do with this?
- Prepare: **Philosophical Salon Secondary Works Bibliography due**

Wednesday

- Read: Hume, *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding*, 555-557, 579-602
- Consider: How does Hume distinguish between causation and constant conjunction? What is the role of skepticism? Does he think we can have certain knowledge of anything?

WEEK 13, Nov. 18, 20

Monday

- Read: Hume, *Enquiry* 602-622
- Consider: What are the sources of ideas? How does Hume try to resolve questions regarding free will and necessity?

Wednesday

- Read: Kant, *Prolegomena*, 703-708, 719-737
- Consider: What is Kant's task? What does he mean by metaphysics? How does he distinguish between the analytic and the synthetic?
- Prepare: **Final Project Proposal Due**

WEEK 14, Nov. 25, 27

Monday

- Read: Kant, *Prolegomena* 737-750
- Consider: What does Kant mean by nature? What sorts of judgments can we make about experience? What are the roles of the imagination and the understanding?
- Prepare: **Philosophical Salon Discussion Due**

Wednesday

- Thanksgiving Break

WEEK 15, Dec. 2, 4

Monday

- Read: Kant, *Prolegomena* 756-774
- Consider: What are the antinomies of pure reason? How do the antinomies relate to our understanding of God? Are there any limits to reason?

Wednesday

- Philosophical Salon, final project presentations

EXAM WEEK, Dec. 9

Monday

- Final paper due by 11:59 p.m.