

MODERN PHILOSOPHY

FALL 2024

INSTRUCTOR

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OFFICE HOURS

Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays,
By Appointment, and
Tuesdays and Thursdays,
12:30 PM–1:45 PM

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Analysis of the major philosophical movements in the modern period. Figures may include Descartes, Spinoza, Leibniz, Locke, Berkeley, Hume, Kant, and Hegel.

COURSE OUTCOMES

This course asks you to do all of these:

- Identify some of the major figures in modern philosophy and summarize their key positions.
- Discuss the strengths and weaknesses of various philosophical positions.
- Outline the basic sequence of modern philosophy.
- Note that, to measure your attainment of these outcomes, you must do certain assessments.

ASSESSMENTS

Your final grade will be determined by your performance on twenty reflections, on two tests, on a paper, and on an exam:

- Twenty reflections will determine twenty percent of your final grade. You must submit each reflection on Canvas prior to the start of the relevant class.
- Two tests will determine thirty percent of your final grade. You must submit each test on Canvas prior to the end of the relevant day.
- A paper will determine twenty-five percent of your final grade. You must submit this paper on Canvas prior to the end of the relevant day.
- An exam will determine twenty-five percent of your final grade. You must submit this exam on Canvas prior to the end of the relevant day.

Note that, if you fail to do an assessment by the time that it is due—for any reason—then you may receive a grade of zero on that assessment. Because of this, you should not wait

until the last minute to do any assessment! Note also that, to do well in these assessments, you must do certain readings.

READINGS

These readings are available at the bookstore—though you are free to buy them elsewhere:

- René Descartes. *Meditations on First Philosophy*. Revised edition. Edited and translated by John Cottingham. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996. ISBN: 978-1107665736.
- Baruch Spinoza. *Ethics*. Edited by Matthew J. Kisner. Translated by Michael Silverthorne and Matthew J. Kisner. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018. ISBN: 978-1107655638.
- David Hume. *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding*. Edited by Stephen Buckle. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007. ISBN: 978-0521604031.
- Immanuel Kant. *Prolegomena to Any Future Metaphysics*. Revised edition. Edited and translated by Gary Hatfield. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004. ISBN: 978-0521535359.
- Anthony Kenny. *A New History of Western Philosophy*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010. ISBN: 978-0199656493.

Any other readings are available on Canvas.

BENEDICTINE VALUES

All six of our [Benedictine Values](#) are implicated in this course. At its heart, though, is Hospitality—that is, a sort of vulnerability to the ideas of others.

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Because discussion plays a crucial role in this course, it is crucial that you not only attend class but also listen attentively and contribute seriously to that discussion—not occasionally but every time that we meet. You should, in other words, be present at and participating in every class—unless, of course, you provide an official university excuse.

I reserve the right to drop you should you miss ten classes without an official university excuse. This is in accord with the excessive absence policy, which is available for review [online](#).

TECHNOLOGY POLICY

Though laptops, tablets, and smartphones are profoundly useful, they are also profoundly distracting—not only to you but also to others. Therefore, you may not use laptops, tablets, and smartphones in class unless, at your request, I have given you permission to do so.

ACADEMIC HONESTY POLICY

It should go without saying that academic dishonesty of any sort is wrong. Worse than that, though, academic dishonesty reveals a serious confusion regarding the reasons that one is in a course in philosophy—or, for that matter, at a university—in the first place. Such dishonesty is occasion for as much pity as anger.

Presenting the work of another as your own is academically dishonest. Whenever you copy the words of another, therefore, you must place those words within quotation marks and cite their source. (This goes for the words of any artificial intelligence, by the way!)

As a deterrent, let me promise that I will prosecute every instance of academic dishonesty. But do not misinterpret this promise: if you feel that you do not understand something well enough to explain it in your own words—whether in this course or in any other—then come to me for help. We will work together to overcome whatever difficulty stands in your way.

COURSE INFORMATION

This course, PHI 320 01, meets for fifteen weeks on Tuesdays and Thursdays at 2:00 PM in Welder Library 207. It is worth three credits, is an elective for majors and minors in philosophy, and is graded according to the usual scale. (Note that there won't be any rounding.)

STATEMENT ON WORKLOAD

Since this is a three semester-credit undergraduate-level course lasting fifteen weeks, students can expect to spend a minimum of three hours a week instructional time and another six hours a week studying outside of instructional time.

STATEMENT ON EXCUSED ABSENCES

The University has a policy on excused absences related to sponsored or sanctioned activities and events. The policy is available for review [online](#). Students participating in such activities and events are expected to review this policy and comply with it. As long as appropriate prior notification is given according to this policy, students and faculty reach a mutual agreement concerning make-up work, and students complete the work in question, faculty shall not penalize a student for missing a class or exam when they were granted an excused absence from the university. Any questions concerning the policy may be referred to the course instructor who may refer the question to the athletic director, the student activities director, or academic affairs for an answer.

STATEMENT ON ACADEMIC HONESTY

Students are expected to read the University of Mary's [Academic Honor Code and Honor System](#) and abide by all the standards of conduct and requirements contained therein. When a student is in doubt about whether or not an action might constitute an Academic Honor Code violation, he or she should request clarification from the instructor *before* the action in question is undertaken.

STATEMENT ON REASONABLE ACCOMMODATIONS

The University of Mary, in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act and in the spirit of our mission, offers support for disabled students who provide the required documentation. Students with disabilities who need accommodations should apply to the [Office of Student Accessibility Services](#). For further information, contact Dr. Lynn Dodge, coordinator of Student Accessibility Services, in the Student Success Center. You can reach her at 701-355-8264 or ljdodge@umary.edu.

COURSE COMMUNICATION CHANNEL

Students should communicate any questions or concerns relating to this course to the following individuals in the order listed below. To learn more about the University of Mary's process for responding to academic concerns, students should read its policy, which is available for review [online](#).

Dan Sportiello, Associate Professor of Philosophy > Hannan Venable, Chair of the Philosophy Program > Jim Peliska, Dean of the School of Arts and Sciences

1	Tuesday	September 3	Introduction		
	Thursday	September 5	Introduction		
2	Tuesday	September 10	Seventeenth	<i>Meditations</i> , §§ 1–2	Reflection 1
	Thursday	September 12	Seventeenth	<i>Meditations</i> , §§ 3–4	Reflection 2
3	Tuesday	September 17	Seventeenth	<i>Meditations</i> , §§ 5–6	Reflection 3
	Thursday	September 19	Seventeenth	<i>Leviathan</i> , §§ 1.1–9	Reflection 4
4	Tuesday	September 24	Seventeenth	<i>Leviathan</i> , §§ 1.10–16	Reflection 5
	Thursday	September 26	Seventeenth	<i>Ethics</i> , § 1	Reflection 6
5	Tuesday	October 1	No Class		
	Thursday	October 3	No Class		
6	Tuesday	October 8	Seventeenth	<i>Ethics</i> , § 2	Reflection 7
	Thursday	October 10	Seventeenth	<i>Ethics</i> , § 3	Reflection 8
7	Tuesday	October 15	Seventeenth	<i>Ethics</i> , § 4	Reflection 9
	Thursday	October 17	Catching Up		
8	Tuesday	October 22	Seventeenth	<i>Ethics</i> , § 5	Reflection 10
	Thursday	October 24	Seventeenth		
9	Tuesday	October 29	Seventeenth		Test 1
	Thursday	October 31	Eighteenth	<i>Monadology</i>	Reflection 11
10	Tuesday	November 5	Eighteenth	<i>Enquiry</i> , §§ 1–6	Reflection 12
	Thursday	November 7	Eighteenth	<i>Enquiry</i> , §§ 7–9	Reflection 13
11	Tuesday	November 12	Eighteenth	<i>Enquiry</i> , §§ 10–11	Reflection 14
	Thursday	November 14	Eighteenth	<i>Enquiry</i> , § 12	Reflection 15
12	Tuesday	November 19	Eighteenth	<i>Prolegomena</i> , §§ 1–5	Reflection 16
	Thursday	November 21	Eighteenth	<i>Prolegomena</i> , §§ 6–13	Reflection 17

13	Tuesday	November 26	Eighteenth	<i>Prolegomena</i> , §§ 14–39	Reflection 18
	Thursday	November 28	No Class		
14	Tuesday	December 3	Eighteenth	<i>Prolegomena</i> , §§ 40–56	Reflection 19
	Thursday	December 5	Eighteenth	<i>Prolegomena</i> , §§ 57–60	Reflection 20
15	Tuesday	December 10	Eighteenth		
	Thursday	December 12	Eighteenth		Test 2
16	Tuesday	December 17	No Class		Paper
	Thursday	December 19	No Class		Exam