

History of Philosophy: Aquinas to Kant
Philosophy V2201y; Spring, 2005
854-3190/3196

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I. Course Description:

An historical survey of philosophical ideas from the 13th through the 18th century in western Europe. We will read, interpret, and discuss the works of major philosophers with special focus on their views about philosophical method, the fundamental nature of reality, the foundations and extent of knowledge, and the foundations of science. We will attempt to place the ideas of these thinkers as much as possible in the intellectual, scientific, and philosophical context that produced them.

II. Required Texts:

The following are **required**. The first five (1-5) are available at Columbia Bookstore (and in the reserve room at Butler Library):

1. *The Philosophy of the 16th and 17th Centuries*, ed. Richard Popkin
2. Anne Conway, *Principles of the Most Ancient and Modern Philosophy* (Cambridge U. Press)
3. Berkeley, *Three Dialogues between Hylas and Philonous* (Hackett)
4. Hume, *Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding* (Hackett)
5. Kant, *Prolegomena to Any Future Metaphysics* (Hackett)
6. Leibniz's *Discourse on Metaphysics* is **required** reading. It has not been ordered. Find it as an eBook at Columbia Libraries Web: go to Clio, Electronic Resources, then Data Bases, then Humanities and History, then to Past Masters; after you connect, go to Continental Rationalists, then Leibniz, then *Philosophical Essays*. Or the text is available in any number of collections of Leibniz's works.
7. Also **required** is a packet of photocopied material that contains excerpts from works by Thomas Aquinas, Marie de Gournay, Pierre Gassendi, and Elisabeth of Bohemia. Obtain this at Village Copier (Brdwy b/w 112 and 111). **Everyone should buy one of these as soon as possible** since it contains the first assignment.

III. Course Assignments and Grades:

There will be two relatively short papers (6 pages each) and two examinations (a mid-term and final). Each paper will count for 23% of your final grade. The mid-term will count for 25%, the final for 29% of your final grade. Paper topics will be distributed at least a week before each paper is due. Late papers will be counted off unless you have a written doctor's excuse. I do not allow rewrites, but am happy to consider drafts and outlines.

Given the size of this class, I will have assistants. They will be available to discuss the topics of the course, to review outlines and/or drafts of papers. There will be an optional discussion session on Friday afternoons. These details will be announced in class.

IV. Lecture Topics and Readings

Week 1 Introduction to course; Aquinas' *Principles of Nature*

January 18: Course description; conceptions of the history of philosophy; the problem with "modern" philosophy; what is metaphysics?

January 20: Aquinas' conception of nature; form, matter, and the causes of things.

Reading: Aquinas's *Principles of Nature* (packet, pp. 1-7). **BRING READING MATERIAL TO CLASS.**

Week 2 The Aristotelian Renaissance: Its method, Principles, and Concerns.

January 25: Aquinas on matter, change, and causation.

January 27: Aristotle's legacy and its transformation within Christian theology; the problem of God.

Reading: Aquinas' "Five Ways" (packet, pp. 8-10).

NOTE: IT IS IMPORTANT TO BRING THE REQUIRED READING MATERIALS TO CLASS

- Week 3 Renaissance Philosophy and Early modern Science
February 1: Renaissance skepticism, anti-Aristotelianism, humanism, and reformed theology.
 Reading: Erasmus (Popkin, pp. 31-36); Luther (Popkin, pp. 37, 42-45); Montaigne (Popkin 70-81); Marie de Gournay (packet, 11-15).
February 3: The middle way of Gassendi and Bacon (Popkin, pp. 110-120; 83- 109; packet, pp. 16-29).
- Week 4 "Divine Madness": The Mathematical Science or How to Create the World.
February 8: Mathematics, reading God's mind, and how to create the world.
 Reading: Kepler (Popkin, pp. 52-57).
February 10: Galileo's *The Assayer* - the fundamental reality of (much of) modern science; the distinction between primary and secondary qualities; the mechanical philosophy (Popkin, pp. 64-68).
- Week 5 Descartes' *Meditations on First Philosophy*.
February 15/17: The importance of the work as a meditation; the skeptical method and the goals of the first meditation; the *cogito* argument and its implications; Descartes' meditation on wax and what it tells us about our knowledge of bodies; clearness and distinctness as a criterion of truth; that God exists and is not a deceiver; problems and implications with the argument for the existence of God in Med. 3; how we make mistakes.
 Reading: Descartes' *Meditations*; read all and then focus on 1, 2, 3, and 4 for this week (Popkin, pp. 122-54). Note that the Popkin translation is not very good. Although we will refer to the Popkin version in class, you may want to read another other version of the *Meditations*. There is a good translation as an ebook. (see **Required Texts**, 6. above).
- Week 6 Descartes' "First Philosophy" and the Foundations of Science
February 22: How we know the essence of bodies; the role that God plays in the acquisition of knowledge; the ontological argument for the existence of God; what we really are and how we exist in the world of material objects.
 Reading: *Meditations* 4, 5 and 6 (Popkin, pp. 154-180 or any other edition of the *Meditations*).
February 24: MID-TERM EXAMINATION
- Week 7 Reactions to Cartesianism
March 1: Elisabeth of Bohemia's body
 Reading: Elisabeth of Bohemia's correspondence with Descartes (packet, pp. 31-end).
March 3: FIRST PAPER TOPICS DISTRIBUTED
- Week 8 Conway's Vitalism
March 8/10: Three kinds of substances; creatures as modes; moral and metaphysical hierarchy.
 Reading: Anne Conway's *Principles of the Most Ancient and Modern Philosophy* (entire book).
- Week 9 **Spring Break: March 14-20**
- Week 10 Spinoza's Simple Monism
March 22/24: Spinoza on substance, cause, attributes, modes
 Reading: Spinoza, *The Ethics*, Book I, Part I (through Proposition XXX) (Popkin, pp. 247-258). Note that the Popkin translation is not very good. Although we will refer to the Popkin version in class, you may want to read another other version of the *Ethics*. There is a good translation as an ebook. (see **Required Texts**, 6. above).
FIRST PAPER DUE by 3:00, Monday, March 29; in my box inside Philosophy Hall
- Week 11 Leibniz's Infinitely Complex Monism
March 29/31: Leibniz's Preestablished Harmony, substance, theories of truth and causation.
 Reading: Leibniz's *Discourse on Metaphysics*, sects. 8-16, 22-23, 26-31, 33-35.
 (see **Required Texts**, 6. above).

Week 12: More Reactions to Cartesianism: Berkeley's Idealism

April 5: Berkeley's phenomenalism: that all qualities are sensible qualities, i.e. ideas; that to be is to be perceived; that there is no material substance or substratum; the revival of common sense.

Reading: Berkeley's *Dialogues* - Preface and First Dialogue

April 7: Berkeley's conception of science and God.

Reading: Read quickly through Second and Third Dialogues.

Week 13 Hume's Radical Empiricism

April 12: Hume's philosophical concerns; his distinction between impressions and ideas; the laws of human thought.

Reading: Enquiry, sections I, II, III.

April 14: Matters of fact vs relations of ideas, matter of fact reasoning; causation, probability, and necessity.

Reading: Enquiry, sections IV, V, VI, VII, VIII, XII.

Week 14 Hume's Conclusions and Kant's Enlightenment.

April 19/21: Hume's skeptical conclusions and Kant's Dogmatic Slumber: the state of metaphysics, Kant's method, what metaphysics as a science depends upon; that metaphysics is possible only if there are a priori synthetic judgments.

Reading: Preface and Preamble of Prolegomena.

SECOND PAPER TOPICS DISTRIBUTED

Week 15 How is metaphysics possible?

April 26: How pure mathematics is possible; how pure science of nature is possible.

[Possible guest lecturer]

Reading: First Part, pp. 25-37. Second Part, sects. 14, 15, 17-20, 22, 23, 27, 28, 30-33, 36.

April 28: How metaphysics is possible.

Reading: Third Part, pp. 69-90; Solution, p. 105-110.

Week 16 **SECOND PAPER DUE Wed., May 4 by 3:00.**