

Schedule of Lecture Topics, Associated Readings, Dates for Papers, Exercises and Exams

Note: if a reading is listed for a particular date, that's the date on which you must have the reading done!

Week

Session Topics (Associated Readings) & Assignments

Intro Week

Aug. 21 Introduction: (a) syllabus, broad overview of how philosophers in the Early Modern period planned to solve the so-called “problem of knowledge” (No readings—**History Handout**, **Early Modern Philosophers Handout**)

Week #1

Aug. 24 What is the “Problem of Knowledge”, exactly, and how do Early Modern philosophers hope to solve it *continued*? What is the value in solving this problem?

Aug. 26 Framework of the *Meditations* and the Background to which Descartes was responding: (1) mechanism vs. teleology; (2) Geometry of Matter vs. Rich Phenomenal Life World (READING: Descartes’ *Meditations on First Philosophy*, Preface to the Reader, and Synopsis) (**Advisory Study Guide/Worksheet #1; due in Canvas by class time this day**)

Aug. 28 Framework and Background of the *Meditations cont’d*. Discussion of the issues they raise.

PART I: RATIONALISM

Week #2

Aug. 31 Meditation 1: The quest for certainty, methodological skepticism, and the critique of common sense. (READING: Descartes’ Meditation I; OBJREP.ZIP 63-67; **In-Class Reading Quiz #1 on Meditation 1 (5-10 minutes)** (**Advisory Study Guide/Worksheet #2; due in Canvas by class time this day**); **Group #1 Report Due in Class on This Reading**)

Sept. 2 Meditation 1 *cont’d*: *plus* first section of Meditation 2: The Cogito and the Nature of the Ego. What establishes the Cogito Belief as secure against the Evil Demon Hypothesis?. (READING: Descartes’ *Meditations*, Meditation 2)

Sept. 4 Med. 2 *cont’d*: The wax discussion, how Descartes’ truth criterion is derived, and the role of rational intuition (=‘the natural light’) in applying it.

Week #3

Sept. 7 Labor Day (No Classes)

Sept. 9 Background for Meditation 3: Descartes’ taxonomy of ideas, the distinction between objective and formal reality, and the Great Chain (and grades of) Being. (READING: Meditation III; OBJREP.ZIP 78-89; Handout #1. (**Advisory Study Guide/Worksheet #3; due in Canvas by class time this day**); **Group #2 Reading Report (on today’s reading. In-Class Reading Quiz #2 (on today’s reading) (5-10 minutes)**)

Sept. 11 Meditation 3 *cont’d*. Stepping through Descartes’s proof of God’s existence from the nature of ideas. Stepping through the proof. (Handouts #2 & #2suppl), then Criticisms of the Med. 3 proof + the second proof of God’s existence (no new readings)

Week #4

Sept. 14 Review of *Meditations* so far. (No New Readings)

Sept. 16 Meditation 4: The First Problem of Error and its Solution: Why God isn’t a deceiver; The Second Problem of Error and its Solution: how error is possible, yet compatible with God’s infinite perfections. (READING: Meditation IV; OBJREP.ZIP 90-94)

Sept. 18 Meditation 4 *cont’d*. Two more Problems of Error and *Their* Solutions, then the Cartesian Circle. (no new readings).

Week #5

Sept. 21 Meditation 5: The nature of the external world, Descartes’s Med. 5 “ontological” proof for God’s existence, and the role of Med. 5 in preparing for Med. 6’s proof for the existence of an External World (EW). (READING: Meditation V; OBJREP.ZIP 95-106)

Sept. 23 Meditation 6: Two Proofs establishing our knowledge of the existence of the external world. (READING: Meditation VI; OBJREP.ZIP 107-115) **In-Class Reading Quiz #3 (on Today’s Reading) (5-10 minutes)** **Group #3 Reading Report (on Meditation 6)**

Sept. 25 Meditation 6 *cont’d*: After defeating the EDH challenge to beliefs based on sense perception, two remaining problems: (a) the mind-body problem, and (b) the final solution to the Dream Problem. (READINGS: Meditation VI; OBJREP.ZIP 107-115) (**Advisory Study Guide/Worksheet #4 available in Canvas and due on Monday, September 28, by 11:59 p.m.**)

Week #6

Sept. 28 Introduction to Leibniz's world: The Monadology. (Reading: Simon Sparks' translation of *Monadology*, paragraphs 1 through 38, available for download on the CANVAS site under Files; Handout #3)

Sept. 30 More on Leibniz's world (same readings)

Oct. 2 Leibniz' most famous argument: The actual world is the best of all possible worlds! (Simon Sparks' translation of *Monadology*, paragraphs 39 through the end; Handout #4; Critical assessment of the argument. **In-Class Reading Quiz #4 (on Today's Reading) (5-10 minutes) Group #4 Reading Report (on *Monadology*, paragraphs 39-end)**)

Week #7

PART II: EMPIRICISM

Oct. 5 Introduction to Locke. Locke against innate ideas. (READINGS: Locke's *Essay*, Book I, Chapter I, §1-8, Chapter II, §1-9, 12, 14-15, 17-19, 21-22, 24) **In-Class Reading Quiz #5 (on Book I ONLY) (Advisory Study Guide/Worksheet #5; Due in Canvas Today, October 5, by 11:59 p.m.)**

Oct. 7 More on Locke against innate ideas; Locke on acquired ideas and mental powers. (READINGS: Locke's *Essay*, Book II, Chapter I, §1-9 inclusive; Chapter II, §1-3, Chapter III, §1-2, Chapter IV, §1-6, Chapter V, intro; Chapter VI, §1-2) **Group #5 Reports In Class (On Today's Readings)**

Oct. 9 Locke on acquired complex and general ideas, and the process of abstraction. (Locke's *Essay*, Book II, Chapter IX, §8-12; Chapter X, §1-2, Chapter XI, §1, 4, 6, 8-11, 15, 17; Chapter XII, §1-8; Chapter XXII, §1-5; Handout #5) **In-Class Reading Quiz #6 (on Today's Readings)**

****Midterm Exam Review Sheet Available on Website and Canvas Today, October 9****

Week #8

Oct. 12 Locke on primary and secondary qualities and ideas of each; their origins and significance. (READINGS: Locke's *Essay*, Book II, Chapter VIII, §7-26) **(Advisory Study Guide/Worksheet #6; Due in Canvas Today, October 12, by 11:59 p.m.)**

****Topics for Term Paper Available on Website and Canvas****

Oct. 14 Locke on the source of the ordinary complex idea of an individual substance (e.g., ideas of particular bodies [*that apple*] or particular spirits [*his mind*]), and of the general, metaphysical concept of Substance (material or immaterial) (READINGS: Locke's *Essay*, Chapter XXIII, §1-12, 14-20, 22-23, 25, 28, 30-37)

Oct. 16 Locke on consciousness and personal identity. (READINGS: Book II, Chapter I, §10-14, 19-20, 23-25; Chapter XXVII, §1-29)

Week #9

Oct. 19 Midterm Exam (In Person, 50 minutes)

Oct. 21 Wrapping up Locke; Introduction Hume's revisionary Empiricism, i.e., his attempt to avoid the problems in Locke's theory of ideas through a kind of *mental geography* and *associationist account of mental content* and related *theory of ideas* (READINGS: *Enquiry*, Author's Advertisement, Section I, Section II; **Group #6 Reading Report (on Today's Readings)**)

Oct. 23 Hume's theory of ideas and the principle of association (*Enquiry*, Sections II & III) **In-Class Reading Quiz #7 (on today's reading) (5-10 minutes)**

Week #10

Oct. 26 Hume's theory of theory of judgment (two kinds: matters of fact and relations of ideas) and associated critique of the rationalist idea of a causal relationship (READINGS: *Enquiry*, Section III, IV, Parts I&II; Handout #6a)

Oct. 28 Hume's solution to the problem with the idea of a causal relationship (his solution to the problem identified in Section IV): (READINGS: Section V, Part I&II, Section VI)

Oct. 30 Revisiting Hume's discovery of the true source of the idea of a necessary connection between perceived causes and their perceived effects, his positive, empiricist alternative account of those relations, and possible counterexamples to that positive account (READINGS: *Enquiry*, Section VII, Part I&II; **Group #7 Reports in Class on Today's Reading) In-Class Reading Quiz #8 (on today's reading) (5-10 minutes) (Advisory Study Guide/Worksheet #7 [Comprehensive on Hume] available today, October 30; Due in Canvas Wednesday, November 4 by 11:59 p.m.)**)

Week #11

Nov.2 Hume on Induction *plus* how Hume became a moderate skeptic about the existence and ultimate nature of the external world. (No New Readings; Handout #6b)

Nov.4 Finishing Hume: mitigated skepticism and the 'common life', leftover problems; Introduction to

Berkeley's extreme reaction to Locke, known as Phenomenalism or Berkeleyan Idealism ([Advisory Study Guide/Worksheet #7 \[Comprehensive on Hume\] Due Today, November 4 by 11:59 p.m. in Canvas](#))

- Nov. 6 Bishop Berkeley: Hylas and Philonous wrestle with some of the problems that afflict Locke's theory of material objects. (READINGS: Berkeley's *Three Dialogues Between Hylas and Philonous*, First Dialogue; [Group Eight Reports in Class on This Reading](#))

Week #12

- Nov. 9 Berkeley on material substance: are there mind-independent bodies in space? (READINGS: Berkeley's *Three Dialogues Between Hylas and Philonous*, Second Dialogue) [In-Class Reading Quiz #9 \(on today's reading\) \(5-10 minutes\)](#)
- Nov. 11 Berkeley on existence: *esse is percipi*; if so, how is a *persisting world possible*? (READINGS: Berkeley's *Three Dialogues Between Hylas and Philonous*, Third Dialogue; [Advisory Study Guide/Worksheet #8 Available today and due by 11:59 p.m. in Canvas on Friday, November 13](#))
- Nov. 13 Berkeley on abstraction (redux); Detailed Arguments in support of subjective idealist theses; critical analysis of Berkeley's idealism (No New Readings; [Advisory Study Guide/Worksheet #8 Due Today by 11:59 p.m. in Canvas](#))

Week #13

PART III: BEYOND RATIONALISM AND EMPIRICISM

- Nov. 16 The Old problem of Objectivity: Kant's Copernican revolution and the reconciliation of rationalism and empiricism and the New problem of Objectivity. (READINGS: Reading: Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason* [CPR], Preface to 1st Edition, Preface to 2nd Edition, Introduction to 1st Edition; Handouts #7-#8; [Group #9 Reports in Class on This Reading](#))
- Nov. 18 The Strategy of the *Critique of Pure Reason* (same readings...[bring Handouts #7 & #8!](#))
- Nov. 20 The Transcendental Aesthetic and transcendental idealism: Kant's revolutionary account of the nature of space and perception generally. (READINGS: Kant's CPR, Introduction to the Second Edition, Transcendental Doctrine of the Elements, First Part: On Space; [Advisory Study Guide/Worksheet #9 Available today and due Sunday, November 22 by 11:59 p.m. in Canvas](#)) [In-Class Reading Quiz #10 \(on today's reading\) \(5-10 minutes\)](#)

****Paper #1 Due in Canvas by Sunday, November 22 by 11:59 pm****

Week #14

- Nov. 23 Fall Break (No Classes)
- Nov. 25 Fall Break (No Classes)
- Nov. 27 Fall Break (No Classes)

Week #15

- Nov. 30 Kant's equally revolutionary account of the nature of time and perceptions of time (READINGS: Kant's CPR, The Transcendental Doctrine of the Elements, Second Part: On Time)
- Dec. 2 Conclusions Drawn from the Transcendental Aesthetic: Transcendental Idealism is *true*, and mathematical (geometric, arithmetic and algebraic) judgments are synthetic a priori. (no new readings)
- Dec. 4 How Kant gets from the *forms of intuition* to the *forms of judgment* (READINGS: Kant's CPR, Transcendental Analytic, Book I, Chapter I entire, Chapter II, First, Second and Third Sections followed by what Kant calls "Of the Deduction of the Pure Concepts of the Understanding, the Second Section" [from the Second Edition])
- Dec. 5 **REVIEW SESSION FOR FINAL EXAM (In our classroom, 1:25 pm for one hour)**

****Optional Revised Paper due December 6 (Second Reading Day) at 11:59 p.m.****

- Dec. 10 **IN-PERSON FINAL EXAM, 1:30 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. In Person in our Classroom, VAC 1B88**