

Reading Assignments & Class Calendar

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

Week	Topics and Readings
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Week #1

7/27 Course Introduction: (a) why study the history of modern philosophy? (b) three Fundamental Frameworks. (c) Background to Descartes' *Meditations on First Philosophy* (READINGS: from Descartes' *Meditations on First Philosophy*, read the *Preface to the Reader* and the *Synopsis*). Supplementary Materials to look at: History and List of Philosophers Handouts, and Powerpoint on the Background to Descartes' *Meditations*. All these are available under Handouts and Lectures on the course website)

PART I: RATIONALISM

7/28 Meditations I & II: The quest for certainty, methodological skepticism, the critique of common sense, the Cogito, the nature of the ego, the wax argument; Preparation for Meditation III (Handout #1) (READINGS: *Preface to the Reader*, *Synopsis*, *Meditation I*; "Objections and Replies" on *Meditation I*; *Meditation II*, "Objections and Replies" on *Meditation II*.) **Study Guide Worksheet #1 due 7:00 p.m.**

7/29 Background to Meditation III cont'd, then Meditation III: stepping through Descartes's proof for God's existence from the nature of ideas; Criticism of Med. III proof, Other Proofs; Beginning Meditation IV: Why God isn't a deceiver; how error is possible. (READINGS: *Meditation III*; "Objections and Replies on *Meditation III*"; *Meditation IV*; Handout #1 cont'd; Handouts #2 and 2suppl.) **Study Guide Worksheet #2 due 7:00 p.m.**; **Discussion Board #1 [on Meditations One and Two] due**

7/30 Meditation IV and V: Descartes' Solution to the Various Problems of Error; Criticisms of Descartes' solution to the problem(s) of error in Meditation IV; Descartes's Meditation V "ontological" proof for God's existence; the existence of the External World (EW), the role of Med. 5 in preparing for Med. 6's proof for the existence of an EW, and the mind-body problem. (READINGS: *Meditation IV cont'd*; "Objections and Replies" on *Meditation IV cont'd*; *Meditation V*; "Objections and Replies" on *Meditation V*)

7/31 Meditation VI: Descartes's proof of the existence of the External World (EW), the mind-body problem, and the solution to the dream problem; transition to Locke (READINGS: *Meditation VI*, "Objections and Replies", on *Meditation VI*; Reading Ahead: Locke against innate ideas; Locke on acquired ideas and mental powers [Essay, Book I, Chapter II, §1-28. Locke on acquired ideas and mental powers (READINGS: Book II, Chapter I, §1-9 inclusive; Book II, Chapter II, §1-3.)] **Discussion Board #2** (On Meditations 4-6) available online at 8 a.m.; **Study Worksheet #3 due 7:00 p.m.**

8/2 **Discussion Board #2** (On Meditations 4-6) **due back by 11:59 pm this day.** **Study Guide Worksheet #4** (on Descartes' Meditation 6) **due 11:59 p.m. this day.**

Week #2

PART II: EMPIRICISM

8/3 Introduction to Locke: Locke against innate ideas; Locke on acquired ideas and mental powers (READINGS: Essay, Book I, Chapter II, §1-28. Locke on acquired ideas and mental powers (READINGS: Book II, Chapter I, §1-9 inclusive; Book II, Chapter II, §1-3, Chapter III, §1-2, Chapter IV, §1-6, Chapter V, §1; Chapter VI, §1-2, Chapter IX, §8-15 [Molyneux's Problem]); Chapter X, §1-3, Chapter XI, §1-17; Chapter XII, §1-8; Chapter XXII, §1-8. (Handout #5 [we will skip handout #4, which concerns a philosopher we are not reading in this summer term])).

8/4 Locke on acquired ideas and mental powers *cont'd*; Locke on qualities and substances, consciousness and personal identity; Review of Descartes for Midterm (READINGS: Essay, Book II, Chapter VIII, §7-26; Chapter XXIII, §1-37; Book II, Chapter I, §10-25; Chapter XXVII, §1-29.) **Discussion Board #3** (on Locke) available at 8 a.m.

- 8/5 Review of Descartes' *Meditations* and Locke's *Essay*; Introduction to Hume's mental geography and theory of ideas. (READINGS: *Enquiry*, Author's Advertisement, Section I, Section II).
- 8/6 More on Hume's mental geography and theory of ideas plus Hume's theory of association. (READINGS: same as for 8/106 *plus Enquiry*, Section III, IV, Parts I&II; Handout #6a) **(Study Guide Worksheet #5 [on all of Locke]) due 11:59 pm today. Discussion Board #3 (on Locke) due by 11:59 pm today****
- 8/7 Hume's theory of association, of judgment and his negative critique of the rationalist principle of sufficient reason, and the idea of a causal relationship; Hume's solution to the problem with the idea of a causal relationship: A New Theory of Causal Relations, and its consequences (External World Skepticism and the New Modesty of Empiricism); the problem of induction (Section V, Parts I&II, Section VI, Section VII, Parts I&II; Handout #6b).

****An Untimed Midterm Exam Downloaded from Canvas and available at 3 p.m. Saturday, 8/8/2026**

[Restricted to Descartes and Locke Units]

Exam must be completed and returned in Canvas by NOON on MONDAY 8/10/2026**

PART III: BEYOND RATIONALISM AND EMPIRICISM

Week #3

- 8/10 Review of and Wrap up for Hume Unit. **Discussion Board #4** (on Hume) available at 12:00 a.m. today. (Study Guide for Final Released on Website and in Canvas).
- 8/11 Introduction to Kant: What Descartes, Hume, and Locke (also Berkeley) all assumed about the nature of ideas; Kant's Copernican revolution and the reconciliation of rationalism and empiricism. Kant solves the Old Problem of Objectivity and creates the New Problem of Objectivity. (READINGS: *Critique of Pure Reason* (Cambridge Edition): Preface (pp. 99-105) and Introduction (pp. 127-135); Handouts #7 & #8) **Study Guide Worksheet #6 (on Hume) due by 11:59 pm this day, along with Discussion Board #4 (also on Hume) due by 11:59 pm this day. (Study Guide Worksheet #7 [on Kant] available 12:00 a.m. today)**
- 8/12 Introduction to Kant (continued): The Transcendental Aesthetic (TA) and transcendental idealism, *or, How the Active Faculty of Appearances Creates Something A Priori in Perception*. (Kant's revolutionary Theory of Perception and the Objectives of the Transcendental Aesthetic (READINGS: *Critique of Pure Reason* (Cambridge Edition): Transcendental Aesthetic from the beginning of the First Part through the end of the First Section, *On Space* (pp. 155-162)
- 8/13 Kant's Theory of Judgment, Why Mathematical Propositions are Synthetic, Not Analytic, and how Transcendental Idealism explains how mathematical propositions can be both *a priori* and *synthetic*. Review of Hume and Kant.
- 8/14 **(Study Guide Worksheet #7 due by Noon Today; Discussion Board #5 [on Kant] due by 11:59 p.m. today)**

**** Time-Limited, 150-minute Comprehensive Online-Only Final Exam Taken in Canvas**

Available at 8 a.m. on 8/13/2026, due by 11:59 pm on Sunday 8/15/2026 **

**NOTE: Don't Begin the Final Until You are Ready to Complete it in the very Next 150 minutes!
(Canvas starts the clock the moment you open the online Final)**