Modern European Philosophy

Phil-A410-01
Fall, 2007

(This is not a Common Curriculum course)

Instructor: Dr. Gary B. Herbert (Her bert)  TR, 11:00—12:15
Office: BO 437
Office Hours: Tues., Thurs. 1:30-4:00

The Empiricists (New York: Doubleday & Co., Inc.) 0-385-09622-4
Immanuel Kant, Prolegomena to Any Future Metaphysics (Indianapolis: The Bobbs-Merrill Co., Inc.) 0-672-60187-7

Assignments

Tues., Aug. 28  Introduction, Mechanics
Thurs., Aug. 30  no class
Thurs., Sept. 6  Descartes, Discourse on Method, Part II, in The Rationalists (pp. 46-54)
Tues., Sept. 11 Descartes, Discourse on Method, Part III, in The Rationalists (pp. 55-61)
Thurs., Sept. 13  11:00 classes, Mass of the Holy Spirit.  No class
Tues., Sept. 18 Descartes, Discourse on Method, Part IV, in The Rationalists (pp. 62-68)
Thurs., Sept. 20 Descartes, Discourse on Method, Part V, in The Rationalists (pp. 69-82)
Tues., Sept. 25 Descartes, Discourse on Method, Part VI, in The Rationalists (pp. 83-96)
[Sept. 25: Kepler warned by consistory in Stuttgart to subdue his speculative spirit, leave testament untroubled by his unnecessary subtleties, scruples and glosses, 1612]
Thurs., Sept. 27 Descartes, (continued)
Tues., Oct. 2  First Celebration
Tues., Oct. 9  Benedict Spinoza, The Ethics, Part II, in The Rationalists, (pp. 216-261)
Thurs., Oct. 11 Benedict Spinoza, The Ethics, Part III, in The Rationalists, (pp. 262-320)
Tues., Oct. 16  Fall break: no class
Tues., Oct. 23 Benedict Spinoza, The Ethics, (cont.)
Tues., Oct. 30 Leibniz, Monadology, in The Rationalists, (pp. 455-471)
Thurs., Nov. 1  Second Celebration
Tues., Nov. 6  David Hume, Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding, in The Empiricists,
   (Section 12, pp. 417-430; Sections 1-8, pp. 307-364)

Thurs., Nov. 8  David Hume, Enquiry (continued)
   [Nov. 10, 1619: birthday of modern philosophy, Ülm, Germany]

Tues., Nov. 13  David Hume, Enquiry (continued)
   [November 14: died, G. W. F. Hegel, 1831; G. W. Leibniz, 1716]

Thurs., Nov. 15  Immanuel Kant, Prolegomena to Any Future Metaphysics, Preamble and First
   Part (pp. 13-41)

Tues., Nov. 20  Immanuel Kant, Prolegomena to Any Future Metaphysics, Part Two (pp. 42-74)

Thurs., Nov. 22  Thanksgiving: No class
   [Nov. 24, 1632: born, Benedict Spinoza]

Tues., Nov. 27  Immanuel Kant, Prolegomena to Any Future Metaphysics, Third Part (pp. 75-98)

Thurs., Nov. 29  Immanuel Kant, Prolegomena to Any Future Metaphysics, Conclusion and
   Solution (pp. 99-119)

Tues., Dec. 4  Immanuel Kant (continued)

Thurs., Dec. 6  Immanuel Kant (continued)

Final Glorious Celebration:  Dec. 9-15

Course Description:

The Early Modern period of philosophy has its origins in the 16th and 17th centuries, and reaches its
high point in the works of late 18th-century thinkers. We will examine in detail a few seminal
philosophical works of this period: some from the “Continental Rationalists,” namely René
Descartes, Baruch Spinoza, and Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz; and some from the “British
Empiricists,” such as John Locke and David Hume. We will also examine a work by Immanuel
Kant, who many believe was the last great Early Modern philosopher. Our aim will be to trace
the history of philosophical thought through this era, to understand the issues and ideas of these
philosophers against the backdrop of their historical contexts, and also to see how their views have
profoundly influenced ours on a variety of issues, particularly those problems and theories
concerning the nature of reality and knowledge.

Mechanics:

Exams: There will be three examinations (celebrations) in this course, inclusive of the final exam.
Each exam will be essay in format and will constitute 1/4th of the course grade. The final exam will
not be comprehensive.

Quizzes: Brief quizzes (7-10 true/false or multiple choice questions) will be given on various
reading assignments assigned in this course. The short quizzes will be given at the beginning of
class, and will be on the readings assigned for that day. The quizzes will collectively be treated as
one exam, and will constitute 1/4 of the semester grade. Quizzes will be announced at the previous
class.

Attendance: Attendance is expected at all classes. Absence from more than 25% of the total of 26
classes assigned (i.e. 6.5 classes), for whatever reason or at whatever stage of the semester, excused or otherwise, will result in a grade reduction. Absence from more than 40% of the total of 26 classes (i.e. 10.4 classes) will result in a failing grade for the course. An absence on an examination day may be excused only for reasons that are grave, serious and unavoidable (i.e. usually medical), and, except in very unusual circumstances, only if the instructor has been notified prior to the examination. Ordinarily, rainy weather, over-sleeping, having a cold, having another exam scheduled that day in another class, failing to know that an exam was scheduled for that day, having an opportunity to get a ride home for the week-end, or having to attend your cousin's wedding rehearsal in Dallas are not grave, serious and unavoidable reasons.

Dates on the syllabus are only tentative and will be adjusted to fit the pace of the course.

Goals and Objectives: Please consult the Department of Philosophy: Goals and Learning Objectives (http://www......) for the Philosophy Department’s goals and objectives for Upper Level Philosophy Common Curriculum and also the College of Arts and Sciences Goals and Objectives of the Common Curriculum (http://cas.loyno.edu/common/purpose.html)/

History of Modern European Philosophy has been designed to satisfy Goal 3 and 3a of the Department of Philosophy: Objectives for Upper Level Philosophy Common Curriculum Courses: (3) Development of capacity to understand and assess “philosophical traditions” (which encompass a rich diversity of movements and thinkers). (3a.) Development of student capacity to articulate clearly and evaluate with insight philosophical arguments, problems, questions, or issues linking what are arguably works of significant authors within either the pre-modern or modern periods of the history of philosophy, and also Goal 6b: Development of student capacity to formulate clearly and evaluate with insight the philosophical (e.g. epistemological, metaphysical, or ethical) or the anti-philosophical aspects of salient issues in contemporary life and culture.

History of Modern European Philosophy has also been designed to satisfy the College of Arts and Sciences Objective of helping students to develop An understanding of philosophical and religious traditions

Disability statement

A student with a disability that qualifies for accommodations should contact Sarah Mead Smith, Director of Disability Services at 865-2990 (Academic Resource Center, Room 405, Monroe Hall). A student wishing to receive test accommodations (e.g., extended test time) should provide the instructor with an official Accommodation Form from Disability Services in advance of the scheduled test date.

Gary B. Herbert, gherbert@loyno.edu