
Course Overview

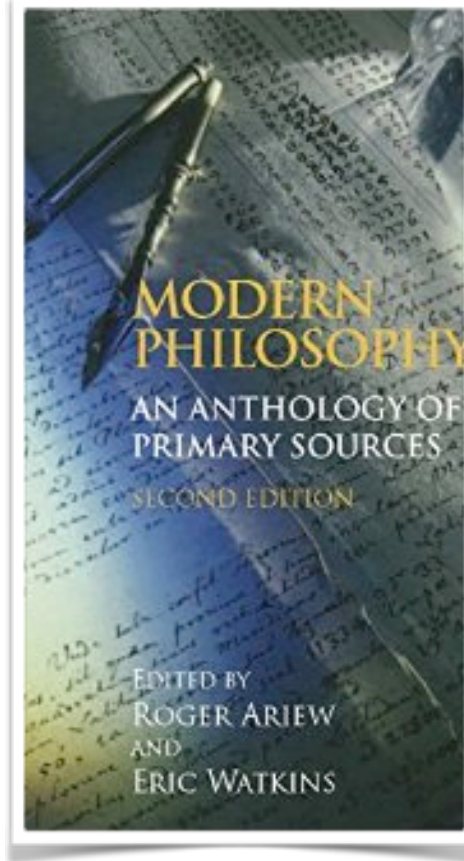
The focus of this course includes central themes in European thought during the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries (1600-1800), when currents stemming from the Renaissance, the Protestant Reformation, and the Scientific Revolution combine, gain force, and threaten to erode traditional cornerstones of Western Culture. Basic assumptions concerning God, the natural world, and human beings are brought into question, examined, and either modified and defended or rejected and replaced with alternative commitments.

The bulk of our time will be spent on the texts and contexts of three central figures: Descartes, Hume, and Kant. Each takes up the intellectual currents of the time in unique ways that continue to impact the theory and practice of contemporary philosophy, the humanities, and both the social and natural sciences.

Learning Objectives

Upon completion of this course, students should be able to:

- Discuss the cultural context of Seventeenth and Eighteenth Century European thought and the philosophical movements that emerge during the time
- Read philosophical texts and answer questions about their argumentative structure and the positions they develop and defend
- Write clear and concise essays explaining motivations, reconstructing arguments, and comparing and evaluating philosophical positions



Course Text

Modern Philosophy: An Anthology of Primary Sources (2nd Edition)
Ariew and Watkins eds.
Hackett 2009
ISBN: 9780872209787

Course Site

<http://markdfisher.com/modern/>

Assessments

Reading Questions, Quizzes, Activities (20%)

Each major reading assignment will include a set of general questions that you should be able to answer after a careful reading of the text. Prepare for each class meeting by (i) reviewing these questions, (ii) formulating the general answers you can provide on the basis of your reading, and (iii) noting any questions that arise for you as you read. On any given day we might begin class with a quiz aimed at evaluating how well you have prepared.

Exams (80%)

There will be four exams for the course, each covering between three and four weeks of material. They will involve short answer questions and essays. Exams will be graded according to how clearly, concisely, and fully you address all parts of the question or essay prompt. Details concerning topics and expectations will be shared in the weeks prior to each exam. (Contact me as soon as possible, if you are not able to make it on the day of an exam.)

Grading Scale

- 93-100% - A
- 90-92% - A-
- 88-89% - B+
- 83-88% - B
- 80-82% - B-
- 78-79% - C+
- 70-77% - C
- 60-69 - D
- 0-59 - F