

PHIL 3331: Continental Rationalism (3 credits), Spring 2014

SECTION 001: LA 370, M, W F, 1:00 p.m. – 1:50 p.m.

Contact Information

Instructor: Dr. Schalow
Office: UNO: LA 383
Office Hours: M, W, F, 11:00-12:30 (and by appointment)
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Course Webpages: Accessed via Moodle

Required Texts

- [1] *The Rationalists*: Descartes, Spinoza, Leibniz (Anchor Books, 1960) ISBN: 978-0385095402.
- [2] *Prolegomena to Any Future Metaphysics*, by I. Kant, trans. L. Beck (Bobbs-Merrill, 1950). ISBN: 0-672-60187.

Course Description

CATALOG DESCRIPTION: Readings in Seventeenth Century thinkers such as Descartes, Spinoza, and Leibniz, whose speculations about the structure of existence helped form the theoretical framework of modern science. Their fundamental ideas about the nature and limits of human knowledge will be examined.

COURSE OVERVIEW: The course is designed to introduce the student to the Rationalist tradition, including the thinkers: Descartes, Spinoza, and Leibniz. Emphasis will also be placed on assessing the impact and influence of Rationalism for future philosophy, including Enlightenment thinkers like Immanuel Kant.

Student Learning Outcomes

Upon successfully completing this course, students will be able to do the following:

- to recognize philosophical questions
- to know the primary arguments that define Rationalist thinking
- to understand and articulate the various innovations in Rationalism, and its influence on subsequent philosophy
- work with philosophical concepts and methods, and to construct and evaluate arguments
- to participate in classroom discussion, developing and displaying an ability and readiness to defend one's own point of view while listening openly but carefully to others
- to demonstrate a willingness to entertain criticism, formulate and reply to reasonable objections, and represent opposing views both critically and sympathetically
- to read both primary and secondary texts and analyze the arguments contained in them correctly

Grading

Requirement			Final grade	
Term Paper	(20%)	20 points	A	100-89.5
First exam	(25%)	25 points	B	89.4-79.5
Second exam	(25%)	25 points	C	79.4-69.5
Third exam	(25%)	25 points	D	69.4-59.5
Participation	(5%)	5 points	F	59.4—0

Course Requirements

TERM PAPER: The primary reason for attending college is to begin the process of becoming a scholar by reflecting on complicated questions related to human experience and its articulation through great thinkers of the philosophical tradition. To this end, each student is required to write an “term paper,” *arguing a “thesis”* on a topic relevant to Rationalism. The paper must be submitted in duplicate, 1) uploaded to Moodle and 2) a hardcopy delivered to the Professor in class. The paper is due on Dec 3 (Wed.). The paper is worth 20% of the student’s final grade.
Late Papers: All papers received after that date will be deducted 5 points for each day late.

TESTS: Three tests will be given throughout the semester. Each test counts 25% toward the student’s final grade. For students who miss an exam, see “Make-Up” policy below.

PARTICIPATION: Participating in class is encouraged, and can impact the student’s final grade in both a positive and a negative way (5% of the total).

Course Policies

ACADEMIC HONESTY Academic integrity is fundamental to the process of earning and evaluating academic performance. Academic dishonesty undermines the academic enterprise and includes, but is not limited to, the following: cheating, plagiarizing, tampering with academic records or exams, falsifying identity, and being an accessory to acts of academic dishonesty. If you’re foolish enough to do something like this, you’ll be expelled from the course with a failing grade and will be reported to the university.

ATTENDANCE Attendance is expected at all class meetings. Students who miss more than 7 classes throughout the semester will have the tally of their final grade deducted one letter, e.g., from “A” to “B”. Classes begin on Time. If you must leave class early, let me know.

DISABILITY POLICY It is university policy to provide, on a flexible and individualized basis, reasonable accomodation to students who have disabilities that may affect their ability to participate in course activies or to meet course requirements. Students with disabilities are encouraged to contract their instructors to discuss their individual needs for accommodations. If you any questions, contact the Office of Disability Serviced at UC 260, (504 280-6222 (Voice).

MAKE-UP EXAMS: Make-up exams are allowed. However, the penalty for missing a test (for whatever reason) is a deduction of 8 points from that exam.

WITHDRAWALS You may withdraw form this course for any reason. Withdrawl is strictly up to you.

CLASS CONDUCT: Each student is required to act in a civil and respectful way.

WARNING! *Doing philosophy requires a willingness to think critically. Doing philosophy can be hazardous to your cherished beliefs.*

Course Schedule (Subject to change)

Reading is due for the date listed. All page numbers refer to the required course text.

Aug. 20	“Introduction”
Aug. 22	The Movement toward Reason, Descartes
Aug. 25	<i>The Rationalists</i> , pp. 41-54.
Aug. 27	Cont.
Aug. 29	<i>The Rationalists</i> , pp. 55-68.
Sept. 3	Cont.
Sept. 5	<i>The Rationalists</i> , pp. 69-96.
Sept. 8	Cont.
Sept. 10	<i>The Rationalists</i> , pp. 109-111
Sept. 12	<i>The Rationalists</i> , pp. 113-127
Sept. 15	Cont.
Sept. 17	<i>The Rationalists</i> , pp. 128-176
Sept. 19	Cont.
Sept. 22	Review
Sept. 24	Test #1
Sept. 26	<i>The Rationalists</i> , pp. 179-214, Spinoza
Sept. 29	Cont.
Oct. 1	<i>The Rationalists</i> , pp. 215-263
Oct. 3	Cont.
Oct. 6	Cont.
Oct. 8	<i>The Rationalists</i> , pp. 264-328
Oct. 10	Cont.
Oct. 13	<i>The Rationalists</i> , pp. 412-440, Leibniz
Oct. 15	Cont.
Oct. 17	Midsemester Break
Oct. 20	<i>The Rationalists</i> , pp. 455-471
Oct. 22	Cont.
Oct. 24	Cont.
Oct. 27	Review
Oct. 29	Test #2
Oct. 31	The Challenge of Empiricism
Nov. 3	Kant’s “Dogmatic Slumber”
Nov. 5	<i>Prolegomena</i> , “Introduction,” pp. 7-11, Kant
Nov. 7	<i>Prolegomena</i> , Part II, pp. 13-44.
Nov. 10	Cont.
Nov. 12	<i>Prolegomena</i> , Part II, pp. 45-77.
Nov. 14	Cont.
Nov. 17	Cont.
Nov. 19	<i>Prolegomena</i> , Part III, pp. 79-98.
Nov. 21	
Nov. 24	“The Boundaries of Reason,” <i>Prolegomena</i> , pp. 99-113.
Nov. 26	Consultation Day
Dec. 1	<i>Rationalism and Beyond</i>
Dec. 3	Cont. (Paper Due)
Dec. 5	Review
Dec. 12 (Fri.)	Final Exam (12:30 to 2:30)

