

PHIL 2150: Early Modern Philosophy

For additional course information, including prerequisites, corequisites, and course fees, please refer to the Catalog: <https://catalog.uvu.edu/>

Semester: Spring

Year: 2025

Course Prefix: PHIL

Course and Section #: 2150 001

Course Title: Early Modern Philosophy

Credits: 3

Course Description

Provides an overview of the history and evolution of ideas in Western culture during the modern period of philosophy from Descartes through Kant. Focuses on the dialogue between rationalism and empiricism, and examines Kant's attempt to bridge the gap between these two approaches. Requires writing-intensive assignments.

Course Attributes

This course has the following attributes:

- General Education Requirements
- Global/Intercultural Graduation Requirements
- Writing Enriched Graduation Requirements
- Discipline Core Requirements in Program
- Elective Core Requirements in Program
- Open Elective

Other: *Click here to enter text.*

Instructor Information

Instructor Name: Eric Stencil

Student Learning Outcomes

1. Develop communication skills, especially clear and concise writing.
 2. Demonstrate ability to critically read and understand Early Modern European works of philosophy.
 3. Demonstrate ability to critically and/or philosophically engage Early Modern European works of philosophy.
 4. Explain and analyze key philosophical texts and/or positions from 17th and 18th Century Europe.
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Course Materials and Texts

Primary:

1. Amo, Anton Wilhelm. On the Impassivity of the Human Mind.
2. Astell, Mary. A Serious Proposal to the Ladies.
3. Berkeley, George. Philosophical Writings: Abbreviated 'PW'
4. Descartes, René. Meditations on First Philosophy: Abbreviated 'M'.
5. Hume, David. An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding: Abbreviated 'H'.
6. Leibniz, Gofried. Discourse on Metaphysics.

7. Locke, John, Essay Concerning Human Understanding ‘E’
 8. Shapiro, Lisa. ed. The Correspondence between Princess Elisabeth of Bohemia and René Descartes: Abbreviated ‘EDC’.
 9. Spinoza, Benedict. The Ethics.
- Secondary/Contemporary:
1. Thomson, Garrek. Descartes to Kant: An Introduction to Modern Philosophy.
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Course Requirements

Course Assignments, Assessments, and Grading Policy

Writing Workshop Paper 1: 250 Points

There will be two papers for this class, each with multiple writing workshops and drafts. The final draft of

paper 1 is due Feb. 25. The specific paper assignment is available on Canvas. There are two paper workshops associated with this paper (Feb 13 and Feb 20). Each are worth 25 points. You must complete at

least one paper workshop for this paper to receive credit.

Writing Workshop Paper 2: 250 Points

Paper 2 is due at the start of the scheduled final exam time (April 24 at 11am). The specific paper assignment is available on Canvas. There are two paper workshops associated with this paper (April 10 and

April 17). Each are worth 25 points. In addition, you must complete at least one of the two paper workshops for this paper to receive credit.

Major Presentation: 250 points

Each class member will do one presentation on an early modern philosopher (broadly construed) not otherwise covered in class. A (non-exhaustive) list of potential figures is available on Canvas along with more details on the nature of the presentation. You may work alone or in a group of two. If you work alone,

you will be responsible for approximately 15 minutes of presentation and 10 minutes of discussion. If you

work in a group of two, you will be responsible for 30 minutes of presentation and 20 minutes of discussion.

The grade will be determined based on three factors: 100 points on the presentation proper, 50 points on the q and a portion, 50 points based on participation in other student presentations, and 50 points based on the two major presentation assignments.

Mini Presentation: (1) 50 points.

In addition to the major presentation, each student will be responsible for leading discussion for part of one

class meeting. Part of the minor presentation involves posting discussion questions on Canvas no later than

48 hours before your presentation day. 25 points of this assignment is the presentation itself, 15 points is based on whether your questions are posted in time, and 10 points is based on the presentation preference

quiz due Jan. 17.

Engaged Learning Assignments: (1) 40 points

The engaged learning assignment involves attending a campus event (from a specific set of options) and then completing a written assignment. See Canvas for more details.

Assessment Activity: (1) 10 points

There is an assessment activity worth 10 points. Details on Canvas.

Participation: 150 points.

This part of the grade is determined based on active, consistent, and relevant participation in the class. Asking questions, engaging in discussion and participation in discussion boards on Canvas are all types of participation.

*More details on all of the above assignments available on Canvas.

Grading Scale

A = 94% and above A- = 90 – 93 B+ = 87 – 89 B = 84 – 86

B- = 80 – 83 C+ = 77 – 79 C = 74 – 76 C- = 70 – 73

D+ = 67 – 69 D = 64 – 66 D- = 60 – 63 E (Failing) = Below 60

Required or Recommended Reading Assignments

Primary:

1. Amo, Anton Wilhelm. On the Impassivity of the Human Mind.
2. Astell, Mary. A Serious Proposal to the Ladies.
3. Berkeley, George. Philosophical Writings: Abbreviated 'PW'
4. Descartes, René. Meditations on First Philosophy: Abbreviated 'M'.
5. Hume, David. An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding: Abbreviated 'H'.
6. Leibniz, G. Discourse on Metaphysics.
7. Locke, John, Essay Concerning Human Understanding 'E'
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9. Spinoza, Benedict. The Ethics.

Secondary/Contemporary:

1. Thomson, Garrek. Descartes to Kant: An Introduction to Modern Philosophy.
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General Description of the Subject Matter of Each Lecture or Discussion

Tue., Jan. 7: Intro to the course

Thu., Jan. 9: Meditation 1 (M 10-17)

Tue., Jan. 14: Meditation 2 (M 17-24)

Thu., Jan. 16: Meditation 3 (M 25-37)

Tue., Jan. 21: Meditation 4 (M 38-45)

Thu., Jan. 23: Meditation 6 (M 51-64)

Tue., Jan. 28: Assessment Assignment

Thu., Jan. 30: Elisabeth Descartes (EDC 61-73)

Tue., Feb. 4: Spinoza day (See Canvas for reading assignment)

Thu., Feb. 6: Leibniz day (Discourse on Metaphysics pp. 3-9; 19-23; 44-45)

Tue., Feb. 11: Astell day (A Serious Proposal to the Ladies (Part II): Chapter 3

Thu., Feb. 13: Paper 1 Outline workshop day (Outline due on Canvas before class)

Tue., Feb. 18: Locke day (Excerpts from An Essay Concerning Human Understanding, see Canvas)

Thu., Feb. 20: Paper 1 Draft workshop and Major Pres Activity 1.

Tue., Feb. 25: Amo day (A 159-171)

Paper 1 Due

Thu., Feb. 27: Hume Enquiry II-III and Part 1 of Section IV (H 12-23)

Tue., Mar. 4: Major Pres Activity 2/Engaged Learning Assignment

Thu., Mar. 6: Hume Enquiry Section IV Part 2 and Section V Part 1 (H 23-34)

Tue., Mar. 11 & Thu., Mar. 13: Spring Break

Tue., Mar. 18: Hume, Enquiry VII (H 44- 57)
Thu., Mar. 20: Presentation Day 1
Tue., Mar. 25: Hume Enquiry X (H 79-95)
Thu., Mar. 27: Presentation Day 2
Tue., Apr. 1: Presentation Day 3
Thu., Apr. 3: Presentation Day 4
Tue., Apr. 8: Paper 2 Outline Workshop (Outline due on Canvas before class)
Thu., Apr. 10: Presentation Day 5
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Tue., Apr. 15: Presentation Day 6
Thu., Apr. 17: Paper 2 Draft Workshop
Tue., Apr. 22: Kant's Transcendental Aesthetic (see Canvas for reading assignment)
Final Paper Due April 24 at 11am

Required Course Syllabus Statements

Generative AI

The Department of Philosophy and Humanities recognizes that Artificial Intelligence and Natural Language Processing Tools are largely accessible to students and will be used by many in higher education for the foreseeable future. However, the skills taught in the humanities are unique. We aim to educate students in the careful reading of texts, the development of rigorous writing skills, the analysis and use of arguments, and to foster the thoughtful application of each of these skills in students' personal and social development. Research has not yet determined what bearing the use of AI tools in the classroom will have upon the successful acquisition of these skills.

Therefore, at this time, online learning support platforms (like ChatGPT or Google Bard) may not be used for course assignments in our department except as explicitly authorized by the instructor. Any assignment or content composed by any resource other than the student (whether human or digital) must be attributed to the source through proper citation. Unacknowledged use of online learning support platforms is a form of scholastic dishonesty and will be treated as such.

Some of our language has been adapted from the University of Minnesota

Using Remote Testing Software

This course does not use remote testing software.

This course uses remote testing software. Remote test-takers may choose their remote testing locations. Please note, however, that the testing software used for this may conduct a brief scan of remote test-takers' immediate surroundings, may require use of a webcam while taking an exam, may require the microphone be on while taking an exam, or may require other practices to confirm academic honesty. Test-takers therefore shall have no expectation of privacy in their test-taking location during, or immediately preceding, remote testing. If a student strongly objects to using test-taking software, the

student should contact the instructor at the beginning of the semester to determine whether alternative testing arrangements are feasible. Alternatives are not guaranteed.

Required University Syllabus Statements

Accommodations/Students with Disabilities

Students needing accommodations due to a permanent or temporary disability, pregnancy or pregnancy-related conditions may contact UVU [Accessibility Services](#) at accessibilityservices@uvu.edu or 801-863-8747.

Accessibility Services is located on the Orem Campus in BA 110.

Deaf/Hard of Hearing students requesting ASL interpreters or transcribers can contact Accessibility Services to set up accommodations. Deaf/Hard of Hearing services can be contacted at DHHservices@uvu.edu

DHH is located on the Orem Campus in BA 112.

Academic Integrity

At Utah Valley University, faculty and students operate in an atmosphere of mutual trust. Maintaining an atmosphere of academic integrity allows for free exchange of ideas and enables all members of the community to achieve their highest potential. Our goal is to foster an intellectual atmosphere that produces scholars of integrity and imaginative thought. In all academic work, the ideas and contributions of others must be appropriately acknowledged and UVU students are expected to produce their own original academic work.

Faculty and students share the responsibility of ensuring the honesty and fairness of the intellectual environment at UVU. Students have a responsibility to promote academic integrity at the university by not participating in or facilitating others' participation in any act of academic dishonesty. As members of the academic community, students must become familiar with their [rights and responsibilities](#). In each course, they are responsible for knowing the requirements and restrictions regarding research and writing, assessments, collaborative work, the use of study aids, the appropriateness of assistance, and other issues. Likewise, instructors are responsible to clearly state expectations and model best practices.

Further information on what constitutes academic dishonesty is detailed in [UVU Policy 541: Student Code of Conduct](#).

Equity and Title IX

Utah Valley University does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, age (40 and over), disability, veteran status, pregnancy, childbirth, or pregnancy-related conditions, citizenship, genetic information, or other basis protected by applicable law, including Title IX and 34 C.F.R. Part 106, in employment, treatment, admission, access to educational programs and activities, or other University benefits or services. Inquiries about nondiscrimination at UVU may be directed to the U.S. Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights or UVU's Title IX Coordinator at 801-863-7999 – TitleIX@uvu.edu – 800 W University Pkwy, Orem, 84058, Suite BA 203.

Religious Accommodation

UVU values and acknowledges the array of worldviews, faiths, and religions represented in our student body, and as such provides supportive accommodations for students. Religious belief or conscience broadly includes religious, non-religious, theistic, or non-theistic moral or ethical beliefs as well as participation in religious holidays, observances, or activities. Accommodations may include scheduling or due-date modifications or make-up assignments for missed class work.

To seek a religious accommodation, a student must provide written notice to the instructor and the Director of Accessibility Services at accessibilityservices@uvu.edu. If the accommodation relates to a scheduling conflict, the notice should include the date, time, and brief description of the difficulty posed by the conflict. Such requests should be made as soon as the student is aware of the prospective scheduling conflict.

While religious expression is welcome throughout campus, UVU also has a [specially dedicated space](#) for meditation, prayer, reflection, or other forms of religious expression.