

**THE UNIVERSITY OF WESTERN ONTARIO
DEPARTMENT OF PHILOSOPHY
Undergraduate Course Outline 2011-2012**

**Philosophy 2202G (002): Early Modern Philosophy
Previously Philosophy 211F/G**



**Course website: <https://instruct.uwo.ca/philosophy/2202G/>
Access using your uwo e-mail login id and password**

**Winter Term 2012
MWF 11:30-12:20
TC 343**

**Instructor: Lorne Falkenstein
Office Hours: MWF 10:30-11:20, StH 3141
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DESCRIPTION

A survey of Western European philosophy in the early modern period, with emphasis placed on the metaphysics and epistemology of Thomas Hobbes, René Descartes, John Locke, and David Hume, and significant attention paid to the role played by early modern science and early modern religious controversies in influencing the development of the philosophy of the period. Readings will also be drawn from the work of Bacon, Galileo, Boyle, Newton, Leibniz, Bayle, and Berkeley. Topics for examination will include corpuscularianism and mechanism, the nature of mind and of body, the distinction between primary and secondary qualities, the roles of reason and sense experience in delivering knowledge, language and universals, scepticism, force and causality, theories of the self and of personal identity, and the basis of our knowledge of an external world.

TEXTS

Readings for this course are listed on [the course syllabus](#). Almost all of the readings are available online to students using a library terminal or accessing the library through a proxy server using their uwo e-mail login id and password. Instructions for accessing the readings can be obtained from the online readings page.

The following texts have been ordered for purchase from the bookstore:
Michael R. Matthews, ed., *The Scientific Background to Modern Philosophy: Selected Readings* (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1989).

René, Descartes, *The Philosophical Writings of Descartes*, vol. 1, John Cottingham, Robert Stoothoff, and Dugald Murdoch, eds. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985).
 John Locke, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*. Students who are not upset by 17th century English diction, orthography, printing conventions, and punctuation, and who intend to do further studies in early modern philosophy should obtain the critical edition edited by Peter H. Nidditch (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975); others may use the modernized abridgement edited by Kenneth Winkler (Indianapolis: Hackett: 1996). The latter will need to obtain a copy of Essay IV.xix, which is available online.
 David Hume, *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding*, Lorne Falkenstein, ed. (Peterborough: Broadview Press, 2011).

While the readings from Hobbes, Descartes, Locke and Hume are available online, serious students of philosophy will want to have print editions of these important works.

OBJECTIVES

Students graduating from this course will be able to identify the major contributions made by the principal early modern philosophers to the history of philosophy. They will understand how and why the views of these philosophers developed and changed as they did over the time period. And they will have a critical understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of those views, tempered by an awareness of what it would have been plausible for people to think at the time.

REQUIREMENTS

Class participation	As assigned	12%
Area assignment	January 25	-5% if late
Mid term exam	February 8	16%
Reading list	February 29	-5% if late
Term paper prospectus	March 14	-5% if late
Term paper	April 11 (earlier if there is an early final)	36%
Final exam	Final Exam Period	36%

Guidelines:

- Each class, three students will be picked to ask two questions (each) about the reading for that class; three others are picked to answer, with help from the rest of the class
- It is not expected that correct answers will be given to questions; it is expected that answers will be informed by a close study of the assigned reading
- Names of questioners and respondents are announced on the course web-site well in advance, based on the alphabetical list of course registrants
- Class participation grade is reduced 4% each time a named person fails to show up to perform
- Term papers must be submitted through *turnitin.com*.
- No papers will be accepted after the last day of classes (April 11, 2011)
- A passing grade on the final exam is a necessary condition for passing the course

AUDIT

Students wishing to audit the course should consult with the instructor prior to or during the first week of classes.

The **Department of Philosophy Policies** which govern the conduct, standards, and expectations for student participation in Philosophy courses is available in the Undergraduate section of the Department of Philosophy website at <http://uwo.ca/philosophy/undergraduate/policies.html>. It is your responsibility to understand the policies set out by the Senate and the Department of Philosophy, and thus ignorance of these policies cannot be used as grounds of appeal.