

THE UNIVERSITY OF WESTERN ONTARIO
DEPARTMENT OF PHILOSOPHY
Undergraduate Course Outline 2011-12

Philosophy 3023F: Spinoza

Fall Term 2011
W: 9:30-10:30, F9:30-11:30
TC304

Instructor: Corey W. Dyck
StH 4138, Office Hours TBA
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DESCRIPTION

In this course we will consider the entire compass of Spinoza's philosophical thought. We will begin with a consideration of Spinoza's early writings, which include reflections on the Cartesian philosophy as well as a controversial critique of religion. We will then turn to a close reading of Spinoza's *Ethics*, with attention to its metaphysics, epistemology, psychology, and moral theory. Finally, we will look briefly at some influential criticisms of Spinoza's thought (by Leibniz and Bayle) as well as some significant later appropriations of his doctrines (by Lessing and Jacobi).

TEXTS

Spinoza, Baruch. *A Spinoza Reader: The Ethics and Other Works*. Ed. E. Curley. Princeton UP. -----. *Theological-Political Treatise*. Trans. S. Shirley. Hackett, 1998.
Della Rocca, Michael. *Spinoza*. Routledge, 2008.

(In addition, I will regularly make use of other primary and secondary material which will be made available through WebCT, etc.)

OBJECTIVES

Students completing this course successfully will (1) be familiar with the thought of one of the most important philosophers of the early Modern period, (2) have demonstrated an ability to comprehend complex philosophical arguments and reflect critically upon them, and (3) be able to write concise argumentative papers exhibiting research competence.

REQUIREMENTS

Short Papers (x2)	45%
Longer Paper	40%
Participation	15%

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.