

# Early Modern Philosophy, 2202F

**Summer 2011 Instructor: Amanda Porter, [aporter5@uwo.ca](mailto:aporter5@uwo.ca)**

## Introduction

A survey of Western European philosophy in the early modern period, with emphasis placed on the metaphysics and epistemology of Descartes, Locke and Hume. Readings will also be drawn from the work of Bacon, Boyle, Galileo, Hobbes, Newton, Bayle and Berkeley. Topics for examination will include corpuscularianism and mechanism, the nature of mind and of matter, the distinction between primary and secondary qualities, the roles of reason and sense of experience in the acquisition of knowledge, language and universals, skepticism, force and causality, the distinction of the analytic and synthetic, and theories of personal identity.

## Required Readings

All the required readings listed below are available for purchase at the UWO Book Store.

1. Michael R. Matthews, ed., *The Scientific Background of Modern Philosophy: Selected Readings* (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1989).
2. Thomas Hobbes, *Human Nature and De Corpore Politico*, J.C.A. Gaskin, ed. (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1994)
3. Rene Descartes, *Discourse on Method and Meditations on First Philosophy*, Donald A. Cress, trans. (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1980)
4. John Locke, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, Kenneth Winkler, ed., (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1996)
5. George Berkeley, *A Treatise Concerning the Principles of Human Knowledge*, Kenneth Winkler, ed., (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1982)
6. David Hume, *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding*, Eric Steinberg, ed., (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1977)
7. Course pack (available at UWO Bookstore)

(Note that all the texts are in the public domain. And so you may wish to find the texts online. However, the texts above are inexpensive, and they may be more useful as they have the relevant paginations.)

## Course Requirements

1. 3 short essays (1000 words each or 3-4 typed, double-spaced page, the highest two essay marks x 25%)
2. Final exam 50%

## **Schedule of Essays and Exam**

### **Due Date**

Essay #1 Friday of Week 3

Essay #2 Friday of Week 8

Essay #3 Friday of Week 12

Final Exam During final exam period

Note: Students are strongly encouraged to contact the course instructor prior to beginning work on the essay if there is any ambiguity about the assignment or if you would like to make slight changes to the essay question for the purposes of your essay.

The final exam will be a selection of 25 of the reading questions drawn from across all units of the course and modified for shorter answers. I recommend you do the questions as you do the readings. So for Week 1, do the reading questions found in the lecture notes for Sections 1, 2 and 3 for Unit 1. And so on. Keep a log of your answers, and go over them every couple of weeks. It will make the exam much easier.

### **Late essays:**

A department memo from September 2008 reads:

Students seeking academic accommodation on medical grounds for any missed tests, exams, participation components and/or assignments worth 10% or more of their final grade must apply to the Academic Counselling office of their home Faculty and provide documentation.