

Centre for the Study of Theory & Criticism
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Course #9204 group A
 Fall 2019
 Wed. 10: 30 to 1:30 pm

Immaterialism

This course treats one of the fundamental and most contested ideas in philosophy and theory: immaterialism. The readings, some of which are taken from the Theory qualifying exam list, will focus on the role of the immaterial in the history of metaphysics, while also charting materialism's emergence in seventeenth-century thought. Our primary goal will be to grasp the notions of the immaterial as both foundational for metaphysics and occultish. Reflecting on its history from antiquity to early modernity, we will assess the fortunes of the incorporeal in an era of mechanistic materialism. Another aim will be to gauge the poetic and eclectic styles of philosophical writing that the immaterial elicits. The course concludes with one contemporary theorist's return to the incorporeal as a critique of materialism.

Course Materials: *Hayy Ibn Yaqzan* is available at the UWO bookstore. Please purchase a copy. All other texts will be photocopied for you.

Syllabus

Phase One: A Short History of Metaphysics From the Point of View of Immaterialism

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| Sept 11 | Introduction; Plato, <i>Phaedrus</i> excerpt |
| Sept 18 | Plato cont'd, Plotinus from <i>Essential Plotinus</i> "The Intelligence, The Ideas, and Being" (V, 9[5]) and "The Descent of the Soul" (IV, 8[6]) |
| Sept 25 | Aristotle, <i>Metaphysics</i> Book 1 ch 1-2 pp 253-9; Book 4 ch 1-2; Book 7, |
| Oct 2 | Aristotle, <i>Metaphysics</i> Book 7 cont'd; Book 12 |
| Oct 9 | Aristotle, <i>De Anima</i> selection
Ibn Tufayl, <i>Hayy Ibn Yaqzan</i> (Read pp 93-130; L. Goodman intro optional) |
| Oct 16 | Ibn Tufayl, <i>Hayy Ibn Yaqzan</i> (pages 130-166) |

Phase Two: Early Modern Philosophy: Materialism contra Immaterialism?

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| Oct 23 | Stoicism: excerpt from A.A. Long and D.N. Sedley, eds. <i>The Hellenistic Philosophers</i> vol 1
Nicholas Jolley, "Metaphysics" in <i>Cambridge Companion to Early Modern Philosophy</i> , ed. Donald Rutherford: read section on substance pp 103-114;
Descartes, selection |
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- Oct 30 Cambridge Platonism: excerpt from Ralph Cudworth, *True Intellectual System of the Universe*
- Nov 6 Fall Reading Week
- Nov 13 Anne Conway, *The Principles of the Most Ancient and Modern Philosophy* ch 1-2, 6-8; Jacqueline Broad, “Anne Conway” in *Women Philosophers of the Seventeenth Century*
- Nov 20 W. G. Leibniz, “The Principles of Philosophy, or, the Monadology”
Daniel Garber and Margaret Wilson, “Mind Body Problems” in *Cambridge History of Seventeenth-Century Philosophy*, ed. Daniel Garber et al.

Conclusions

- Nov 27 Elizabeth Grosz, from *The Incorporeal: Ontology, Ethics and the Limits of Materialism* (2017) intro and chapter 1
- Dec 4 Grosz cont'd and conclusions; meetings regarding final essays

Evaluation:

1. Class Participation

A. Weekly oral participation. Come to class having read the material thoroughly and prepared to contribute your thoughts and observations. I may send you study questions and a prompt to prepare.

B. Respondent: one person will be designated to respond to the week's oral presentation. Your task is to attempt to digest the presentation and ask questions, make comments, open up discussion points. The respondent will not have access to the presentation prior to class. A. and B. together: 20% of final grade.

2. Oral presentation of a reading and 5-6 page write-up. Write up is due before the next class or within 7 days in the case of the class before Reading Week. The primary aim is for you to present an analysis of some aspect of the text rather than summarize the whole, try to cover multiple ideas in the text, or present historical background and context. Your focus should be on understanding and analysis of a text. The secondary aim is for you to spur class discussion. You will be evaluated on content and on clarity of presentation. Plan to speak in class for no more than 15-20 minutes. 25% of final grade.

3. Essay: approx 15 pages on a topic of your choice, related to the course and readings. 55% of the final grade.

All written work shall be submitted in electronic format only via email (Word is preferable).

Policies

No laptops or other devices in class.

Absences are unacceptable except in extenuating circumstances.

Statement on Academic Offences (*scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, at the following Web site: http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_discipline_grad.pdf*) Additional guidelines can be found [here](#).