

Syllabus

Modern Philosophy (PHH3400), Spring 2020

1. Course description

PHH3400 is an introduction to seventeenth- and eighteenth-century European philosophy. We will focus on four prominent works of the period: René Descartes's 1641 *Meditations*, Benedict Spinoza's 1677 *Ethics*, John Locke's 1689 *Essay concerning Human Understanding*, and David Hume's 1748 *Enquiry concerning Human Understanding*. We will also look, albeit more briefly, at the views of some of their contemporaries. The course will focus on the philosophers' views in metaphysics and epistemology, but will also consider views in the physical sciences and in ethics.

In our discussion of these topics, we will have two main aims. The first is to come to understand some views that philosophers have had on these issues. The second is to develop your own skills in such matters as careful reading, critical thinking, and clear writing.

2. Contact information

Dr. Stewart Duncan

Email: sdrd@ufl.edu

Office hours: Tuesdays, 3:00-5:00pm, and by appointment, in 330A Griffin-Floyd

Office phone: (352) 273-1808

Outside class and office hours, email will usually be the easiest way to communicate with me. In doing so, please use your ufl.edu email address.

There is a [Canvas page \(http://ufl.instructure.com\)](http://ufl.instructure.com) for the class. This will be the place to find the syllabus, announcements, grade information, and notes. It will also be the place to submit your papers.

3. Books and other readings

I have ordered four books for the class on the UF Textbook Adoption site. They are:

René Descartes, *Meditations on First Philosophy*, translated by Donald A. Cress. Third edition. Indianapolis: Hackett, 1993. List price \$10.00.

Baruch Spinoza, *Ethics, with The Treatise on the Emendation of the Intellect and Selected Letters*, translated by Samuel Shirley. Indianapolis: Hackett, 1992. List price \$15.00.

John Locke, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, edited by R.S. Woolhouse. London: Penguin, 1998. ISBN 0140434828. List price \$17.00.

David Hume, *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding*, edited by Eric Steinberg. Indianapolis: Hackett, 1993. List price \$9.00.

All other readings from early modern philosophers will be available online, either posted on or linked from the class Canvas site.

You should bring the text to class with you, so you can refer to it during discussions.

See also the notes on [Primary texts \(https://ufl.instructure.com/courses/386386/pages/primary-texts\)](https://ufl.instructure.com/courses/386386/pages/primary-texts) and [Secondary literature \(https://ufl.instructure.com/courses/386386/pages/secondary-literature\)](https://ufl.instructure.com/courses/386386/pages/secondary-literature).

4. Assessment

Graded assignments are described below. In addition, there is a **syllabus quiz** on Canvas, due by 5pm on Tuesday 1/14. This will not itself be worth any points towards your final grade. However, if you do not take the syllabus quiz, you will not receive a grade for any other assignment.

4.1 Papers (60%)

There will be two paper assignments. Each paper should be between 1400 and 1600 words long. The papers together will count for 60% of your grade for the course (each counting for 30%).

Topics will be made available two weeks before papers are due. All papers must be submitted on paper in class and as a pdf file on Canvas. Any papers submitted late without a good excuse will be penalized three points (on a hundred-point scale) for every day they're late.

The first paper is due on Tuesday 2/18 and the second on Tuesday 4/7. In each case, papers are due at the start of class. For detailed instructions, see the [Assignments \(https://ufl.instructure.com/courses/386386/assignments\)](https://ufl.instructure.com/courses/386386/assignments) section.

No papers will be accepted after the end of classes (more precisely, after 5:00pm on Wednesday 4/22). If you fail to submit a paper, you will receive a grade of zero for it.

Information on the standards for grading papers is available on the Canvas site: [Paper grading guide \(https://ufl.instructure.com/courses/335489/pages/paper-grading-guide\)](https://ufl.instructure.com/courses/335489/pages/paper-grading-guide).

4.2 Final exam (30%)

The final exam for this class will be on Friday 5/1 from 12:30 to 2:30pm in our usual classroom.

The final exam will count for 30% of your grade for the class. Makeup final exams will only be given in those few circumstances that merit the awarding of an incomplete grade for the class.

The final exam will include both short answer and essay questions. Short answer questions may ask about any material covered during the semester. Essay questions will be drawn from longer lists of possible questions, which will be made available by Thursday 4/16.

4.3 Quizzes (10%)

There will be 10-15 short quizzes in class during the semester. Their dates will not be announced in advance. A quiz might ask you to write a short paragraph in response to a reading, or to answer a couple of multiple choice questions.

Each quiz will count equally towards your overall quiz grade, except that I will drop your two lowest quiz grades. Makeup quizzes will only be given if you have good excuses. In appropriate cases (which is most of them) these reasons should be documented in writing. I will excuse absences only for the acceptable reasons stated in the UF attendance policy

(<https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/attendance.aspx>
(<https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/attendance.aspx>)).

If you arrive too late for a quiz, you may not take it. If you leave class before the end, but after the quiz, you will receive a grade of zero for that quiz.

4.4 Numerical grades and letter grades

All assignments will be given a numerical grade. At the end of the semester, your overall numerical grade will be calculated, based on your grades for and the relative weights of the assignments. This numerical grade will be converted to a letter grade using the following scale.

Numerical grade (n)	Letter grade	GPA*
$90 \leq n \leq 100$	A	4.0
$86.7 \leq n < 90$	A-	3.67
$83.3 \leq n < 86.7$	B+	3.33
$80 \leq n < 83.3$	B	3.0
$76.7 \leq n < 80$	B-	2.67
$73.3 \leq n < 76.7$	C+	2.33
$70 \leq n < 73.3$	C	2.0
$66.7 \leq n < 70$	C-	1.67
$63.3 \leq n < 66.7$	D+	1.33
$60 \leq n < 63.3$	D	1.0
$56.7 \leq n < 60$	D-	0.67
$0 \leq n < 56.7$	E	0

* Current UF policies for assigning grade points may be found at <https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/grades.aspx>
(<https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/grades.aspx>).

4.5 Incomplete grades

Grades of I (Incomplete) may only be assigned in certain special circumstances. These are described in the CLAS Incomplete Grade Contract: <http://www.clas.ufl.edu/forms/incomplete-grade-contract.pdf>
(<http://www.clas.ufl.edu/forms/incomplete-grade-contract.pdf>).

5. Academic honesty

UF students are bound by The Honor Pledge which states,

We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honor and integrity by abiding by the Honor Code. On all work submitted for credit by students at the University of Florida, the following pledge is either required or implied: "On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment".

The Honor Code (<http://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/process/student-conduct-honor-code/> (<http://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/process/student-conduct-honor-code/>)) specifies a number of behaviors that are in violation of this code and the possible sanctions. Furthermore, you are obligated to report any condition that facilitates academic misconduct to appropriate personnel. If you have any questions or concerns, please consult with the instructor.

You should expect the minimum penalty for academic dishonesty to be a grade of E for the class (not just the assignment). All incidents of academic dishonesty will be reported to Student Judicial Affairs. Repeat offenders may be penalized by suspension or expulsion from the university.

You should already have a good idea of what constitutes plagiarism and other forms of academic dishonesty. I will also review this when handing out paper assignments. If you have any questions about this, ask me before it's too late.

All papers submitted for the course will be checked using turnitin.com (<http://turnitin.com>).

6. Schedule

See the separate [Schedule \(https://ufl.instructure.com/courses/386386/pages/schedule\)](https://ufl.instructure.com/courses/386386/pages/schedule) page.

7. Other policies and information

7.1 Accommodations for students with disabilities

Students with disabilities who experience learning barriers and would like to request academic accommodations should connect with the disability Resource Center by visiting disability.ufl.edu/students/get-started. It is important for students to share their accommodation letter with their instructor and discuss their access needs, as early as possible in the semester.

7.2 Classroom behavior

Please remember that it is not enough to be merely physically present in class. You are expected to do all assigned reading in advance – which is not to say you should not revisit it again afterwards. You should also be paying attention, taking notes as appropriate, and participating in class discussions.

My aim is to have a classroom atmosphere that is both serious and relaxed. Things will go well if you come to class prepared, avoid behavior that is rude or distracts others, and remember to treat others with respect in classroom discussions.

7.3 Use of electronic devices

You may not use laptops, phones, or other electronic devices in class, without my explicit written permission. Anyone violating this policy may be asked to leave class.

If you believe that I ought to allow you to use a laptop in class, please contact me.

Unless you have my explicit written permission, you may not make any audio or video recordings of the class or related meetings. Making such recordings is a violation of the honor code.

7.4 Evaluations

Students are expected to provide professional and respectful feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing course evaluations online via GatorEvals. Guidance on how to give feedback in a professional and respectful manner is available at <https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/students/> (<https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/students/>). Students will be notified when the evaluation period opens, and can complete evaluations through the email they receive from GatorEvals, in their Canvas course menu under GatorEvals, or via <https://ufl.bluera.com/ufl/> (https://urldefense.proofpoint.com/v2/url?u=https-3A_ufl.bluera.com_ufl_&d=DwMFAg&c=sJ6xIWYx-zLMB3EPkvcnVg&r=y2HjEMjRMHJhfdvLrqJZIYczRsfp5e4TfQjHuc5rVHg&m=WXko6OK_Ha6T00ZVAsEaSh99qRXHOgMNFrywCoehRho&s=itVU46DDJnlg4CW6efJOOlgPjdzsPvCghyfzJoFONs&e=)). Summaries of course evaluation results are available to students at <https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/public-results/> (<https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/public-results/>).

7.5 Other contact information

Contact information for the Counseling and Wellness Center: <https://counseling.ufl.edu> (<https://counseling.ufl.edu>), 392-1575; and the University Police Department: 392-1111 or 911 for emergencies.

7.6 The Academic Learning Compact for the Philosophy major

PHH3400 is related to several of the Strategic Learning Outcomes of the Philosophy major, as described in the Academic Learning Compact. For more information, please see <https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/liberalarts/alc/philosophy.aspx> (<https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/liberalarts/alc/philosophy.aspx>).

7.7 General education

PHH3400 meets the Humanities and International General Education requirements. A minimum grade of C is required for general education credit.

The subject area objectives for Humanities and International courses are available at <http://gened.aa.ufl.edu/subject-area-objectives.aspx> (<http://gened.aa.ufl.edu/subject-area-objectives.aspx>).

Associated student learning outcomes in content, critical thinking, and communication are described at <http://gened.aa.ufl.edu/student-learning-outcomes.aspx> (<http://gened.aa.ufl.edu/student-learning-outcomes.aspx>).

Schedule

INTRODUCTION

Tuesday 1/7. Introduction to the class.

DESCARTES

For each class, you should read the relevant texts in advance. When we are discussing critics as well as Descartes, further required reading is described.

Thursday 1/9. Meditation 1

Tuesday 1/14. Meditations 2-3

Thursday 1/16. Meditation 3 and Hobbes's criticisms ([Hobbes reading](https://ufl.instructure.com/courses/386386/pages/hobbes-reading) (<https://ufl.instructure.com/courses/386386/pages/hobbes-reading>)).

Tuesday 1/21. Meditation 4

Thursday 1/23. Meditation 5 and Leibniz's criticisms ([Leibniz reading](https://ufl.instructure.com/courses/386386/pages/leibniz-reading) (<https://ufl.instructure.com/courses/386386/pages/leibniz-reading>)).

Tuesday 1/28. Meditation 6

Thursday 1/30. Elizabeth's criticisms ([Elizabeth reading](https://ufl.instructure.com/courses/386386/pages/elizabeth-reading) (<https://ufl.instructure.com/courses/386386/pages/elizabeth-reading>)).

SPINOZA

Tuesday 2/4. Introducing Spinoza. Reading: *Ethics*, part 1, up to proposition 15. Paper 1 topics available.

Thursday 2/6. Monism. Reading: again *Ethics*, part 1, up to proposition 15

Tuesday 2/11. Necessitarianism. Reading: *Ethics*, part 1, from proposition 16 to the end of part 1, including the Appendix.

Thursday 2/13. Parallelism. Reading: *Ethics*, part 2, as far as the scholium following proposition 13.

Tuesday 2/18. Parallelism again. Paper 1 due.

Thursday 2/20. Emotions. Reading: *Ethics*, part 3, as far as proposition 30.

Tuesday 2/25. Ethics. Reading: *Ethics*, part 4, as far as proposition 8; part 4 propositions 35-37 (including the scholia that follow); the Appendix at the end of part 4; and the scholium to proposition 20 of part 5.

Thursday 2/27. The eternity of the human mind and the intellectual love of God. Reading: *Ethics*, part 5, from proposition 21 to the end.

(Spring break is the week of Monday 3/3.)

LOCKE

Tuesday 3/10. Locke against innate knowledge. Reading: **Essay**, book 1, especially chapters 1 and 2.

Thursday 3/12. Locke against Descartes: the idea of God, and whether the mind always thinks.
Reading: **Essay**, book 1, chapter 4, and book 2, chapter 1.

Tuesday 3/17. The origin of various different sorts of ideas. Reading: **Essay**, book 2, chapters 2-8, and 22-23.

Thursday 3/19. Identity over time, and in particular personal identity. Reading: **Essay**, book 2, chapter 27.

Tuesday 3/24. Knowledge, including knowledge of God's existence. Reading: **Essay**, book 4, chapters 1-4 and 10. Paper 2 topics available.

Thursday 3/26. Faith, reason, and enthusiasm. Reading: **Essay**, book 4, chapters 17-19.

HUME

Tuesday 3/31. Impressions, ideas and the copy principle; association of ideas; a question about how much of the mind's work is done by reason. Reading: **Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding** (EHU), sections I-IV.

Thursday 4/2. Hume's answer to the question about reason. Reading: EHU V

Tuesday 4/7. Shepherd against Hume, and Hume on causation. Reading: [Shepherd reading \(https://ufl.instructure.com/courses/386386/pages/shepherd-reading\)](https://ufl.instructure.com/courses/386386/pages/shepherd-reading) and EHU VII. Paper 2 due.

Thursday 4/9. Liberty and necessity. Reading: EHU VIII.

Tuesday 4/14. Skepticism about some religious questions. Reading: EHU X-XI.

Thursday 4/16. Skepticism more generally. Reading: EHU XII.

END OF SEMESTER

Tuesday 4/21. Review class

Friday 5/1, 12:30-2:30pm. Final exam