HISTORY OF PHILOSOPHY: EARLY MODERN

TBD

Instructor:	Corey Dethier	Time:	TBD
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Course description: This course serves as an introduction to early modern philosophy, which (roughly speaking) means philosophy between 1630 and 1780. The early modern period is a notable one in the history of philosophy for a number of reasons. For one, it produced a surprising number of extraordinarily influential philosophers such as Descartes, Leibniz, Locke, and Hume. For another, the early modern period witnesses the division between philosophy and science; it's here where our contemporary understanding of philosophy—a discipline that is distinct from physics, economics, psychology, etc.—begins to develop.

The course itself will be divided into four main sections, covering work on method, the relationship between mind and body, ethics and political philosophy, and the domain of knowledge and ideas. Students will not be expected to have previous familiarity with either early modern philosophy or early modern science.

Course Aims:

- To develop a familiarity with *some* of the questions central to philosophy in the early modern period.
- To develop a familiarity with *some* of the most influential philosophers and philosophical writings in the early modern period.
- To develop an understanding of the relationship between science and philosophy during the "scientific revolution."

Texts: All readings will be posted on the class website.

Grades: The grading scale will be as follows: A (94+), A- (90-93), B+ (87-89), B (84-86), B- (80-83), C+ (77-79), C (74-76), C- (70-73), D (60-69), F (59-)

Assignments:

Final grades in the class will be divided into the following categories (detailed rubrics for the assignments will be given as we approach the due dates):

- 25% Reading responses. Throughout the semester, students will be asked to turn in short reading responses by noon on class day. These responses will usually ask the students to answer one of 2-3 questions on the readings for that day.
- 50% Short papers. There will be two short papers (\sim 5 pages) assigned throughout the course, each of which will be worth 25% of the final grade.
- 25% Final exam. The final will be a written exam consisting of short answer questions about the views of the various philosophers studied in the course.

Course policies: In addition to the honor code (http://firstyear.nd.edu/current-students/honor-code/), which students are expected to learn and follow, I will expect students to (a) be respectful of their fellow students, (b) turn their assignments in on time, and (c) behave ethically both in class and in fulfilling their assignments.

Schedule:

Unit 1: Method ([TBD]-[TBD])

Reading:

Day 1 René Descartes, Meditations (§1) Teresa of Ávila, The Interior Castle (§1.2)

Day 2 René Descartes, Discourse (§2), Principles (§§71-76)

Day 3 Francis Bacon, New Organon (§§1.1-24,69-70) Thomas Hobbes, Leviathan (§§1.1-1.2)

Day 4 Isaac Newton, Principia ("Rules of Reasoning" and "General Scholium")

Key discussion questions:

What is the proper method of philosophy? Should we begin with our ideas, or make "inductions" from empirical data? How does the latter work, anyway? And what is it reasonable to doubt?

Relevant SEP Pages: Bacon, Descartes, Descartes' Method, Hobbes, and Newton

Unit 2: Mind and Body ([TBD]-[TBD])

Reading:

Day 5	René Descartes, Meditations (§2)	
	Elisabeth of Bohemia, letter to Descartes dated 20 June 16	643

- Day 6 René Descartes, Meditations (§3) Baruch Spinoza, Ethics (§§1.1-15)
- Day 7 Baruch Spinoza, *Ethics* (§§2.1-13) Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz, *Discourse* (§§1-12)

Day 8 Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz, *Discourse* (§§17-18) Isaac Newton, *Principia* ("Definitions" and "Laws of Motion")

Day 9 Anne Conway, *Principles* (§§9.1-10) George Berkeley, *Principles* (§§1-34, 58-59)

Key discussion questions:

What are the mind and the body, and what is the relationship between the two of them? Does it matter whether the essence of body is extension or something else? What is God doing in this picture? And how do other animals fit in?

Relevant SEP Pages: George Berkeley, Conway, Elisabeth of Bohemia, Leibniz, Leibniz's Philosophy of Physics, and Spinoza

Unit 3: Ethics and Political Philosophy ([TBD]-[TBD])

Reading:

Day 10 Thomas Hobbes, Leviathan (§§1.13-15) John Locke, Second Treatise (§§1-3)

Day 11 Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Discourse (§1)

Day 12 Catharine Trotter Cockburn, Remarks on some Authors (selection) ****First essay due****

Day 13 Jeremy Bentham, Principles (§§1, 17.1) Adam Smith, Theory of Moral Sentiments (§2.2)

Day 14 Mary Wollstonecraft, Vindication (§§3.3.1-2)

Day 15 David Hume, Treatise on Human Nature (§9)

Key discussion questions:

Should ethics be founded on human nature, on moral sentiment, or on the calculation of pains and pleasure? What about government policy? What's the role of the state of nature in the "contract theorists," and does it do what they want it do? What does Hume mean when he argues that we cannot derive an ought from an is, and is he right about that?

Relevant SEP Pages: Bentham, Cockburn, Economics in early modern philosophy, Hobbes' Moral Philosophy, Hume's Moral Philosophy, Locke's Political Philosophy, Smith's Moral Philosophy, and Woll-stonecraft

Unit 4: Ideas ([TBD]-[TBD])

Reading:

Day 16 Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz, New Essays (§1.1)

Day 17 John Locke, Essay (§§1.1-2, 3.1)

Day 18 Émile Du Châtelet, Foundations (§1)

Day 19 David Hume, Inquiry (§7)

Day 20 Mary Shepherd, Essays (selection)

Key discussion questions:

To what extent are our ideas innate, and to what extent learned from experience? Why does the difference matter? Are there certain kinds of ideas that must be innate / experiences?

Relevant SEP Pages: Du Châtelet, Hume, Locke, and Shepherd.

Please note that there were a large number of influential philosophers who I didn't manage to fit in to the syllabus. These include: Mary Astell (1666–1731), Pierre Bayle (1647–1706), Robert Boyle (1627-91), Margaret Cavendish (1623-73), Ralph Cudworth (1618-88), Denis Diderot (1713-84), Nicolas Malebranche (1638-1715), Danaris Masham (1658-1708), Moses Mendelssohn (1729-86), Henry More (1614-87), Blaise Pascal (1623-62), Thomas Reid (1710-1796), Christian Wolff (1679-1754), and Voltaire (1694-1778).

Second essay due