Description

In this course we will examine the ways in which the scientific and political innovations of 16th, 17th, and 18th century Europe both influenced and were influenced by the rationalist and empiricist philosophical traditions that competed and flourished during this period. We will study the works of several philosophers working within these two traditions as they struggled to make sense of the scientific and social revolutions sweeping through their world; and we will see how their work would, in turn, help shape these revolutions, even as they continue to evolve today. One focus of the course, then, will be to examine the ways in which these philosophical traditions have maintained their relevance and influence in our own millennium as 21st century science struggles with its most difficult questions yet.

Our survey will entail a careful reading and critique of the metaphysical and epistemological schemes developed by key philosophers of the early modern period, beginning with the work of Bacon, Galileo, and Descartes and concluding with Kant and his revolutionary synthesis of the rationalist and empiricist worldviews. The course website can be found at: www.csus.edu/cpns/epperson.

Requirements

Our work will primarily be lecture and discussion, so both careful attention to the readings and class participation will be crucial for a lively course. Please bring your text to class.

There will be two examinations--one take-home mid-term paper and one in-class final--as well as several homework assignments and unannounced short answer quizzes on the readings. All written work must comply with Philosophy Department guidelines, which can be found here: www.csus.edu/phil/req/writing.htm. The departmental grading policy for written work can be found here: www.csus.edu/phil/req/grading.htm.

Text

ISBN: 9780872209787

Grading

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Notes</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Class participation</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>(2 unexcused absences results in 0%)</td>
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<tr>
<td>HW &amp; Quizzes</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>(These are written pop quizzes on the reading assignments)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mid-term exam</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>(4-6 page take-home exam/paper)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final exam</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>(4-6 page take-home exam/paper)</td>
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Academic Standards: All sources in papers must be cited and given appropriate credit. The author of any information from the Internet must be given credit; using such information without indicating the source constitutes plagiarism, as it would with print publications. Students are allowed to discuss lectures and even assignments with each other, but they must do their own work. Students are required to read the University policy on academic honesty, which can be found here.

Students with Disabilities: If you have a documented disability and require accommodation or assistance with assignments, tests, attendance, note taking, etc., please see the instructor during the first week of the semester so that appropriate arrangements can be made to ensure your full participation in class. Also, you are encouraged to contact the Services for Students with Disabilities (Lassen Hall) for additional information regarding services that might be available to you.

Lecture Schedule – Detailed View

Week 1
8/31
General introduction and background: the Early Modern Period in the history of philosophy; the Aristotelian world-view; Renaissance Humanism and the Scientific Revolution; Bacon, New Organon (16-20); Galileo, The Assayer (21-24); Descartes, Discourse on the Metehod, Part 1, 2 & 5: (25-34)

Week 2
9/07
Descartes, Mediations, Letter of Dedication, Preface and Meditation I (35-43)

Week 3
9/14
Meditations II and III (43-54)

Week 4
9/21
Meditations V and VI (pp. 58-68): Wrap up of Descartes

Week 5
9/28
Spinoza: Ethics Book I, Propositions 1-15 (144-149)

Week 6
10/05
Spinoza, Ethics, Book I, Propositions 16-36 and Appendix (151-164)

Week 7
10/12
Mechanistic materialism: Boyle, Of the Excellency and Grounds of the Corpuscular or Mechanical Philosophy (308-316); Locke, Essay Concerning Human Understanding, Book I, Chapters 1-2; Book II, Chapters 1-14 (316-348)

MIDTERM EXAM DISTRIBUTED THURSDAY 10/14

Week 8
10/19
Locke, Essay, Book IV, Chapters 1-4 (329-358)

Week 9
10/26
Leibniz, Discourse on Metaphysics (224-247)

MIDTERM EXAM COLLECTED TUESDAY 10/26
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Readings</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Early Modern Cosmology: Space &amp; Time: <strong>Newton</strong>, Scholium to Definition VIII in the <em>Principia</em> (pp. 284-293); <strong>Hume</strong>, <em>An Inquiry Concerning Human Understanding</em>, sections I-IV (533-548)</td>
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<td>11</td>
<td>Hume, <em>Inquiry</em>, sections V-VII (548-564)</td>
<td><strong>THURSDAY - VETERAN'S DAY - NO CLASS</strong></td>
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<td>12</td>
<td>Hume, <em>Inquiry</em>, section VIII (564-575); sections XI-XII (586-600)</td>
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<td>13</td>
<td>Hume, <em>Inquiry</em>, sections XI-XII, cont'd (586-600)</td>
<td><strong>NO CLASS THURSDAY 11/25 (THANKSGIVING DAY)</strong></td>
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<td>14</td>
<td><strong>Kant</strong>, <em>Prolegomena</em>, Preface (661-664); <em>Critique of Pure Reason</em>, Prefaces (717-724); Analytic and synthetic judgments, <em>Critique of Pure Reason</em>, Introduction (724-725)</td>
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<td>15</td>
<td><strong>Kant</strong>, <em>Prolegomena</em>, §§1-21 (665-684); §§27-35 (687-690) <em>Critique of Pure Reason</em>, Transcendental Aesthetic (729-737)</td>
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