

**Philosophy 102, History of Western Philosophy II**  
**TuTh 3:10pm-4:25pm**  
**Rockefeller Hall 304**  
**Spring 2007 Syllabus and Reading Schedule**

Barry Lam  
[balam@vassar.edu](mailto:balam@vassar.edu)  
Office: Rockefeller Hall 401A  
OH: Tues, Thurs, 1:30pm-3:00pm  
and by appointment  
Office Phone: 437-5528

This course will focus on the metaphysics and epistemology of the 17th and 18th centuries. What is the nature of reality and how much can humans know about it? Which is more important as a tool for attaining knowledge about the world, reason or sense-experience? Science as we know it today was only just emerging during this period, and philosophers were trying their hardest to make sense of and justify the emerging sciences as genuine systems of knowledge. Descartes argued for the primacy of our faculties of reason, at the cost of skepticism about sense-experience. The British Empiricists like Locke, Berkeley, and Hume argued for the primacy of sense-experience at the cost of skepticism about our faculties of reason. Finally, Kant forced us to rethink the dichotomies between mind and world, and reason and sense-experience. The objective in this course is to familiarize you with the grand ideas of some of the most important thinkers in intellectual history.

**Texts:** *Discourse on Method and Meditations on First Philosophy*, by Rene Descartes  
*An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, by John Locke  
*A Treatise Concerning The Principles of Human Knowledge*, by George Berkeley  
*An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding*, by David Hume  
*Prolegomena to Any Future Metaphysics*, by Immanuel Kant

We will be using the *Hackett* editions of all of these texts.

Any additional readings will be posted on Blackboard.

**Requirements:** Active participation in class discussions and on the Blackboard discussion board, and other small assignments, will be worth 10% of your final grade. You will write two 1500-page papers, and take an in-class final exam, each worth 30% of your final grade.

### Reading Schedule

(Any changes will be announced in class.)

#### January 25th

Introduction to philosophy of the Early Modern Period

#### Week 1: January 30th, February 1st, Cartesian Epistemology

Jan. 30th: *Required, Discourse on Method*, Parts One-Four, pp. 1-22. *Optional* Parts Five and Six.

Feb. 1st: Letter of Dedication, Preface to the Reader, Synopsis, and Meditation One, pp. 47-63.

#### Week 2: February 6th, 8th, Cartesian Doubt and Knowledge of the Self

Feb. 6th: Meditation Two, pp. 63-69.

Feb. 8th: Beginning of Meditation Three, pp. 69-last full paragraph of pp. 70.

#### Week 3: February 13th, 15th, Cartesian Reason and Error

Feb. 13th: Meditation Three, pp. 69-81.

Feb. 15th: Meditation Four pp. 81-87.

#### Week 4: February 20th, 22nd, Cartesian Metaphysical Dualism

Feb. 20th: Meditation Five and Six, pp. 87-103.

Feb. 22nd: First paper topics distributed.

#### Week 5: February 27th, March 1st, The Origin of Ideas

Feb. 27th: Locke, pp. 4-14, pp. 33-68.

Mar. 1st: Locke, pp. 117-128.

#### Week 6: March 6th, 8th, The Nature of Things and our Knowledge of Them

Mar. 6th: Locke, pp. 133-149, pp. 192-203.

Mar. 8th: Locke, pp. 235-247 *Optional* pp. 254-264. First Paper Due.

#### Spring Break

Week 7: March 27th, 29th, Idealism

Mar. 27th: Berkeley: Introduction and paragraphs 1-36.

Mar. 29th: paragraphs 37-end.

Week 8: April 3rd, 5th, From Idealism to Pure Empiricism

Apr. 3rd: Finish up Berkeley

Apr. 5th: Hume pp. 1-15. Second paper topics distributed.

Week 9: April 10th, 12th, Hume on Causation and Induction

Apr. 10th: Hume pp. 15-37.

Apr. 12th: Hume pp. 38-53.

Week 10: April 17th, 19th, What Should We Believe? Hume on Miracles and Philosophy

Apr. 17th: Hume pp. 69-90.

Apr. 19th: Hume pp. 102-114. Second papers due.

Week 11: April 24th, 26th, Kant's Transcendental Argument

Apr. 24th: Prolegomena, Preface and Preamble, pp. 1-22.

Apr 26th: First Part, pp. 23-34.

Week 12: May 1st, 3rd, Transcendental Metaphysics and Epistemology

May 1st: Second Part, pp. 35-63.

Week 13: May 8th, The Kantian World

May 8th: Final Exam Study Guide distributed.

*Academic accommodations are available for students with disabilities who are registered with the Office of Disability and Support Services. Students in need of disability accommodations should schedule an appointment with me early in the semester to discuss any accommodations for this course which have been approved by the Office of Disability and Support Services, as indicated in your DSS accommodation letter.*