

# PHILOSOPHY 302 – History of Philosophy: Modern Period

Spring 2013

TR 9:30-10:45 CRN 21968

Kinard 312

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Open office hours: M 12:30-2:30; W 12:30-2:30; or by appointment

**COURSE DESCRIPTION:** This three-hour course takes an historical approach to philosophical problems. Rather than going from problem to problem (as in PHIL 101), we will begin with the first modern philosophers and move chronologically to the early 19<sup>th</sup> century. We will see how philosophy deals with major issues in epistemology, metaphysics, and ethics during the modern era. Notable among the modern philosophers are Hobbes, Descartes, Spinoza, Leibniz, Locke, Berkeley, Hume, Kant, and Hegel. This brings us to the beginning of German Idealism, which the Existentialism course (PHIL 303) takes up and studies further. PHIL 302 attempts to show how these earlier thinkers were connected, how they influenced and critiqued one another, and, most importantly, how they addressed many of the central problems in the history of human thought. We will keep two key dividing lines in mind as we think about the distinctions among these figures: (1) rationalism and empiricism represent one way to understand the differences among these philosophers; (2) whether or not evil can or should be explained represents another more urgent question dividing these thinkers. In general, we will use a textbook that includes many of the primary texts, attempting to understand each philosopher's work individually but also trying to get enough distance on each to see the broader trajectories of thought at play in these centuries. For further understanding and appreciation of these trajectories, we will read Michael A. Gillespie's *The Theological Origins of Modernity*.

This course has no prerequisites and is worth three (3) credit hours. It fulfills the Historical Perspectives Touchstone requirement. Any subsequent changes to this syllabus will be announced in class if minor, or else distributed in writing. This course participates in the department's Critical Thinking Initiative (CTI) and Effective Communication Initiative (ECI), with relevant assignments so designated on the syllabus.

## GLOBAL LEARNING INITIATIVE

The global learning components of this course are the following: learning about European reactions to the crisis of theology and metaphysics brought on by the clash of scholasticism and nominalism; understanding developments in European culture such as humanism, the reformation, the scientific revolution, and the renewal of ancient skepticism; considering the political impact of these new movements in the turmoil of the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries in Europe.

## STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES AND METHODS IN PHIL 302

*SLO 1:* Demonstrate the ability to read critically significant primary and/or secondary sources on historical questions with appropriate understanding.

*Method:* Reading primary and secondary texts from major philosophers and historians of philosophy; analyzing those readings in class discussion; assessing the merits of their positions in written assignments.

*Assessment of Student Learning Outcome:* Students will take periodic quizzes or do assignments on the reading to ensure comprehension of the basic ideas. More in-depth writing assignments on exams and in the final paper will gauge their understanding of intertextual nature of the ideas in the course and their implications.

**SLO 2:** Demonstrate the ability to “think historically,” i.e., the ability to appreciate and articulate the differences and the relationships between past and present and how past eras differ from one another.

*Method:* Comparing the philosophical eras to understand how earlier ones influenced later developments as well as how contemporaneous movements related to one another; analyzing these influences and relations in class discussion; displaying this understanding in written form on exams.

*Assessment of Student Learning Outcome:* Students will demonstrate their understanding of the historical connections among ideas and the context in which these ideas took shape through a variety of assignments—quizzes, writing assignments, and the term paper.

**SLO 3:** Demonstrate knowledge of significant information specific to the historical topic, time period, or culture addressed.

*Method:* Learning about the cultural, religious, and political context of the philosophers; relating that context to their philosophy in class discussion and on exams.

*Assessment of Student Learning Outcome:* The exams will be the primary vehicles for assessing the students’ knowledge of specific historical information.

**SLO 4:** Demonstrate the ability to conduct guided and independent research or analysis of historical topics.

*Method:* Engaging in independent analysis of philosophical ideas in class discussion and on exams; writing a term paper with a significant research component.

*Assessment of Student Learning Outcome:* The paper accompanying the final exam, which will involve significant instruction and guidance regarding its process and execution, will be the primary vehicle for assessing the students’ knowledge of specific historical information.

**SLO 5:** Demonstrate the ability to communicate effectively in standard English.

*Method:* Discussion and written work in which a premium is placed on precision in language.

*Assessment of Student Learning Outcome:* Class participation as well as writing assignments will provide plenty of material with which to assess this goal.

## **PHIL 302 AND UNIVERSITY-LEVEL COMPETENCIES**

PHIL 302 is completed as part of the Touchstone Program, Winthrop University’s distinctive approach to general education. Thus, PHIL 302 helps students make progress toward the following University-Level Competencies.

### **Competency 1: Winthrop graduates think critically and solve problems.**

Winthrop University graduates reason logically, evaluate and use evidence, and solve problems. They seek out and assess relevant information from multiple viewpoints to form well-reasoned conclusions. Winthrop graduates consider the full context and consequences of their decisions and continually reexamine their own critical thinking process, including the strengths and weaknesses of their arguments.

*Method:* Students read, discuss, and write about some of the most challenging philosophical issues of the modern era. The course requires students to examine their assumptions, learn

new concepts, formulate cogent arguments, and apprentice their minds to some of the greatest minds in history.

**Competency 3: Winthrop graduates understand the interconnected nature of the world and the time in which they live.**

Winthrop University graduates comprehend the historical, social, and global contexts of their disciplines and their lives. They also recognize how their chosen area of study is inextricably linked to other fields. Winthrop graduates collaborate with members of diverse academic, professional, and cultural communities as informed and engaged citizens.

*Method:* The course examines the historical context of each philosopher and attempts to see how each philosophical position is conditioned by, and responds to, the demands of that context. In the end, the course shows how our contemporary forms of thought are deeply connected to this history of ideas.

**Competency 4: Winthrop graduates communicate effectively.**

Winthrop University graduates communicate in a manner appropriate to the subject, occasion, and audience. They create texts – including but not limited to written, oral, and visual presentations – that convey content effectively. Mindful of their voice and the impact of their communication, Winthrop graduates successfully express and exchange ideas.

*Method:* Students are required to discuss the arguments in class, write short homework assignments to display their reading comprehension, write several exam essays to synthesize the problems addressed in the course, and write a final paper in which the student offers not only exegesis and analysis of a difficult text but also an original assessment of the argument. The instructor grades all of these elements and offers comments and suggestions regarding the effectiveness of their communication.

**TEXTS**

In Bookstore:

1. Norman Melchert, *The Great Conversation: Volume II Descartes through Derrida and Quine*, 6th edition (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011).
2. Michael Allen Gillespie, *The Theological Origins of Modernity* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008).

Online:

1. Leibniz, *Monadology*,  
<http://www.philosophy.leeds.ac.uk/GMR/hmp/texts/modern/leibniz/monadology/monadology.html>.
  - a. Commentary on the Monadology:  
<http://www.philosophy.leeds.ac.uk/GMR/hmp/texts/modern/leibniz/monadology/monadology/nexpl.html>.
  - b. “Absolute and Relational Theories of Space and Motion” (*Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*): <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/spacetime-theories/>.
2. “Epistemological Problems of Perception” (*Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*):  
<http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/perception-episprob/>

3. “Kant and Hume on Causality” (*Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*):  
<http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/kant-hume-causality/>

**ATTENDANCE, MAKE-UP POLICY AND TESTS:** More than two (2) absences will diminish your grade, while fewer than two will improve it. If you miss a quiz or exam due to illness or a death in the family, appropriate documentation will allow you to take a make-up.

### EXPECTATIONS OF THE STUDENT

1. **Class Participation:** Class participation is worth 100 points. What counts as participation? First and foremost, good participation means being present in class, displaying the “ready poise” of an engaged thinker, and actively questioning and thinking out loud during class. I will judge your contribution with the following indicators in mind:
  - Can you answer questions about the current readings?
  - Can you integrate the material with previous classes?
  - Do you have written notes on your reading assignment?
  - Do you ask good questions? Do you listen carefully to your peers?
  - Do you demonstrate intellectual curiosity?
  - Do you arrive on time with a positive attitude?
2. **Quizzes or assignments:** Periodic assignments on the reading will be assigned on Blackboard to assess critical reading and thinking skills (CTI assignments). Cumulatively they will be worth 300 points.
3. **Exams:** Students will take two exams and a final exam. The first two exams are each worth 200 points. The final exam will involve an extended essay and will be worth 200 points.

### GRADING

Participation:	100 points	<u>Grading scale:</u>	
Exam 1:	200 points	930-1000: A	900-929: A-
Exam 2:	200 points	870-899: B+	830-869: B 800-829: B-
Quizzes/Assignments:	300 points	770-799: C+	730-769: C 700-729: C-
<u>Final Exam:</u>	<u>200 points</u>	670-699: D+	630-669: D 600-629: D-
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1000 points</b>	0-599: F	

**STATEMENT OF TOLERANCE:** Regardless of sexual orientation, race, ethnicity, national origin, gender, religion, age and ability, you will be treated and respected as a human being. Your continued presence in this course signals your commitment to act likewise.

**STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES:** If you have a disability and need classroom accommodations, please contact Gena Smith, Coordinator, Services for Students with Disabilities, at 323-2233, as soon as possible. Once you have your professor notification letter, please notify me so that I am aware of your accommodations well before the first test.

**ACADEMIC SUCCESS CENTER:** Winthrop’s Academic Success Center is a free resource for all undergraduate students seeking to perform their best academically. The ASC offers a variety of personalized and structured resources that help students achieve academic excellence, such as tutoring, academic skill development (test taking strategies, time management counseling, and study techniques), group and individual study spaces, and academic coaching. The ASC is located on the first floor of Dinkins, Suite 106. Please contact the ASC at 803-323-3929 or

[success@winthrop.edu](mailto:success@winthrop.edu). For more information on ASC services, please visit [www.winthrop.edu/success](http://www.winthrop.edu/success).

**STUDENT CONDUCT:** Students are expected to cultivate personal and academic integrity. Academic misconduct will be addressed in accordance with the Student Conduct Code and the University Undergraduate Catalog. Students will submit all major written assignments through Turnitin. Students in this course should be aware of the strong sanctions against plagiarism (misrepresentation of another person's work as one's own) stated in the Student Conduct Code. (See section V. Student Academic Misconduct of the Student Conduct Code in the Student Handbook.) If proven, a charge of plagiarism could result in an automatic "F" in the course and possible expulsion. If you have any questions or doubts about what plagiarism entails or how to properly acknowledge source materials and the works of others, be sure to consult the instructor. Proper citation procedures are provided in all standard writing manuals. For more information, see the Student Handbook at [www.winthrop.edu/studentaffairs](http://www.winthrop.edu/studentaffairs).

### **BLACKBOARD: Instructions for Logging into Blackboard**

1. Go to <http://online.winthrop.edu>.
2. Click on the link for "New Blackboard."
3. **Please note: You will not use the WebCT "wu\_" login for Blackboard.** Log into Blackboard with the same user name and password as you use to login to Winthrop email.  
**For example:**
  - a. **Username: whetstonek2**
  - b. **Password: Enter Your Winthrop Email Password**
4. After you log in, on the right side of the screen, in the My Courses module, click on the title for your course.
5. Once inside the course, you will be viewing the Home Page. Use the menu on the left side of the screen to navigate through the course. **Note: If you do not see the menu on the left side of the screen, it may be hidden. Click on the arrow on the left side of the screen to reveal the menu.**

### **Need Blackboard Help?**

1. **Log in issues:** Please contact the help desk at 323-2400 or [helpdesk@winthrop.edu](mailto:helpdesk@winthrop.edu).
2. **Tutorials:** You can find helpful tutorials for using Blackboard at the following web site: [http://www2.winthrop.edu/webct/Blackboard\\_Training\\_Tutorials.html](http://www2.winthrop.edu/webct/Blackboard_Training_Tutorials.html).
3. **Blackboard User's Guide:** You can find the Blackboard user's guide by logging into Blackboard, and at the very top of the screen, click on the Help link, and then click on User Guide. You can search for a specific topic that you need help with.
4. **For additional assistance:** Please contact Kimarie Whetstone, Online Learning Coordinator at 323-2551 or [whetstonek@winthrop.edu](mailto:whetstonek@winthrop.edu).

Date	Topic	Reading
<b>Week 1</b>		
Tues., Jan. 8	Introduction	
Thurs., Jan. 10	Medieval Roots	<i>The Great Conversation</i> , ch. 12
<b>Week 2</b>		
Tues., Jan. 15	Nominalism	<i>The Theological Origins of Modernity</i> , ch. 1
Thurs., Jan. 17	Humanism	<i>The Theological Origins of Modernity</i> , ch. 3 [Recommended: <i>Theological Origins</i> , ch. 2]
<b>Week 3</b>		
Tues., Jan. 22	Luther and the Reformation	<i>The Theological Origins of Modernity</i> , ch. 4
Thurs., Jan. 24	Erasmus and Premodern Contradictions	<i>The Theological Origins of Modernity</i> , ch. 5
<b>Week 4</b>		
Tues., Jan. 29	Descartes	<i>The Theological Origins of Modernity</i> , ch. 6
Thurs., Jan. 31	Descartes	<i>The Great Conversation</i> , ch. 13 (first half or so)
<b>Week 5</b>		
Tues., Feb. 5	Descartes	<i>The Great Conversation</i> , ch. 13 (the rest of the chapter)
Thurs., Feb. 7	Descartes	Further discussion
<b>Week 6</b>		
Tues., Feb. 12	Review	
Thurs., Feb. 14	Exam Day	<b>EXAM 1 (CTI and ECI)</b>
<b>Week 7</b>		
Tues., Feb. 19	Hobbes	<i>The Theological Origins of Modernity</i> , ch. 7
Thurs., Feb. 21	Hobbes & Descartes	<i>The Theological Origins of Modernity</i> , ch. 8
<b>Week 8</b>		
Tues., Feb. 26	Empiricism	<i>The Great Conversation</i> , ch. 14 (Hobbes part) Recommended: "Epistemological Problems of Perception," <a href="http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/perception-episprob/">http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/perception-episprob/</a>

Thurs., Feb. 28	Locke's Empiricism	<i>The Great Conversation</i> , ch. 14 (Locke part)
<b>Week 9</b>		
Tues. March 5	Berkeley's Idealism	<i>The Great Conversation</i> , ch. 14 (Berkeley part) Recommended: "Epistemological Problems of Perception," <a href="http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/perception-episprob/">http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/perception-episprob/</a>
Thurs., March 7	Hume's Skepticism	<i>The Great Conversation</i> , ch. 15 (first half or so)
	<b>Spring Break</b>	<b>Spring Break</b>
<b>Week 10</b>		
Tues., March 19	Hume's Skepticism	<i>The Great Conversation</i> , ch. 15 (the rest of the chapter)
Thurs., March 21	Review	
<b>Week 11</b>		
Tues., March 26	Exam Day	<b>EXAM 2 (CTI and ECI)</b>
Thurs., March 28	Introducing Kant	None
<b>Week 12</b>		
Tues., April 2	Critical Philosophy	<i>The Great Conversation</i> , ch. 16 (to p. 444)
Thurs., April 4	Transcendental Ideas	<i>The Great Conversation</i> , ch. 16 (pp. 444-452)
<b>Week 13</b>		
Tues., April 9	Kantian Morality	<i>The Great Conversation</i> , ch. 16 (pp. 452 to end)
Thurs., April 11	Hegel	<i>The Great Conversation</i> , ch. 17 (to p. 479)
<b>Week 14</b>		
Tues., April 16	Hegel	<i>The Great Conversation</i> , ch. 17 (pp. 479 to end)
Thurs., April 18	Final Discussion	None
Wed., April 24	<b>Final Exam</b>	<b>8:00 A.M. (CTI and ECI)</b>