

Fall, 2009
PHI 302 (21108)
Renaissance and Enlightenment Philosophy
Dr. Jack Weinstein
Tues., Thurs.: 9:30 – 10:45
Room: Merrifield 214

Office: M 201C, (701) 277 –2887.

Office Hours: Tuesday, Thursday: 2:00 – 4:00 p.m., or by appointment.

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Texts: Required: *Required Texts:* Forest E. Baird and Walter Kaufman, *Philosophical Classics Vol. III: Modern Philosophy, fourth edition*. (Upper Saddle River: Prentice Hall, 1997).

ISBN: 0-13-048558-6

Robert C. Solomon and Kathleen M. Higgins, *A Short History of Philosophy* (Oxford; Oxford University Press, 1996). ISBN: 0-19-510196-0

Optional: Jorge J. E Garcia, Gregory M. Reichberg, and Bernard N. Schumacher (editors). *The Classics of Western Philosophy: A Reader's Guide*. Blackwell Publishing, ISBN 0-631-23611-2.

This book will not be at the bookstore; I recommend you order it online.

Course Objectives: (1) To examine key philosophical texts of the Renaissance and Enlightenment periods. (2) To develop an understanding of the historical forces that influence and connect the tradition of western philosophy. (3) To foster written, oral and comprehension skills required for argumentation and analysis.

Course Description: This is a course in the history of philosophy. It is concerned with philosophical discussions spanning the sixteenth, seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Following the philosophers of that time, we will be primarily concerned with epistemology – the study of the nature and limits of human knowledge – and metaphysics – the study of the true nature of reality. Although supplementary reading will be required, the majority of our work will be in primary sources.

A course in the history of philosophy is concerned with both the meaning of individual texts and the relationship between texts. In this regard, we will focus on argument analysis as well as the development of certain philosophical themes. We will investigate the philosophical method adopted by each philosopher, acknowledging that conclusions can only be truly understood in relation to the arguments supporting them. We will also note how philosophical positions evolve; emphasizing the tensions between rejections of old ideas inherent in new conclusions and the continuity with the traditions that gave birth to them.

Additionally, this course is geared towards skills-development. It is designed to foster argumentation, writing, comprehension, and oral skills through in-depth reading, writing, and oral assignments. The course emphasizes the critical examinations of selected readings. Students are expected to understand difficult texts and write summaries, comparisons, and criticisms that represent both the philosopher's ideas and the students' own observations about those ideas. Please note: **this is a writing- and reading-intensive class. You will have both writing and reading assignments virtually every single night.**

This course emphasizes reading, understanding, expressing ourselves and listening to others. All students are required to participate in in-class discussions and to respect the opinions of others even if they do not agree with those opinions expressed. This course encourages both independence and inter-dependence. It encourages questioning and the ability of individuals to make up their own mind yet also recognizes the importance of discussion and sharing in learning and thinking. Above all else, this course emphasizes communication within a larger group and hopes to create a community of people who can contribute to and learn from each other's insights and knowledge.

Requirements: Class participation is of the highest priority. This course will not be a success unless everyone in it feels as if they are a part of a larger whole. It is expected that all members of the class keep up to date with the

assignments, take an interest in the opinions and arguments of others and, as a result, students will be graded on participation.

Students are required to complete nightly journals summarizing and commenting on the readings assigned in class. The week's journals will be collected every Thursday. Students are also required to complete all papers listed on the syllabus. Late papers will only be accepted in special circumstances. Please speak with me about lateness or attendance problems in advance.

Grading: The grading formula is as follows:

Papers 1-2:	25%.
Final Paper:	20%.
Journals:	25%.
<u>Class Participation (includes bulletin board posts):</u>	<u>30%.</u>
Total:	100 points.

Letter grades will be converted to a 100 point scale, in which 95 = A, 87 = B+, 85 = B, 83 = B-, etc.

Perhaps a more useful way of thinking about the grades is: A = excellent or outstanding work, B = good or above average work, C = acceptable or average work, D = unsatisfactory work but it is "just squeaking by," and F = unsatisfactory or failing work. By definition, most work is "average." Papers will be graded on: clarity of focus, adequacy of text, breadth and depth of documentation, cogency of argument.

All written work must be typed. No handwritten work will be accepted.

How to get an 'A' in this course: This course is difficult; it requires both a lot of work and a significant personal commitment (all classes *should* require this). You should anticipate at least three hours of out-of-class work for every hour you spend in class. Written work should be detailed and well edited, with a strong sense of academic discipline evident in the assignment. 'A' students notate their textbooks both when they read and during class discussion. They also take notes during the lecture and refer to these notes when completing assignments. To get an 'A', a student must participate actively in the majority of classes, and write detailed journals that integrate the personal point of view with textual analysis. If someone has questions about his or her overall grade, I will ask to see his or her notes and study material. Without textbook notations, lecture notes, lengthy journals, active participation, and, of course, the completion of all assignments, it is unlikely that someone can earn a high grade.

Participation Policy: The pre-requisite for participation is, of course, being present to participate. An 'A' in class participations signifies frequent, substantive, and meaningful participation in the class indicative of thoughtful and disciplined interaction with the texts, If you have other commitments, family issues, or personal problems, please come see me and we can discuss your options.

Note: Absences are not extensions; all deadlines still apply. If you know you are going to be absent, please give me all the required work *in advance* or e-mail your assignments before class ends. **No late assignments will be accepted unless we have spoken and I have agreed to an extension.** Simply informing me that your paper is going to be late does not constitute my consent.

Discussion Days: Discussion days occur either one or two class sessions before the day papers number two and three are due. They are set aside for group work so that you can talk amongst yourselves about your papers. How should you start? What have you done so far? What ideas are you exploring? The purpose of discussion days is to help you write better papers. I recommend that you come to class with an outline or an early draft that you can bounce off of your colleagues. The more you prepare, the better grades you will end up getting. **IMPORTANT:** Discussion days are not free days. Do not be absent. If large numbers of people skip class then I will be forced to lecture instead of allowing group-time.

Rewrites: You will have the opportunity to re-write as many papers and journals as the semester schedule allows (final papers, obviously, cannot be rewritten). All rewrites are due within one week after the first version is returned. **When submitting the rewrite, please hand in both the original paper as well. I cannot grade rewrites that are**

not accompanied by the original paper. NOTE: If you do not hand in a completed paper on time, you forfeit the opportunity to submit a rewrite. Always hand in a paper, even if you are unsatisfied with the quality.

Journals: Write a journal on the reading assigned. The journal is due the day the reading is scheduled for discussion, although I only collect them on Thursdays. **Journals should be written before class discussion.** Each journal entry should be at least 450 words long, but this is a *minimum* length and, in conjunction with other factors, does not guarantee anything above the *minimum* satisfactory grade. The first half should include a summary of the main idea of the reading. The second half of the journal should be your reaction. Is the argument a good one? Are there mistakes in reasoning? How does this connect with other readings? Did the reading upset you? Are there problems to be solved? Is there something you don't understand, or would like to spend more time on? Include any questions or other comments you have about the reading. The journals will be graded on a three point scale: 3= Excellent, 2=Good, 1=Acceptable. Your journal grades will be averaged at the end of the semester. There are sample journals on my web page. **Unless I indicate otherwise, journals are only required for days in which there are reading assignments. There are, for example, no journals required for discussion day.**

Bulletin Board Posts: Every student must post at least one message on the class-specific bulletin board per week. The message must be at least a short paragraph, and must be substantive, relating to something discussed in class that week. You may respond to other posts or you may start a new thread, but you must make a genuine attempt to engage in the community of inquiry present on the board. **Please print out and submit a copy of your post each week. Posts that are not submitted will not be counted for credit.**

No anonymous postings are permitted. Please sign the board with your first name and last initial.

The Web Page: I have developed an interactive World Wide Web page that I hope will make things easier for you throughout the semester. It contains links to sites that will help you write your papers, take better notes, and understand the text better. It also contains discussion boards so that you can post questions, comments, and suggestion for your colleagues. My intention is to provide a 24-hour support group that adds depth to our in-class time and makes you feel less isolated when you are doing work outside of class. I hope that this will be the first place you go to when you are having difficulties, or when you are simply "inspired" and want to talk philosophy. The web page address is as follows: <http://www.und.nodak.edu/instruct/weinstei/>

A password is required for the course-specific discussion board. It will be announced in class and via e-mail.

Grading Rubrics: Each paper you submit must include a grading rubric as a cover sheet (with your name on it). There are separate ones for the journals and your papers. You are responsible for printing them out and attaching them *to the front* of your paper. Papers without rubrics will not be graded.

General comments: All of the journal entries are considered to be foundational work contributing to the larger papers. All of the early papers are considered to be foundational work for the later papers. Consequently, you are encouraged to use these entries as much as possible in order to organize your thoughts and arguments. This means that if you feel something that you have written in a journal or earlier paper can be used within a different assignment, you are encouraged to use it again. Remember, you cannot plagiarize off your own work— only other people's work.

- Do not plagiarize. The university defines plagiarism as "the appropriation, buying, receiving as a gift, or obtaining by any means another person's work and the unacknowledged submission or incorporation of it in one's own work." If you are unsure of what that means, speak with me. When in doubt, use citations. **All acts of plagiarism will result in immediate failure for the course.** Plagiarism includes but is not limited to copying work from other students. You are encouraged to talk in groups about your assignments; I hope that students form study groups to attack the reading and the papers. However, when it is time to write the papers, do your work on your own. Do not write collectively. Should two or more students hand in the same or unacceptably similar papers, both the writer and those who copied the work will be subject to the consequences. In short, all written work must be your own. *I have failed many people for plagiarism. Don't do it. It's not worth the risk.*

- Students who are absent are responsible for all work and all announcements made while they were absent. The syllabus is not a contract. I may add, take-away, or change assignments when I think it necessary. Additionally, I

may change deadlines, so make sure you know what you missed while you were absent. All the new rules will apply, even if you are unaware that things have changed.

- Avoid sloppy or careless mistakes. Spell the names of the philosophers correctly. I become very frustrated when I read people who do not care enough about their papers to edit properly. You don't want a frustrated professor grading your paper – that would be a very bad thing.

- Please be sure to keep copies of everything you hand me, either on disk or as a photocopy. I am a human being. Sometimes I lose things. If, for whatever reason, I misplace your paper, or I think you never gave it to me, these copies will resolve the issue.

- If you are having difficulties, or if you are falling behind, come see me. I have office hours for a reason, and I am almost always willing to arrange a one-on-one meeting. E-mail is also a useful way of contacting me. I cannot help you if you don't let me know you need help. No one has ever been penalized for asking for help. In fact, students who come see me often find it to be an advantage. There is no reason to be scared of me. I really am quite harmless, even though I am loud and flail while I talk.

- As an extension of the previous comment, do not come to me three weeks before the end of the semester to ask what you can do to pass this course. The grade for this course is a semester long evaluative measure. At that point, there is little I can do. Don't let it get that far. See me early with any difficulties. Remember, I don't give you a grade; you earn it.

- **Electronic Communication** - My Webpage contains all the course handouts; please go there to download them and print them out to bring to class. Also, make sure that Campus Connection has your current e-mail address. Announcements and links will be sent electronically via that service, and you are responsible for receiving them even if you have not updated your account. Finally, for class related matters, it is best to communicate with me via my UND email address rather than my Facebook account. I have no objections to being friended, having you write on my wall, or receiving messages there, but I don't check it as often. Facebook is for fun and my UND address is my *official* account. It is best to conduct class business there.

- **Students with disabilities:** Individuals with physical, psychological, or learning disabilities, should contact Disability Support Services in McConnel Hall (777 – 3425 – voice or TTY). It is the student's responsibility to request accommodations. I cannot provide accommodations that are not requested in writing from Disability Support Services.

- **Students for whom English is a second language:** I will make every attempt to work with you so that you meet the requirements of this class. However, you will be held responsible for writing understandable and grammatically correct papers. Contact the academic services below for academic assistance.

- **Students requiring writing assistance or tutoring:** Help is available free of charge through the University Learning Center at the Memorial Union room 201A (777 – 4406), or the Writing Center in Merrifield Hall, room 12 (777 – 3600).

- Discussions in this class will not shy away from controversy. Students are encouraged to discuss any topic that is relevant to the course. It is therefore not uncommon for issues relating to current events, human sexuality, religion, drugs, politics, race, and gender to be our focus. It is also quite common that students will disagree with each other or with me. Although each person is expected to show the proper respect for his or her colleagues, students will not be discouraged from discussing relevant topics that may be offensive to others. Consequently, if such topics make you uncomfortable, or if you are concerned about being offended, you may want to reconsider taking this course.

Reading and Assignment Schedule:

Don't forget to attach the relevant grading rubric to each assignment.
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Tuesday, August 25: Introduction, administrative matters, etc.

Francis Bacon, *Novum Organum*.

Thursday, August 27: Ancient vs. Modern Philosophy. *Read: SHP*, pp. 1 – 17, 43 - 67.

Due: Internet Assignment. Log onto any computer and access my web page. The address is <http://www.und.nodak.edu/instruct/weinstei/>. If you do not know how to use the World Wide Web, go to the library or a computer lab and ask for help.

Once you are on my page (it's called "Dr. Jack Russell Weinstein's Philosophy Page!"), find the *course materials* page and locate the section called "How to write a journal." Send me an email with your name and class in the subject heading. Include, in the body of the letter: (1) your name, (2) phone number you can be reached, (3) email address, (4) what home town you are from (including the state or country if you are not from North Dakota), (5) the population of your home town, (6) any other philosophy classes you have already taken, and (7) the three reasons listed why I recommend you write a journal. If you do not have an email address, you can get free from either the school or a service such as Yahoo (www.yahoo.com) and hotmail (www.hotmail.com). I recommend gmail (www.gmail.com).

Tuesday, September 1: *Read: Francis Bacon: Aphorisms Concerning ...*"

Thursday, September 3: *Re-Read: "Francis Bacon: Aphorisms Concerning ..."*.

Rene Descartes, *Meditations on First Philosophy*.

Tuesday, September 8: *Read: "Descartes, Meditations on the First Philosophy," Dedicatory letter – Meditation One.*

Thursday, September 10: *Read: "Descartes, Meditations on the First Philosophy," Meditation Two.*

Tuesday, September 15: *Read: "Descartes, Meditations on the First Philosophy," Meditation Three.*

Thursday, September 17: *Read: "Descartes, Meditations on the First Philosophy," Meditation Four.*

Tuesday, September 22: *Read: "Descartes, Meditations on the First Philosophy," Meditation Five.*

Thursday, September 24: *Read: "Descartes, Meditations on the First Philosophy," Meditation Six.*

Tuesday, September 29: Discussion Day.

Baruch Spinoza, *Ethics*.

Thursday, October 1: *Read: SHP*, pp. 175 – 192 *and* "Spinoza, Introduction and Ethics," part one through P30.
Due: Paper #1. "How Is Philosophical Argument Scientific?" (4 - 6 pages).

Tuesday, October 6: *Read: "Spinoza: Ethics," finish part one.*

Thursday, October 8: *Read: "Spinoza: Ethics," Part two through L7.*

Tuesday, October 13: *Read: "Spinoza: Ethics," finish part two.*

Gottfried Leibniz, *The Monadology*.

Thursday, October 15: *Read: "Leibniz: Monadology," Introduction, the complete Monadology.*

Tuesday, October 20: *Re-Read*: “Leibniz: Monadology,” the complete Monadology.

Thursday, October 22: Discussion Day.

John Locke, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*.

Tuesday, October 27: *Read*: SHP, pp. 192 – 202, and “Locke: Essay Concerning.....,” “Introduction and Book I.
Due: Paper #2. “What is the nature of individuality?” (5 – 7 pages)

Thursday, October 29: *Read*: “Locke: Essay Concerning.....,” Book II through Chapter 12.

Tuesday, November 3: *Read*: “Locke: Essay Concerning.....,” “finish Book II.

Thursday, November 5: *Read*: “Locke: Essay Concerning.....,” Book III and IV.

George Berkeley, *A Treatise Concerning the Principles of Human Knowledge*.

Tuesday, November 10: *Read*: Berkeley, Introduction, and Preface/Introduction to the Treatise.

Thursday, November 12: *Read*: Berkeley, Treatise paragraphs 1 – 72.

Tuesday, November 17: *Read*: Berkeley, Treatise paragraphs, 73 - 116.

Thursday, November 19: *Read*: Berkeley, Finish the Treatise.

Tuesday, November 24: Buffer day.

Thursday, November 26: Thanksgiving Day, No class.

David Hume, *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding*.

Tuesday, December 1: *Read*: Hume, Introduction, and sections I – III.

Thursday, December 3: *Read*: Hume, sections IV – V.

Tuesday, December 8: *Read*: Hume, sections VI – VII (*do not* read past VII).

Thursday, December 10: Discussion Day.

Final Paper: “Can anything be known?” (10 – 12 pages).

Due at scheduled final exam time: Thursday, December 17, 8 a.m.