

PHIL 0021 - HISTORY OF MODERN PHILOSOPHY

Catalog Description

Advisory: Eligibility for ENGL 1A

Hours: 54 lecture

Description: Sixteenth through Eighteenth century philosophy with emphasis on broad epistemological or metaphysical theories, developments of empiricism and rationalism from Descartes to Kant. (C-ID PHIL 140) (CSU, UC)

Course Student Learning Outcomes

- CSLO #1: Describe and critically analyze the philosophical viewpoints of the Rationalists: Descartes, Spinoza, and Leibniz.
- CSLO #2: Describe and critically analyze the philosophical viewpoints of the Empiricists: Locke, Berkeley, and Hume.
- CSLO #3: Compare and contrast the theories of knowledge and reality of the Rationalists and Empiricists.
- CSLO #4: Describe and critically analyze Kant's theory of knowledge and reality as contrasted with the views of the Rationalists and Empiricists.

Effective Term

Fall 2022

Course Type

Credit - Degree-applicable

Contact Hours

54

Outside of Class Hours

108

Total Student Learning Hours

162

Course Objectives

1. Describe the historical background and circumstances that gave rise to the birth of Contemporary Science out of Ancient and Scholastic philosophies;
2. Explicate and evaluate Cartesian epistemology and metaphysics;
3. Describe the continuity between the epistemological and metaphysical systems of the Rationalists: Descartes, Spinoza, and Leibniz;
4. Describe the continuity between the epistemological and metaphysical systems of the Empiricists: Locke, Berkeley and Hume;
5. Contrast the metaphysical systems of the Rationalists;
6. Contrast the metaphysical systems of the Empiricists;
7. Compare and contrast the epistemological and metaphysical systems of the Rationalists and Empiricists;
8. Describe and analyze Hume's problematization of Metaphysics;
9. Defend Kant's metaphysics and epistemology as a synthesis of rationalism and empiricism;

10. Demonstrate mastery of critical philosophical skills to present accurately and to interpret the positions of 16th to 18th century philosophers, based on readings of their primary texts; and
11. Critically analyze and evaluate arguments, assumptions, principles, and methods of 16th through 18th century philosophers.

General Education Information

- Approved College Associate Degree GE Applicability
 - AA/AS - Literature & Language
- CSU GE Applicability (Recommended-requires CSU approval)
 - CSUGE - C2 Humanities
- Cal-GETC Applicability (Recommended - Requires External Approval)
- IGETC Applicability (Recommended-requires CSU/UC approval)
 - IGETC - 3B Humanities

Articulation Information

- CSU Transferable
- UC Transferable

Methods of Evaluation

- Classroom Discussions
 - Example: In an instructor led discussion the instructor will prompt students to identify the difference between Kant's concepts of an analytic and synthetic judgment. Have students describe: (a) three analytic judgments and what they imply for knowledge. (b) three synthetic judgments and what they imply for knowledge. After the instructor determines that students have sufficiently mastered the above concepts and distinctions, an instructor will lead a discussion prompted by the following question: Is "I think, therefore, I am?" an analytic judgement or a synthetic judgement? Explain your answer.
- Essay Examinations
 - Example: Select one of the following questions (a, b, or c) and write a three page, typed, double spaced, size 12 font essay thoroughly responding to your chosen question. (a) Why doesn't Descartes simply determine what's real by looking around him and use his sense experience? What does Descartes assume about sense experience as it method to know what's real? (b) In Book II of Locke's Essay Concerning Human Understanding, Locke claims that the mind is a tabula rasa or blank sheet until experience in the form of sensation and reflection provide the basis for complex knowledge. What does Locke's epistemology assume about our ability to know what's real? (c) Immanuel Kant's epistemology claims that empiricism can't get us to understanding. How does the example of face-blindness (as explored in the documentary: The Mind's Eye: How the Brain Sees the World) reinforce Kant's metaphysics and epistemology as a synthesis of rationalism and empiricism? Student essays will be assessed based upon a rubric that includes criteria such as correctness of response, thoroughness of explanation, relevance of quotes provided, and demonstration of "justification" by way of quote selection.
- Objective Examinations
 - Example: Students will take a multiple-choice examination on their ability to describe and analyze the assumptions entailed in Rationalism and Empiricism. Example: For Hume, what is the source of our knowledge of cause and effect? A. Reasoning "a priori" (i.e. independently of experience). B. In experience, finding that particular objects are constantly conjoined with each other.

C. A type of intuition that is used to make sense of the world. D. Social conditioning from early childhood onwards.

- Projects
 - Example: Working in student pairs, write a conversational dialogue based on Kant's metaphysics and epistemology as a response to Descartes and Hume. (1) In conversational language convey where Kant thinks Descartes and Locke got some things right, and where Kant thinks Descartes and Locke got some things wrong.

Repeatable

No

Methods of Instruction

- Lecture/Discussion
- Distance Learning

Lecture:

1. Instructor will lead a discussion on the various historical circumstances that lead to the epistemological crisis Descartes was addressing in Discourse on Methods, 164
2. In an in-person or online discussion assignment, the instructor will prompt students to identify areas in the primary writings of Descartes that suggests his desire to find a firm epistemological foundation for the sciences. Students will orally or in writing explain how the quotes support Descartes' epistemic goal.

Distance Learning

1. Based upon in class or online video lectures, students will work in small in-person or online discussion groups identifying similarities and differences between the Rationalist and Empiricist philosophers. Students will learn to compare and contrast Rationalist epistemology and metaphysics using the visual compare and contrast Venn diagram. The instructor will evaluate the accuracy of student artifacts.

Typical Out of Class Assignments

Reading Assignments

1. Read Rene Descartes, Meditations on First Philosophy, Meditation I and II and come to class prepared to explain the epistemological purpose of the evil genius scenario. 2. Read John Locke, An Essay Concerning Human understanding, Book II, chapters 1-8, and come to class prepared to describe the difference between Primary and Secondary Qualities.

Writing, Problem Solving or Performance

1. Formal Paper: write a 3 page minimum essay answering all parts of the question prompt that is typed, double-spaced, size 12 font paper: What is unable to be doubted, according to Descartes, and why does Descartes find this sufficient to serve as his First Philosophy? 2. Formal Paper: write a 3 page minimum essay answering all parts of the question prompt that is typed, double-spaced, size 12 font paper. Describe how Locke would answer the question, "If a tree falls in the forest with no one around to hear it, does it make a sound?" Students will describe differences between Primary and Secondary Qualities as explained by Locke.

Other (Term projects, research papers, portfolios, etc.)

Required Materials

- Discourse on Method and Meditations on First Philosophy
 - Author: Rene Descartes, Translated by Donald A. Cress
 - Publisher: Hackett
 - Publication Date: 2011
 - Text Edition: 4th
 - Classic Textbook?:
 - OER Link:
 - OER:
- An Essay Concerning Human Understanding
 - Author: John Locke
 - Publisher: Hackett
 - Publication Date: 1993
 - Text Edition:
 - Classic Textbook?:
 - OER Link:
 - OER:
- An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding
 - Author: Hume, David
 - Publisher: Hackett
 - Publication Date: 1993
 - Text Edition: 2nd
 - Classic Textbook?:
 - OER Link:
 - OER:
- Modern Philosophy: An Anthology of Primary Sources
 - Author: Roger Ariew and Eric Watkins, Editors
 - Publisher: Hackett
 - Publication Date: 2009
 - Text Edition: 2nd
 - Classic Textbook?:
 - OER Link:
 - OER:
- Descartes: Meditations on First Philosophy: With Selections from the Objections and Replies
 - Author: Rene Descartes
 - Publisher: Cambridge University Press
 - Publication Date: 2017
 - Text Edition: 2nd
 - Classic Textbook?:
 - OER Link:
 - OER:
- Philosophic Classics, Volume III: Modern Philosophy
 - Author: Forest E. Baird
 - Publisher: Routledge
 - Publication Date: 2010
 - Text Edition: 6th
 - Classic Textbook?:

- OER Link:
- OER:

Other materials and-or supplies required of students that contribute to the cost of the course.