

# Early modern philosophy

Dr. Jacob Archambault

## Course description

This course discusses the development of philosophy in the early modern period, i.e. philosophy as it was practiced roughly from the time of the Thirty Years' War to the revolutions in America and France.

Early modernity is marked by two fundamental occurrences: the scientific revolution and the development of the modern state. With the former, one finds Galileo's invention of the telescope, Kepler's laws of planetary motion, Descartes' development of analytic geometry, and Leibniz and Newton's discovery of calculus. Accompanying the latter, one finds the rise of absolute monarchies, constitutional monarchies, and constitutional republics; the widespread adoption of fractional reserve banking and paper money; mercantilism and colonial expansion, the slave trade, and the prolonged suppression or extermination of indigenous peoples and local cultures. Philosophy played an important role in both of these developments. Besides contributing directly to scientific developments, Descartes, Leibniz, and others sought to provide a philosophical foundation for the development of modern science, while political theorists from Hobbes and Locke to Rousseau and Adam Smith developed the theoretical basis for newly emerging modes of political economy. By the term's end, the student shall have attained familiarity with some of the most important ideas of the period, and have deepened his/her understanding of the place of philosophy within the development of modernity.

## Required texts

Hume, David. *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding*. Ed. Eric Steinberg. Hackett, 1993.

Rousseau, Jean Jacques. *Basic Political Writings* (2<sup>nd</sup> edition). Ed. and Trans. Donald A. Cress. Introduction and annotation by David Wooton. Hackett, 2012.

Kant, Immanuel. *Critique of Judgment*. Trans. Werner S. Pluhar. Hackett, 1987.

All additional texts will be provided.

## Assignments and Grading

1. **Homework** (33%)—Assigned daily. Due on the day of the reading it covers, at the beginning of class.
2. **Midterm** (33%) – Administered in class.
3. **Final journal article** (33%)—Student shall write an original work in the style of a contemporary journal article on a question of philosophical importance. The paper must engage with at least one source from the *Philosopher's Index* (or alternative sources explicitly approved by the instructor), as well as one of the readings assigned in class. The paper will go through a blind review process by two other students in the class, prior to final submission.

## Miscellaneous Policies

1. **Absences**—attendance will be taken at the beginning of each class. Each absence after the fifth will result in a loss of 1/3 of a letter grade from one's final grade.
2. **Tardiness**—Students are expected be present *at the beginning of class*. Being tardy will count for ½ of an absence.
3. **Participation**—Everyone in class is encouraged to participate. Doing so will help you to understand the texts better and will make for a more fruitful and enjoyable classroom experience for everybody, yourself included. Students are especially encouraged to prepare questions for clarification and discussion as they come up, e.g. while taking notes on the reading assignment for the next class.
4. **Electronics**—In order to foster an environment of active participation free from distraction, electronic devices (e.g. phones, computers) may not be used within the classroom. A student found violating this rule will be marked absent from class for that day.
5. **Plagiarism** will not be tolerated. 1<sup>st</sup> offense = failed paper. 2<sup>nd</sup> offense = fail course.

6. **Late assignments**—Papers will be downgraded by 1/3 of a letter for each day late. Assignments will not be accepted more than a week late.

## Notice from the Office of Disability Services.

Under the Americans with Disabilities Act and Section 504 of the Vocational Rehabilitation Act of 1973, all students, with or without disabilities, are entitled to equal access to the programs and activities of Fordham University. If you believe that you have a disabling condition that may interfere with your ability to participate in the activities, coursework, or assessment of the object of this course, you may be entitled to accommodations. Please schedule an appointment to speak with someone at the Office of Disability Services (Rose Hill - O'Hare Hall, Lower Level, x0655 or at Lincoln Center - Room 207, x6282).

## Syllabus

Week	Tues	Wed	Fri
Jan 12-18	Semester Overview	David Hume, <i>An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding</i> I	Hume, <i>Enquiry</i> II
Jan 19-25	Hume, <i>Enquiry</i> III	Hume, <i>Enquiry</i> IV.1	Hume, <i>Enquiry</i> IV.2
Jan 26-Feb 1	Hume, <i>Enquiry</i> V.1	Hume, <i>Enquiry</i> V.2	Hume, <i>Enquiry</i> VI
Feb 2-8	Hume, <i>Enquiry</i> VII.1	Hume, <i>Enquiry</i> VII.2	Hume, <i>Enquiry</i> VIII.1
Feb 9-15	Hume, <i>Enquiry</i> VIII.2	Hume, <i>Enquiry</i> IX	Hume, <i>Enquiry</i> X.1
Feb 16-22	No Class	Hume, <i>Enquiry</i> X.2	Hume, <i>Enquiry</i> XI
Feb 23-Mar 1	Hume, <i>Enquiry</i> XII.1	Hume, <i>Enquiry</i> XII.2	Hume, <i>Enquiry</i> XII.3
Mar 2-8	Rousseau, <i>Discourse on Inequality</i> I	Rousseau, <i>Discourse on Inequality</i> I (cont.)	Rousseau, <i>Discourse on Inequality</i> II
Mar 9-15	Rousseau, <i>Discourse on Inequality</i> II (cont.)	Rousseau, <i>Discourse on Political Economy</i>	<b>Midterm</b>
Mar 16-22	No Class	No Class	No Class
Mar 23-29	Burke, <i>A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful</i> , I	Burke, <i>On the Sublime and Beautiful</i> , III	Burke, <i>On the Sublime and Beautiful</i> IV
Mar 30-Apr 5	Kant, <i>Critique of Judgment</i> , Introduction	Kant, <i>Critique of Judgment</i> I, d. 1, Bk. 1, 1-5	Kant, <i>Critique of Judgment</i> I, d. 1, Bk. 1, 6-9
Apr 6-12	Kant, <i>Critique of Judgment</i> I, d. 1, Bk. 1, 10-17	Kant, <i>Critique of Judgment</i> I, d. 1, Bk. 1, 18-22	Kant, <i>Critique of Judgment</i> I, d. 1, Bk. 2, 23-24
Apr 13-19	Kant, <i>Critique of Judgment</i> I, d. 1, Bk. 2, 25-27	Kant, <i>Critique of Judgment</i> I, d. 1, Bk. 1, 28-29	No Class
Apr 20-26	Kant, <i>Critique of Judgment</i> I, d. 1, Bk. 1, 30-54	Kant, <i>Critique of Judgment</i> I, d. 2, 55-60	Kant, <i>Critique of Judgment</i> II, d. 1, 61-68
Apr 27-May 3	Kant, <i>Critique of Judgment</i> II, d. 2, 69-78	Kant, <i>Critique of Judgment</i> II, appendix, 79-91	Semester Wrap-up