

## 0101P212

# Early Modern Philosophy

**Instructor:** TBA

**Time:** October 16, 2023 - November 17, 2023

**Office Hours:** 2 hours (according to the teaching schedule)

**Contact Hours:** 60 (50 minutes each)

**Credits:** 4

**E-mail:** TBA

### Course Description

The transition from the Medieval to the Modern era in philosophy began, roughly, in the late 16th and early 17th centuries and ended, again roughly, in the late 18th century. In this course we will cover the works of various great thinkers from this time period including Descartes, David Hume, Thomas Hobbes, John Locke, and others. Finally, we will discuss various philosophical topics including the nature of knowledge, identity, the mind, ethics, and politics.

### Required Textbook(s)

All readings can be found online, links and/or copies of the assigned text will be provided.

## **Course Set up and Expectations.**

This course is broken up into units.

- ❖ The units are set up by theme. Each unit is designed to introduce you to the writings and ideas of key philosophers (as well as lesser known philosophers) from the early modern period as they correlate with the given theme.

Note on assigned **Reading Homework**: Prior to each of the units, you will complete the assigned readings, as they will be essential to helping you navigate and understand the material within the lectures.

Note on **Weekly Discussions**: At the end of each week, you will engage in discussion with your fellow classmates about the core material as well as any discussion prompts or thought experiments. **Participation** in these discussions is mandatory and will count as your overall participation grade. **For full participation points** you must respond at least once during the zoom session either via the chat function or by opening your camera/mic to speak.

There will be **four weekly written reflection assignments** throughout the course, due at the end of each week.

### **A quick note on Philosophical readings**

Philosophical readings can be complex in nature and the language sometimes difficult. They make take up a substantial amount of your homework time. Thus, I encourage you to start reading early, read more than once, and don't be afraid to look up a summary of the key ideas from the assigned reading on the internet. I will break the key ideas from the readings down for you within my lectures as well, however students that come into the lecture with a basic understanding of the ideas do better and the lecture content makes more sense, as they know exactly what I'm referencing.

### **The importance of participation and engagement**

Philosophy is something you Do—Thus, the dialogue and discussion portion of the course is essential and should prove to be lively.

### **Course Schedule**

Please note that the schedule is meant to give an overview of the major concepts in this course. Changes may occur in this calendar as needed to aid in the student's development.

#### **Week 1: Course Introduction and Epistemology (12 Lectures)**

- Reading 1: Rene 'Descartes "Meditations I and II" (1641)
- Reading 2: John Locke "An Essay Concerning Human Understanding" (Selected Excerpts)(1689)
- Main topics covered within unit 1: Overview of Early Modern Philosophy, An introduction to philosophical thinking (philosophy bootcamp), Epistemological theory of Descartes, Epistemological theory of Locke, Epistemological theory of Kant, and a review.

**The Discussion for this unit will be held no later than Sunday (Time TBD)**

**Weekly reflection 1 due Sunday 11:59am**

#### **Week 2: Personhood and Personal Identity (Approx.10 Lectures)**

- Reading 1: David Hume "A Treatise of Human Nature "Book I, Part IV, Section VI (1739-1740)

- Reading 2: John Locke “An Essay Concerning Human Understanding” (Selected Excerpts) (1748)
- Main topics covered within Unit 2: An overview of philosophical personhood and personal identity, John Locke’s theory of personal identity, A contemporary comparative view of Locke’s theory of personal identity by Marya Schecthman, David Hume’s theory of personal identity, Critical thinking activities related to personhood and personal identity, an overview of recognition politics in philosophy, and a review.

**The Discussion for this unit will be held no later than Sunday (Time TBD)**

**Weekly reflection 2 due Sunday 11:59am**

**Week 3: Ethics (Approx.12 – 14 lectures) and Unit 4 – Free Will (Approx.4-6 lectures)**

- Reading 1: Immanuel Kant “Critique of Pure Reason” (Selected Excerpts or an overview) (1781)
- Reading 2: Jeremy Bentham “An Introduction to the Principles of Morals and Legislation” (1789)
- Topics to be covered this week: Perspectives on philosophical ethics and free will from the early modern period including: Immanuel Kant, Jeremy Bentham, and John Stuart Mill. This week will also include opportunities to apply theory via ethical thought experiments, case studies, and critical thinking on the topic of free will.

**The weekly discussion will be held no later than Sunday (Time TBD)**

**Weekly reflection 3 due Sunday 11:59am**

**Week 4: Socio-Political Philosophy (Approx.10-12 Lectures)**

- Reading 1: Thomas Hobbes “Leviathan” (Selected Excerpts) (1651)
- Reading 2: John Locke “An Essay Concerning Human Understanding ” (Selected Excerpts)(1689)
- Topics to be covered this week: Socio-political philosophical theories from the Early Modern period including: Hobbes, Locke, and Rousseau . This unit will also do a comparative analysis of Rawls contemporary socio-political theory to it’s predecessors and include critical thinking activities as an opportunity to apply theory to practice.

**The weekly discussion will be held no later than Sunday (Time TBD)**

**Weekly reflection 4 due Sunday 11:59am**

**Week 5: Forgotten voices from this period (Approx.8-12 Lectures)**

- In this unit we will cover the readings and ideas of various thinkers that are lesser known from the early modern period, including: Beccaria, Mary Astell, Zera Yacob, George Berkely, and Voltaire

**The weekly discussion will be held no later than Wednesday (Time TBD)**

**Final exam to taken no later than Thursday 11:59am**

**Supplementary readings for the course that may be included in discussion or encouraged for future reading.**

- Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz “Discourse on Metaphysics and The Monadology” (Selected excerpts)(1686)
- Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz “Clark Correspondence” (1715-1716)
- George Berkeley “Three Dialogues between Hylas and Philonous” (1713)

## Grading Policy

Weekly Discussions Participation (4 points for each weekly discussion – 5 total. You must join and contribute to the discussion for points) (20 points)	20%
4 weekly reflections – theory in practice (15 points each)	60%
Final examination (20 points)	20%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>

## Grading Scale

The instructor will use the grading system as applied by JNU:

<b>Definition</b>	<b>Letter Grade</b>	<b>Score</b>
Excellent	A	90~100
Good	B	80~89
Satisfactory	C	70~79
Poor	D	60~69
Failed	E	Below 60

## Academic Integrity

As members of the Jinan University academic community, students are expected to be honest in all of their academic coursework and activities. Academic dishonesty, includes (but is not limited to) cheating on assignments or examinations; plagiarizing, i.e., misrepresenting as one's own work any work done by another; submitting the

same paper, or a substantially similar paper, to meet the requirements of more than one course without the approval and consent of the instructors concerned; or sabotaging other students' work within these general definitions. Instructors, however, determine what constitutes academic misconduct in the courses they teach. Students found guilty of academic misconduct in any portion of the academic work face penalties that range from the lowering of their course grade to awarding a grade of E for the entire course.