

Philosophy 201: Modern Philosophy

Colorado College

Ben Bayer

Spring 2009, Blocks 6 and 7

Course description

The works of the most important figures in the history of Western philosophy can be seen at reflecting—and influencing—some of the most important cultural trends. “Modern Philosophy” studies the history of philosophy during a crucial period of the history of Western Civilization, lasting roughly from the early seventh century into the nineteenth century, in which a uniquely “modern” approach to knowledge emerges, which emphasizes the importance of individual rational thinking over tradition and faith.

As background, we will first look at the medieval figures of **St. Augustine** and **St. Aquinas**, who served as counterparts and predecessors to key the modern philosophers **Rene Descartes** and **John Locke**, to understand the contrast between the modern and medieval approaches even when their subject matter is continuous. We will also take special care to examine the implications of this approach to knowing in both ethical and political theory (dwelling on the ethics of **Spinoza** and the politics of Locke), where surely the cultural impact of modern philosophy was the clearest (for example, the American revolution).

In the later part of the course, we’ll study how the central hallmarks of this “Age of Reason” came under attack by leading figures such as **David Hume** and **Immanuel Kant**. We’ll conclude by examining the four most important figures who reacted to Kant—including **Schopenhauer**, **Nietzsche**, **Hegel** and **Marx**—who unpacked and gave voice to the most important cultural consequences of the Kantian revolution for morality, religion, and politics.

Course goals

By the end of the course, I hope that you will

1. Understand how philosophical approaches to *knowledge* influence philosophical approaches to *ethics* and *politics*.
2. Understand some of the major lines of historical influence between major philosophers, by understanding how subsequent philosophers incorporated and modified the approaches of their predecessors.
3. Appreciate how, amidst the diversity of philosophical positions, two to three distinct approaches to philosophy can be discerned.

Texts

Books

- Rene Descartes, *Selected Philosophical Writings*, Cottingham, Stoothoff, and Murdoch, translators. Cambridge, 1988.
- Baruch Spinoza, *Ethics, Treatises on the Emendation of the Intellect, and Selected Letters*, Samuel Shirley translation. Hackett, 1992.
- John Locke, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*. Hackett, 1996
- John Locke, *A Letter Concerning Toleration*. Hackett, 1983.
- John Locke, *Second Treatise on Civil Government*. Hackett, 1980
- David Hume, *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding*. Hackett, 1993.
- David Hume, *An Enquiry Concerning the Principles of Morals*. Hackett, 1983.
- OPTIONAL: W.T. Jones, *The History of Western Philosophy, Volume III: Hobbes to Hume* (via Amazon.com)

Other

- Course pack containing readings from St. Augustine and John Hermann Randall (from CC Bookstore).
- Handouts from St. Augustine, St. Thomas Aquinas, Dante, Leonardo, Columbus, Bacon, Galileo, Descartes, Spinoza, Locke, Hume (in class)
- PROWL reading selection from W.T. Jones.

BLOCK SEVEN Lecture and reading schedule

Introduction and background

Monday, March 23, 2009

Introduction

- St. Augustine, selection from *The Confessions* (handout, 7 pp.)
- Rene Descartes, “Discourse on the Method of rightly conducting one’s reason and seeking the truth in the sciences” (handout, 5pp)

Tuesday, March 24, 2009

Medieval background

- John Hermann Randall, “The Three Medieval Philosophical Traditions,” from *The Career of Philosophy*, pp. 21-43.
- *Optional*: John Hermann Randall, “Modern Philosophy and Modern Culture,” pp. 13-22
- St. Augustine, selections from *The Confessions* and *The City of God* (handout, 7 pp.)
- St. Augustine, selections from *The Teacher* (course pack, 9 pp.)
- St. Thomas Aquinas, selections from *De Veritate*, *Summa Contra Gentiles*, *Summa Theologica* (handout, 12 pp.).
[50 pp. or 60 pp.]

Wednesday, March 25, 2009

Early modern cultural developments (Renaissance, Reformation, Scientific Revolution)

- W.T. Jones, “Renaissance,” “Reformation,” “Scientific Revolution” (PROWL, 38 pp.)
- Dante Alighieri, “De Monarchia” (handout, 5 pp.)
- Leonardo Da Vinci, “Notebooks” (handout, 1 pg.)
- Christopher Columbus, “Letter to Ferdinand and Isabella” (handout, 3 pp.)
- Francis Bacon, from “Novum Organum” (handout, 5 pp.)
- Galileo Galilei, from “Dialogues Concerning Two New Sciences” (handout , 4 pp.)
[56 pp.]

Early modern rationalism

Thursday, March 26, 2009

Descartes

- “Discourse on the Method of rightly conducting one’s reason and seeking the truth in the sciences,” pp. 25-31,35-40
- “Rules for the Direction of Our Native Intelligence,” pp. 1-7
- “Meditations on First Philosophy,” pp. 73-86
- “Objections and Replies,” pp. 123-131.

[43 pp.]

➤ **FIRST ONE-PAGE PAPER DUE (Summarize “Meditations” 73-86)**

Friday, March 27, 2009

Descartes (continued)

- “Meditations on First Philosophy,” pp. 86-122.
- “Objections and Replies,” pp. 139-143 (“Clear and distinct perception and the ‘Cartesian Circle’”)
- *Optional review*: “Principles of Philosophy,” pp. 160-175 (until number 45).

[58 pp.]

Monday, March 30., 2009

Descartes (continued)

- “Passions of the Soul,” pp. 218-238.
- “Passions of the Soul,” further selections (handout, 11 pp.)

[32 pp.]

Tuesday, March 31, 2009

Spinoza

- *Optional*: *Ethics*, pp. 21-26 (read this introductory glossary to get clear on some of Spinoza’s terminology)
- *Ethics*, pp. 31-90

[58 pp, or 64pp]

➤ **SECOND ONE-PAGE PAPER DUE (Summarize *Ethics* pp. 31-62)**

Wednesday, April 1, 2009

Spinoza (continued)

- *Ethics*, pp. 102-122 (to §31), 132-133 (§50-51), 137-144 (§56-Explication #13), 150-1 (“General definition of emotions”),
- 152-155, 158-160 (§6-9), 165-181 (§19-46), 195-200 (§73-Appendix)

[63 pp.]

Thursday, April 2, 2009

Spinoza (continued)

- *Ethics*, pp. 201-209 (to §10), 213-223 (§21-42).
- *Theologico-Political Treatise*, selections (handout, 21 pp.) [41 pp.]

Friday, April 3, 2009

NO CLASS

➤ **FIRST PAPER DUE—7PM**

Early modern empiricism

Monday, April 6, 2009

Locke

- *Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, pp. 1-9 (to §5), 11-12 (§15), 23-26 (to §8), 30-32 (§22-25); 33-35 (§1-5), 39 (§24-25), 40-41 (§1-3), 63-68
- *Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, further selections (handout, pp 1-3) [33 pp.]

➤ **THIRD ONE-PAGE PAPER DUE (Summarize entire *Essay* reading)**

Tuesday, April 7, 2009

Locke (continued)

- *Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, pp. 180-187 (to §20), 224-230 (to §4), 233-235 (§14, §1-4), 247 (§26, §28), 250-252 (§1-7), 274, 284-289 (to §8), 300-312 (to §14) [39 pp.]

Wednesday, April 8, 2009

Locke (continued)

- *Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, selections on morality: pp. 15-23 (to §27), 90-92, 104-105 (§41-44), 151-53 (§4-15), 218-219 (§15-17), 243-244 (§18)
- *Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, selections on religion: pp. 275-277 (to § 6), 322-328 (from §23)
- *Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, further selections (handout, pg. 4)
- *Letter Concerning Toleration*, pp. 23-28 (until “Let us now consider what a Church is”), 30-36 (from “These things being determined” to end of page 36), 38 (paragraph beginning “But after all, the *principal Consideration...*”), 39-40 (“But perhaps it may be concluded” up until “Again: Things in their own nature”).

[34 pp.]

Thursday, April 9, 2009

Locke (continued)

- *Second Treatise of Government*, pp. 5-68, 101-113 (to §223) [77 pp.]

Friday, April 10, 2009

Hume

- *Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding*, 1-37
- *Treatise on Human Nature*, Book I, §VII (handout)
- *Enquiry Concerning Principles of Morals*, pp. 82-85 (part I only) [45 pp.]

➤ **FOURTH ONE-PAGE PAPER DUE (Summarize *Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding*, pp. 15-25)**

Monday, April 13, 2009

Hume (continued)

- *Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding*, 72-102
- *Enquiry Concerning Principles of Morals*, pp. 13-20 [39 pp.]

Tuesday, April 14, 2009

Hume (continued)

- *Enquiry Concerning Principles of Morals*, pp. 38-82
 - OPTIONAL: *Enquiry*, pp. 21-37.
- [45 pp, or 62 pp.]

Wednesday, April 15, 2009

➤ **BLOCK EXAM**

BLOCK EIGHT lecture and reading schedule

Texts

Books

- Immanuel Kant, *Prolegomena to Any Future Metaphysics*, Hackett, 2nd edition, 2002.
- Immanuel Kant, *Grounding for the Metaphysics of Morals*, Hackett, 3rd edition, 1993.
- Georg Hegel, *Hegel: The Essential Writings*, Harper Perennial, 1977.
- Arthur Schopenhauer, *The World as Will & Idea*, Everyman Paperbacks; Abridged edition, 1995.
- Friedrich Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*, Vintage, 1989.
- Karl Marx, *Selected Writings*, Hackett, 1994.
- Soren Kierkegaard, *Fear and Trembling*, Wilder Publications, 2008.

Other

- Handouts from Hegel
- PROWL reading selection from W.T. Jones.

Monday, April 20, 2009

Kant

- W.T. Jones reading, PROWL, "The Age of Reason," pp. 1-13.
- *Prolegomena to any Future Metaphysics*, 1-37 (Preface, Preamble and First Part (§1-13))

Tuesday, April 21, 2009

Kant (continued)

- *Prolegomena to any Future Metaphysics*, pp. 38-58 (§14-33), 79-90 (§50-56).

Wednesday, April 22, 2009

Kant (continued)

- *Grounding for the Metaphysics of Morals*, pp. 1-33 (up to line 425)

➤ **FIFTH ONE-PAGE PAPER DUE (Summarize pp. 19-33)**

Thursday, April 23, 2009

Kant (continued)

- *Grounding for the Metaphysics of Morals*, pp. 33-62

Friday, April 24, 2009

Hegel

- W.T. Jones reading, PROWL, "Reactions against Kantianism": "Romanticism," pp. 101-107.
- *Phenomenology of Spirit*, pp. 54-63, then 44-53

Monday, April 27, 2009

Hegel

- "Phenomenology of Spirit," pp. 64-85

➤ **SIXTH ONE-PAGE PAPER DUE (Summarize pp. 70-79)**

Tuesday, April 28, 2009

Hegel

- "Philosophy of Right," pp. 265-288 (up until §540); 290 (§323)-293 (up until "Zusatz"); 298 (§323)-302 (up until §239)

Wednesday, April 29, 2009

Marx

- “On the Jewish Question,” pp. 14-21 (From “We thus do not say...” up until section beginning “Bruno Bauer, ‘The Capacity...’”)
- “Toward a Critique of Hegel’s Philosophy of Right: Introduction,” pp. 28-29 (up until “if one were to proceed”), 32-25 (From “As the ancient countries....” up until “Considering German governments”)
- “Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts,” pp. 58-79

Thursday, April 30, 2009

Marx

- “Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts,” pp. 82-84 (From “Since Hegel’s *Encyclopedia*....” up until “We shall now indicate in detail...”); 89-95 (From “All the illusions of speculation...” up until “But nature too...”)
- “The German Ideology,” pp. 105-132 (From “A. Ideology in General...” up until “[Division of Labor]”)
- “The Communist Manifesto,” pp. 158-176 (parts I and II)

Friday, May 1, 2009

NO CLASS

➤ **SECOND PAPER DUE, SATURDAY, 3pm**

Monday, May 4, 2009

Schopenhauer

- *The World as Will and Idea*, pp. 3-51 (up until §24), 72-75 (From “I wish that by a clear exposition” up until “Although it is to objectify itself....”)

Tuesday, May 5, 2009

Schopenhauer

- *The World as Will and Idea*, pp. 175-224 (up until “If a person is always inclined”); 230-242 (up until “A closer and more complete knowledge”)

➤ **SEVENTH ONE-PAGE PAPER DUE (Summarize pp. 206-224)**

Wednesday, May 6, 2009

Nietzsche

- *Beyond Good and Evil*, pp. 1-56

Thursday, May 7, 2009

Nietzsche

- *Beyond Good and Evil*, pp. 59-76, 97-140

Friday, May 8, 2009

Nietzsche

- *Beyond Good and Evil*, pp. 145-170, 201-237

➤ **EIGHTH ONE-PAGE PAPER DUE (Summarize 201-212)**

Monday, May 11, 2009

Kierkegaard

- *Fear and Trembling*, pp. 5-48

Tuesday, May 12, 2009

STUDY DAY

Wednesday, May 13, 2009

➤ **BLOCK EXAM**