

PHIL 3210: Women in the History of Philosophy



(Margaret Cavendish)

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Office Hours: Thursdays 1:30-3:00 or by appointment

This course will examine the works of several early modern women philosophers: including Princess Elizabeth of Bohemia, Margaret Cavendish, Mary Astell, Damarais Cudworth Masham, Anne Conway, Catharine Trotter Cockburn and Lady Mary Shepherd. Each of these women made an original contribution to the dominating philosophical debates of their time. The philosophical style of these women is best described as polemical; that is, they present their own views through debate. Each woman addresses and critiques particular issues in the works of some of the dominating male figures in 17th and 18th century philosophy. For this reason, we will look at the views to which these thinkers are responding. In this context we will consider the relevant views of the major thinkers of the day, including Descartes, Hobbes, More, Leibniz, Locke, and Hume. We will be examining these thinkers in conversation over the prominent issues of the day.

The aim of this course is to examine the philosophical contributions made by women at a time when women were universally discouraged from intellectual study. The women we will be considering are noteworthy not only for the fact that they wrote philosophy under adverse conditions, but also for the fact that their writings challenged the views of some of the most important thinkers of their time. We will begin with a consideration of women's lives in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries—this will provide important context for appreciating not only the small numbers of women writing in this period but also the philosophical accomplishments of those who did write. We will follow by examining, in turn, the relevant arguments of major seventeenth and eighteenth century thinkers and the critical responses of the women philosophers under consideration. Through this course I hope to provide the students, generally, with an appreciation for the dominating debates of the early modern period and, in particular, for the contributions women made to those debates.

Texts:

*Women Philosophers of the Early Modern Period, edited by Margaret Atherton (Hackett, 1994)

*Selected readings from <http://www.earlymoderntexts.com/> (Readings to be announced)

Requirements (see course schedule for relevant dates)

(Mid-term and Final exam are essay format)

Critical Summary (3 pgs)	15%
Term paper (5 pages)	25%
Mid-term	25%
Final Exam	35%

Note: This course will be using D2L. Please be sure to check the site throughout the term for important information regarding paper-writing guidelines and due dates, exam formats, and links to course materials.

E-mail Communication

As per University regulations, all students are required to check their <uoguelph.ca> e-mail account regularly: e-mail is the official route of communication between the university and its students.

When You Cannot Meet a Course Requirement

When you find yourself unable to meet an in-course requirement because of illness or compassionate reasons, please advise the course instructor (or designated person, such as a teaching assistant) in writing, with your name, id#, and e-mail contact. See the Undergraduate Calendar for information on regulations and procedures for Academic Consideration:

<http://www.uoguelph.ca/registrar/calendars/undergraduate/current/c08/c08-ac.shtml>

Drop Date

The last date to drop one-semester Fall 2013 courses, without academic penalty, is **Thursday October 31**.

For regulations and procedures for Dropping Courses, see the Undergraduate Calendar:

<http://www.uoguelph.ca/registrar/calendars/undergraduate/current/c08/c08-drop.shtml>

Copies of out-of-class assignments

Keep paper and/or other reliable back-up copies of all out-of-class assignments: you may be asked to resubmit work at any time.

Student Rights and Responsibilities

Each student at the University of Guelph has rights which carry commensurate responsibilities that involve, broadly, being a civil and respectful member of the University community. The Rights and Responsibilities are detailed in the Undergraduate Calendar:

<http://www.uoguelph.ca/registrar/calendars/undergraduate/current/c14/c14-strightsrespon.shtml>

Academic Misconduct

The University of Guelph is committed to upholding the highest standards of academic integrity and enjoins all members of the University community – faculty, staff, and students – to be aware of what constitutes academic misconduct and to do as much as possible to prevent academic offences from occurring. The Academic Misconduct Policy is detailed in the Undergraduate Calendar:

<http://www.uoguelph.ca/registrar/calendars/undergraduate/current/c08/c08-amisconduct.shtml>

Recording of Materials

Presentations which are made in relation to course work—including lectures—cannot be recorded in any electronic media without the permission of the presenter, whether the instructor, a classmate or guest lecturer.

Resources

The Undergraduate Calendar is the source of information about the University of Guelph's procedures, policies and regulations which apply to undergraduate programs. It can be found at:

<http://www.uoguelph.ca/registrar/calendars/undergraduate/current/>

If you find yourself in difficulty, contact the undergraduate advisor in your program, or the BA Counselling Office: <http://www.uoguelph.ca/baco/contact.shtml>