



PHIL*6340 Modern Philosophy

Fall 2020

Section(s): C01

Department of Philosophy

Credit Weight: 0.50

Version 1.00 - September 14, 2020

1 Course Details

1.1 Calendar Description

An examination of major texts, from Descartes to Mill.

1.2 Course Description

The early modern period saw the rise of experimental science, an epistemological and methodological system that insisted upon epistemic rigour, objectivity, and empirical accountability. While the end of this new scientific approach was obviously better science, there is a theme that runs through the literature of this period that is far more ethical and psychological in nature. For many of the central thinkers of the seventeenth century, the methods of the new science offered not only a new basis for knowledge, but a means of overcoming the imperfections of the rational mind. What we find in the writings of such foundational thinkers as Bacon, Boyle, and Locke is a vision of how an ordered regimen of reasoning provides a key to mental health and a route to a virtuous life. This was, quite simply, a view of philosophy as a way of living.

1.3 Timetable

We will try to meet every two weeks for 1.5 hours via Teams. Meeting times and dates: TBA

1.4 Final Exam

There is no final exam for this course

2 Instructional Support

3 Learning Resources

3.1 Required Resources

Sorana Corneanu (Textbook)

Regimens of the Mind: Boyle, Locke, and the Early Modern Cultura Animi Tradition. University of Chicago Press, 2011.

Online Primary-source Texts (Readings)

We will also be looking at the original texts of various early modern thinkers (e.g. Bacon, Boyle, Locke, and others). These texts will all be available online. I will make sure to let students know where to find these resources.

4 Learning Outcomes

4.1 Course Learning Outcomes

By the end of this course, you should be able to:

1. *Understand and appreciate* the ideas and contributions of early modern thinkers to the development of modern science and its foundational aims.
 2. *Orally Articulate and Defend* a position on a historical text, either in class discussion or in written work, that is clear, accurate and well-reasoned.
 3. *Demonstrate Independence* in articulating an original approach to the interpretation of historical philosophical texts.
 4. *Write* clearly and cogently on complex problems in the history of philosophy.
 5. *Read* primary historical texts extensively and systematically.
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5 Teaching and Learning Activities

6 Assessments

6.1 Assessment Details

Weekly Write-ups (15%)

Date: Every Friday beginning September 25th

1 -2 pages. Each write-up is worth 1.5%. You will submit your write-up via Dropbox, by 5:00 p.m. There will be 10 write-ups due over the course of the semester. The write-up is an opportunity for you to raise interpretive points and critical observations of the text. What point or points struck you as particularly interesting (i.e. that raises some interesting ideas that you think are relevant or innovative in some way), troubling (i.e. implying something worth worrying about), or problematic (perhaps inconsistent with other aspects of the text.). It is up to you what text or texts you talk about.

Weekly write-ups will be graded on the basis of the following three criteria: 1. How well you've understood the text; 2. The clarity of your writing; 3. The quality of your critical engagement with the text.

Handout (15%)

Date: TBD

Each week, select students will be responsible for preparing a point-form handout of no more than 2-3 pages, which aims to specify what you take to be key, interesting points in one or more of the texts for that week. I will look for volunteers for each week once I've distributed the reading schedule.

Your handout is in lieu of a presentation, and should take a critical approach to some aspect of the text or texts. What you choose to discuss is entirely up to you, but you should make clear what you find interesting, noteworthy, about the text or texts, whether you agree or disagree with the author.

Handouts will **be due on the Tuesday of the week you are responsible for (submitted via Dropbox by 5:00 p.m.)** and will be made available to the class. The handouts will form the basis for the discussion in that week's **forum** (see below).

Handouts will be graded on the basis of three criteria: 1. Understanding of the text and attention to interpretive points; 2. Clarity and organization of the presentation; 3. Critical engagement with the text

Discussion Forum (10%)

Date: Weekly beginning Week of September 21st

You will all be expected to participate to some significant extent in the Courselink discussion forums. I will let you know when a new forum has been created and you will be expected to log in and make comments, ask questions, raise counterpoints (respectfully of course) to the issues raised in the week's handout(s).

This grade should be an easy 10% as long as you make visible effort to participate in these weekly forums. The grading structure for this is quite simple. There will be 10 discussion forums (starting the week of Sept. 21st). You get 1% for each week you log in and participate. This should be fun more than onerous and it will give you a chance to receive feedback from the class on your ideas and to offer constructive feedback to others.

Research Paper (s): Two options (60%)

Date: Please see description

You have two options for the research paper component:

- 2 short papers (5 pgs each): 30% each
- 1 long paper (10 pgs): 60%

2-paper option:

- **1st paper due November 2nd**
worth 30% of grade
- **2nd paper due December 14th**
worth 30% of grade

Considering their length, these papers should be focussed on a very specific topic or argument (and they can be comparative across two thinkers). These will take the form of a critical analysis, examining in detail the argument, or theory, of a thinker, or thinkers, assessing their strengths and weaknesses, and offering your own solutions, ideas, thoughts. You can use your handout, if possible, as a basis for one of these papers.

I will propose some topics for these papers, but you are free to develop them yourselves. In the latter case, please make an appointment or email me with your topic.

1- paper option

- **due December 14th**
worth 60% of grade

The paper will be on a topic of your own choosing (and you can use your handout as the basis for this paper, if appropriate). You must contact me about your paper. I will want to hear what you are working on, how you are approaching the topic, and what secondary literature, if any, you are planning to use.

A grading guideline will be made available for both formats on our course website

7 University Statements

7.1 Email Communication

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

7.2 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. The grounds for Academic Consideration are detailed in the Undergraduate and Graduate Calendars.

Undergraduate Calendar - Academic Consideration and Appeals

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

Graduate Calendar - Grounds for Academic Consideration

<https://www.uoguelph.ca/registrar/calendars/graduate/current/genreg/index.shtml>

Associate Diploma Calendar - Academic Consideration, Appeals and Petitions

<https://www.uoguelph.ca/registrar/calendars/diploma/current/index.shtml>

7.3 Drop Date

Students will have until the last day of classes to drop courses without academic penalty. The deadline to drop two-semester courses will be the last day of classes in the second semester. This applies to all students (undergraduate, graduate and diploma) except for Doctor of Veterinary Medicine and Associate Diploma in Veterinary Technology (conventional and alternative delivery) students. The regulations and procedures for course registration are available in their respective Academic Calendars.

Undergraduate Calendar - Dropping Courses

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

Graduate Calendar - Registration Changes

<https://www.uoguelph.ca/registrar/calendars/graduate/current/genreg/genreg-reg-regchg.shtml>

Associate Diploma Calendar - Dropping Courses

<https://www.uoguelph.ca/registrar/calendars/diploma/current/c08/c08-drop.shtml>

7.4 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.

7.5 Accessibility

The University promotes the full participation of students who experience disabilities in their academic programs. To that end, the provision of academic accommodation is a shared responsibility between the University and the student.

When accommodations are needed, the student is required to first register with Student Accessibility Services (SAS). Documentation to substantiate the existence of a disability is required; however, interim accommodations may be possible while that process is underway.

Accommodations are available for both permanent and temporary disabilities. It should be noted that common illnesses such as a cold or the flu do not constitute a disability.

Use of the SAS Exam Centre requires students to book their exams at least 7 days in advance and not later than the 40th Class Day.

For Guelph students, information can be found on the SAS website
<https://www.uoguelph.ca/sas>

For Ridgetown students, information can be found on the Ridgetown SAS website
<https://www.ridgetownc.com/services/accessibilityservices.cfm>

7.6 Academic Integrity

The University of Guelph is committed to upholding the highest standards of academic integrity, and it is the responsibility of 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. University of Guelph students have the responsibility of abiding by the University's policy on academic misconduct regardless of their location of study; faculty, staff, and students have the responsibility of supporting an environment that encourages academic integrity. Students need to remain aware that instructors have access to and the right to use electronic and other means of detection.

Please note: Whether or not a student intended to commit academic misconduct is not relevant for a finding of guilt. Hurried or careless submission of assignments does not excuse students from responsibility for verifying the academic integrity of their work before submitting it. Students who are in any doubt as to whether an action on their part could be construed as an academic offence should consult with a faculty member or faculty advisor.

Undergraduate Calendar - Academic Misconduct
<https://www.uoguelph.ca/registrar/calendars/undergraduate/current/c08/c08-amisconduct.shtml>

Graduate Calendar - Academic Misconduct
<https://www.uoguelph.ca/registrar/calendars/graduate/current/genreg/index.shtml>

7.7 Recording of Materials

Presentations that are made in relation to course work - including lectures - cannot be recorded or copied without the permission of the presenter, whether the instructor, a student, or guest lecturer. Material recorded with permission is restricted to use for that course unless further permission is granted.

7.8 Resources

The Academic Calendars are the source of information about the University of Guelph's procedures, policies, and regulations that apply to undergraduate, graduate, and diploma programs.

Academic Calendars
<https://www.uoguelph.ca/academics/calendars>

7.9 Disclaimer

Please note that the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic may necessitate a revision of the format of course offerings and academic schedules. Any such changes will be announced via CourseLink and/or class email. All University-wide decisions will be posted on the COVID-19 website (<https://news.uoguelph.ca/2019-novel-coronavirus-information/>) and circulated by email.

7.10 Illness

The University will not normally require verification of illness (doctor's notes) for fall 2020 or winter 2021 semester courses. However, requests for Academic Consideration may still require medical documentation as appropriate.
