

Modern Philosophy

Philosophy 272 K— Spring 2017

Instructor: Felipe G. A. Moreira

Room: Memorial 108

Time: Monday – Wednesday – 6:25 PM — 7:40PM

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Office Hours: Monday and Wednesday after class at Memorial 108, and by appointment

Website: Blackboard (Students must have access to Blackboard. Let me know as soon as possible if you are having problems to do so).

Class Description

What are the requirements for a philosophy to be modern as opposed to pre-modern, or post-modern (if there is such a philosophy)? This class is driven by this question. We will start with a brief study of what has been considered a standard case of pre-modern philosophy; Aquinas's. Then, we will approach the works of four philosophers who have been taken as standard cases of modern philosophers —Descartes, Hume, Kant and Hegel. This will be the core of the class. The class ends with a brief study on what has been considered a standard case of post-modern philosophy; Nietzsche's. Here are some other questions that will be considered in the class. Is there a God? If yes, how can we know that there is a God? Can we know anything whatsoever? If yes, how can we know? What do we know? Is there a soul? If yes, is the soul distinct from the body? How can mathematical knowledge and empirical knowledge be differentiated? Is causality grounded by habit? Are there miracles? Is metaphysics possible? What is transcendental idealism? What is the analytic / synthetic distinction? Can philosophy provide a-historical answers to any of the aforementioned questions? What is phenomenology? What is the absolute? Is God dead?

Class Goals

To provide an overview of the history of modern philosophy in opposing it both to pre-modern and to post-modern philosophy (if there is such a philosophy)

To discuss in some detail the aforementioned philosophers and philosophical questions

To give students philosophical tools so that they start to articulate philosophical works of their own

Mandatory Readings

Aquinas's *Summa Theologica* (*excerpt*; Part I, Question 2, Article 3) (available on blackboard).

Descartes's *Meditations on First Philosophy*, translated by Michael Moriarty. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008 (Available on blackboard, but I advise you to acquire it anyway).

Hume's *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007 (Available on blackboard, but I advise you to acquire it anyway).

Kant's *Prolegomena to Any Future Metaphysics*, translated by Gary Hatfield. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004 (Available on blackboard, but I advise you to acquire it anyway).

Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit*, translated by A.V. Miller. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977 (We'll not read the whole book, but I advise you to acquire it anyway).

Nietzsche's *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* (excerpt; "Prologues of Zarathustra"), and *On the Genealogy of Morality* (excerpt, "First Essay: 'Good' and 'Evil', 'Good,' and 'Bad'") (available on Blackboard).

Recommended Readings

Vaughn's *Living Philosophy: A Historical Introduction to Philosophical Ideas*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015 (selected chapters available on Blackboard).

Melchert's *The Great Conversation: A Historical Introduction to Philosophy*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014 (selected chapters available on Blackboard).

Craig's *The Mind of God and the Works of Man*. Oxford: Oxford University, 1987 (available for download through UM's library).

Moore's *The Evolution of Modern Metaphysics: Making Sense of Things*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012 (available for download through UM's library).

Beiser's *Hegel*. NY: Routledge, 2005 (available on Blackboard).

Schedule

P.S₁: Come to class having read the text for that date.

P.S₂: I reserve the right to make changes to topics and dates of reading assignments.

January 18: Outline of the Class

1. Pre-Modern Philosophy (Brief Overview of Aquinas's Project)

January 23 and 25: Aquinas's *Summa Theologica* (1265-1274) (excerpt; Part I, Question 2, Article 3).

2. Modern Philosophy (Focus)

2.1. Descartes's *Meditations* (1641)

January 30: 1st Meditation

February 1: 2nd Meditation

February 6: 3rd Meditation

February 8: 4th Meditation

February 13: 5th Meditation

February 15: 6th Meditation

2.2. Hume's *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding* (1748)

February 20: Chapters 1-3
February 22: Chapter 4
February 27: Chapters 5-7
March 1: Chapters 8-9
March 6: Chapter 10-12

2.3. Kant's *Prolegomena to Any Future Metaphysics* (1783)

March 8: "Preface" and "Preamble"

March 11-19: *Spring Break*

March 20: "General Question of the Prolegomena," and "General Question"

March 22: "The Main Transcendental Question, First Part"

March 27: "The Main Transcendental Question, Second Part"

March 29: "The Main Transcendental Question, Third Part"

April 3: "Solution to the General Question of the Prolegomena," and "Appendix"

2.4. Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit* (1807) (the beginning)

April 5: "Introduction"

April 10 and 12: "Consciousness"

April 17 and 19: "Self-Consciousness"

3. Post-Modern Philosophy? (Brief Overview of Nietzsche's Project)

April 24 and 26: Nietzsche's *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* (1885) (excerpt; "Zarathustra's Prologue")

Requirements

Class participation: **20%** (I strongly suggest all students to participate in class as much as possible; and I give extra-credit to students who do so. Yet, I will not oblige ('shy') students to talk. I only do **not** give 20% for class participation to students who missed more than 10 classes, or disrespected the rules stated in what follows under class behavior)

In class quizzes and short take home assignments: **20 %** (The quizzes will usually be given in the beginning of the class. So, you should make every effort to arrive on time)

1st Draft's: 0 % Due Date: **February 22th**

1st Paper: **30%**. Due Date: **March 8th**

2nd Draft's: 0 % Due Date: **April 17th**

2nd Paper: **30%**. Due Date: **May 1st**

All drafts and papers should be submitted on blackboard. Drafts must have at least 500 words.

Papers must have least 1500 words. **If you want to earn writing credits for this class, you**

should submit both drafts. If you do not need writing credits, I still recommend you to submit a

draft. I will comment on your drafts and you should revise them in accordance with my comments before submitting your papers.

Grading

There will be no curve, and the following grading scale will apply: F: 0-59% D-: 60-62% D: 63-66% D+: 67-69% C-: 70-72% C: 73-76% C+: 77-79% B-: 80-82% B: 83-86% B+: 87-89% A-: 90-92% A: 93-100% A+: **I may give A+ to the best student in the class; someone who besides achieving an A score, writes the most original paper of the class.**

Late assignments

Make every attempt to complete your work by the due date. If you see that you cannot complete an assignment on time, please notify me **before the deadline** in class or by e-mail with an explanation. The only accepted excuses are: (i) illness for which you have a doctor's note, (ii) a university sponsored activity taking place at the time an assignment is due, or (iii) death or family crisis, with proper documentation provided.

Cheating and Plagiarism

Cheating and plagiarism will not be tolerated. All work must be your own. Quotations from other sources must be acknowledged. Close and extensive paraphrasing should not be used. You may and are encouraged to talk with others and discuss the material with them in preparing to write your own work. Yet, the finished product should be clearly attributable to you and you alone. See the *University of Miami Honor Code* for more information on what constitutes cheating and plagiarism — and how it might be dealt with suspension from the University. Moreover, **note that Blackboard's safe assignment makes it very easy for teachers to identify plagiarism.**

Attendance

I will allow you **five** unexcused absences. **After that, you will lose 1% of your final grade per absence. If you have more than 50% absences, you will fail the course.** The only accepted excuses for missing a class are the following: (i) illness for which you have a doctor's note, (ii) a university sponsored activity taking place at the time an assignment is due, (iii) death or family crisis, with proper documentation provided; or (iv) religious holiday. The policy of the university regarding religious holidays is that students must inform the instructor at the beginning of the semester of any classes they will have to miss owing to a religious holiday. Otherwise, such absences will count as unexcused. Moreover, **it is your responsibility to sign the attendance sheet every class.**

Class Behavior

I advise you to bring the readings to class, but this is not mandatory. **If you talk with other students regarding matters not related to the class, sleep in class, are late and leave the class before its end with no apparent justification, this will significantly affect your participation grade. Phones and electronic equipment (tablets, computers, etc.) should not be used in class. If students are seeing using them, this will also significantly affect their participation grades. There are no exceptions to this rule.**