

Date prepared: 8/14/14

Syllabus  
The University of New Orleans  
Dept. of Philosophy

## PHIL 2312: History of Modern Philosophy (3 credits)

SECTIONS 476 & 585: Online

### Contact Information

**Instructor:** Dr. Clarence Mark Phillips  
**Office:** UNO: LA 391  
**Office Hours:** MWF 12:50-2; 2:50-3:40 (and by appointment)  
**Office / Mobile:** (504) 280-6659  
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**Course Webpages:** [Moodle](#) login page

### Required Texts

- [1] Melchert, Norman - The Great Conversation: A Historical Introduction to Philosophy (7th ed.), Mayfield, Oxford University Press, ISBN 9780915397611
- [2] (Recommended)  
Hugo Bedau - Thinking and Writing about Philosophy and/or  
Zachary Seech - Writing Philosophy Papers (on reserve in UNO Library)

### Course Description

**CATALOG DESCRIPTION:** A historical survey of the History of Modern Philosophy in the West.

**COURSE OVERVIEW:** This course is traditionally a survey of philosophy from the beginning of the 17<sup>th</sup> century to the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Running from Descartes to Kant, it is usually meant to familiarize students with the difference in perspectives between the Rationalist and Empiricist schools of thought during this period. However, the scope of the present course will be much broader, with emphasis being placed on the development of scientific methodology, the differences between idealism and materialism, as well as the splintering of modern thought into such disciplines as political science, economics, and evolutionary psychology. Consequently, in addition to such figures as Hobbes, Locke, Berkeley, Leibniz, and Hume, who are typically considered, we will also be discussing figures that are not always included as contributors to the philosophical enterprise - such figures as Francis Bacon, Adam Smith, Blaise Pascal, and Isaac Newton. Along with the traditional list of thinkers, we will be looking at the contributions of these thinkers in the fields of empirical science and epistemology.

Student Learning Outcomes

Upon successfully completing this course, students will be able to do the following:

- to recognize philosophical issues.
- to know the various subfields of philosophy and the sorts of questions dealt with by philosophers in those areas.
- to know how to form arguments.
- to know the views of the pre-Socratics regarding the problem of explanations.
- to understand the philosophical issues associated with definitions.
- to identify key figures in the history of Western Thought
- to understand the nature of philosophical argumentation.
- to present and to defend your own views regarding the above issues.
- to read philosophical texts.
- to recognize philosophical questions.
- to define key concepts in philosophical thought.
- to write an analytical text-based argumentative essay.
- to understand the historical development of Western Philosophy, from the Descartes through the Utilitarians.

Grades will be based on a 100 point scale distributed as follows:

Requirement		Final grade	
<b>Term Paper</b>	(25%) 25 points	<b>A</b>	100 – 90 points
<b>Exam 1</b>	(25%) 25 points	<b>B</b>	89 – 80 points
<b>Exam 2</b>	(25%) 25 points	<b>C</b>	79 – 70 points
<b>Exam 3</b>	(25%) 25 points	<b>D</b>	69 – 60 points
		<b>F</b>	59 – 0 points

Course Requirements

**Readings:** Students will be required to keep up on weekly reading assignments from the textbook, as well as those posted on Moodle.

**Exams:** There will be 3 examinations on material from the reading and class lectures, and there will be no make-up exams. Each exam is worth 25% of the grade.

**Term Paper:** Each student will also be required to write a term paper of not less than 2,500 words on a philosophical subject of his or her choice. The paper is due on or before the last day of class, and counts as 25% of the overall grade.

**Comparing Theory to Practice:** Students will also be requested to pay close attention to current news issues (both in order to determine the relevance of philosophy to our present concerns, and to generate a variety of possible paper topics).

**ACADEMIC DISHONESTY**

Academic honesty is fundamental to the process of learning and to evaluating academic performance. Academic dishonesty will not be tolerated. Academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, the following: cheating, plagiarism, tampering with academic records and examinations, disseminating any part of an exam, falsifying identity, and being an accessory to acts of academic dishonesty. Refer to the Student Code of Conduct for further information. The Code is available on Moodle and online at <http://www.studentaffairs.uno.edu>.

**AUDITS:** If you would like to audit the course, please let me know as soon as possible.

**DISABILITIES:** It is University policy to provide, on a flexible and individualized basis, reasonable accommodations to students who have disabilities that may affect their ability to participate in course activities or to meet course requirements. Students with disabilities should contact the Office of Disability Services as well as their instructors to discuss their individual needs for accommodations. For more information, please go to <http://www.ods.uno.edu>.

**INCOMPLETES:** If you are unable to finish the work, and need to take an incomplete, please let me know as soon as possible.

**MAKE-UPS:** There are no make-up exams.

**PROCTORING:** To ensure academic integrity, all students enrolled in distance learning courses at the University of New Orleans may be required to participate in additional student identification procedures. At the discretion of the faculty member teaching the course, these measures may include on-campus proctored examinations, off-site or online proctored examinations, or other reasonable measures to ensure student identity. Authentication measures for this course may include Proctor U and any fees associated are the responsibility of the student. University of New Orleans partners with Proctor U, a live, online proctoring service that allows students to complete exams from any location using a computer, webcam, and reliable internet connection.

**WITHDRAWALS:** You may withdraw from this course for any reason. Please consult the course listings for the last day to withdraw without penalty (a 'W' appearing on your transcript).

**PHIL 2312 – Fall 2014 Timeline**  
(subject to revision)

DAY	TOPIC/READING
Week 1 8/20-24	Introduction (Syllabus) – Moodle & iTunesU
Week 2 8/25-31	The Aim of Philosophy – What is Philosophy?, Italian Renaissance
Week 3 9/1-7	Dark Ages to Enlightenment – Chapter 12, Copernicus' Hypothesis, Da Vinci's Waters
Week 4 9/8-14	Montaigne & Descartes – Excerpt of Meditations, Chapter 13
Week 5 9/15-21	Bacon & Hobbes – Chapter 14, Excerpts of Novum Organum & Leviathan
Week 6 9/22-28	Pascal & Spinoza – The Wager & Excerpt from The Ethics
Week 7 9/29-10/5	Locke – Chapter 14, Letter on Toleration
Week 8 10/6-12	Berkeley – Bio & Summary of Immaterialism, Chapter 14
Week 9* 10/13-19	Term Paper Synopsis & <i>Midsemester Break</i>
Week 10 10/20-6	Smith – Summary of Wealth of Nations & "Theory of Moral Sentiments"
Week 11 10/27-11/2	Newton & Leibniz – Summary of Newton's Three Laws & Summary of Monadology
Week 12 11/3-9	LaMettrie, Holbach, & LaPlace – "Man: a Machine" & "Human Beings are Determined"
Week 13 11/10-16	Hume – Chapter 15
Week 14 11/17-23	Kant – Chapter 16
Week 15 11/24-30	Rousseau & Voltaire – Social Contract & Summary of Candide & Treatise on Toleration
Week 16 12/1-7	The Utilitarians – Chapter 19
Finals Week 12/8-10	Term Papers Due