

WILLIAM RAINEY HARPER COLLEGE
LIBERAL ARTS DIVISION
GENERAL COURSE OUTLINE

PHI Course Prefix	232 Course Number	History of Philosophy: Modern Course Title	3-0 (Lec-Lab)	3 Semester Hours
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COURSE DESCRIPTION

Surveys the major figures and schools in Western philosophical tradition from the 15th to the 20th centuries. Emphasizes interpreting philosophical reflection in light of the social, political, religious, and cultural context from which it arises. IAI H4 902

Prerequisite: A course in Philosophy or consent of instructor.

TOPICAL OUTLINE

- I. The Transition from Medieval to Renaissance and Modern Philosophy
 - A. General characteristics of the time
 - B. Medieval backgrounds
 - C. Renaissance humanism: Machiavelli, Erasmus, Thomas More
 - D. The rise of natural science: Francis Bacon
 - E. The reformation
- II. Rene Descartes--The Father of Modern Philosophy
- III. Continental Rationalism
 - A. Spinoza
 - B. Leibniz
- IV. British Empiricism
 - A. John Locke
 - B. George Berkeley
 - C. David Hume
- V. The Enlightenment: Kant
 - A. Characteristics of the enlightenment
 - B. Voltaire
 - C. Rousseau
 - D. Immanuel Kant
 1. Kant's heritage from his predecessors
 2. The modern problematic: Epistemology
 3. The synthetic a priori
 4. The Critique of Pure Reason
 5. The Critique of Practical Reason
 6. The impossibility of metaphysics
 7. The significance of Kant
- VI. German Idealism
 - A. The legacy of Kant
 - B. The romantic reaction
 - C. Fichte
 - D. Schelling
 - E. Hegel
 - F. Others -- Schleiermacher, Schopenhauer, Karl Marx
- VII. Existentialism
 - A. General characteristics
 - B. Nietzsche
 - C. Kierkegaard
 - D. Century existentialism

1. Heidegger
2. Sartre
3. Others

VIII. French and English 19th Century Philosophy

- A. Utilitarianism of J.S. Mill and Jeremy Bentham
- B. Spencer's Evolutionism: Darwin
- C. Henri Bergson
- D. British Idealism

XI. American Pragmatism

- A. General characteristics
- B. C.S. Pierce
- C. William James
- D. John Dewey
- E. The speculative cosmology of A.N. Whitehead

X. Anglo-American Analytic Philosophy

- A. General characteristics
- B. Roots in empiricism
- C. G.E. Moore
- D. Bertrand Russell
- E. Logical positivism
- F. Ludwig Wittgenstein

XI. Phenomenology

- A. Edmund Husserl and the phenomenological movement
- B. Existentialist appropriations of the phenomenological method

XII. Recent trends in Philosophy

METHODS OF PRESENTATION

1. Lecture/discussion method
2. Films, A-V units, visiting lecturer, when appropriate and available
3. Student presentation, when appropriate

STUDENT OUTCOMES: (*The student should . . .*)

1. explain the central philosophical issues or questions of the period.
2. explain the relationship between philosophy and the social, political, religious and cultural contexts of the period.
3. analyze the development of philosophy within the period.
4. evaluate the main arguments or ideas of at least three seminal sources from the period.
5. support a position with research and argumentation.
6. be able to identify some common criticisms of the above philosophical traditions.
7. write at least ten pages, of approximately 300 words each, of college-level writing in the process of demonstrating the accomplishment of the other outcomes.

METHODS OF EVALUATION

1. Written examinations, primarily interpretive and critical essay
2. Short term papers on approved topics
3. Class participation

TEXTBOOKS/INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS

Ayer, *Language, Truth & Logic*

Scruton, *A Short History of Modern Philosophy: From Descartes to Wittgenstein*, 2nd edition, Routledge Classics, 2001

Descartes, *Discourse on Method & Meditations on First Philosophy*

Dewey, *Common Faith*

Hume, *Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion*

Hume, *Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding*

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Semester Fall Year 2015