



Syllabus for PHIL 412.900: 17th Century Philosophy

Tuesday & Thursday (3 semester hours): 3:15-4:30 (online)

Fall 2020; Dr. Stephen H. Daniel



Course Description and Objectives. In this writing-intensive course, students learn to analyze and critically evaluate well-known thinkers (Descartes, Hobbes, Spinoza, Leibniz) as well as women thinkers of the period. The discussions set the stage for later philosophic debates about mind, nature, freedom, knowledge, and God. By interpreting their works in light of secondary literature, students develop the ability to incorporate quality scholarship into their writing. The course has no prerequisites. It is a W (Writing Intensive) course, so students must pass the writing components to earn a grade. Before the first essay I provide students with a sample essay, indicating the distinctive style of philosophical writing I am looking for, including information on format, citations, and problems that often appear in papers.

Texts are from (1) *Debates in Modern Philosophy* by Stewart Duncan & Antonia LoLordo; *Readings in Modern Philosophy*, vol. 1, ed. Roger Ariew & Eric Watkins; and *Women Philosophers of the Seventeenth Century* by Jacqueline Broad). All readings are available online for students: simply **click on the reading for the day**.

Aug. 20	“Modern” Philosophy , 1-6	Oct. 13	Damaris Masham/Conclusion, Broad 211-239
25	Descartes, Discourse on Method , 7-13	15	Spinoza, Ethics Ip1-31 : 240-255
27	Descartes Meditations I-III : 14-27	[18	Sunday: 4th short paper due (midnight)] #
Sept. 1	Descartes Meditations IV-VI : 28-40	20	Spinoza, Ethics Ip32-IIp13 Postulates : 256-68
3	Mersenne/Hobbes/Descartes, Obj II/III : 41-53	22	Spinoza, Ethics IIp14-49 269-282
[6	Sunday: 1st short paper due (midnight)] #	27	Spinoza, Ethics V Preface, p21-42 : 285-293
8	Arnauld/Descartes, Obj IV & True/False Ideas , 54-66	29	Bayle, SEP article, Lennon/Hickson 294-308
10	Elisabeth of Bohemia, Broad 67-79	Nov. [1	Sunday: 5th short paper due (midnight)] #
15	Pascal, Pensees 80-88	3	Leibniz, Intro, Discourse I-18 : 309-320
17	Hobbes, Leviathan 89-99	5	Leibniz, Discourse 19-37 : 323-335
[20	Sunday: 2nd short paper due (midnight)] #	10	Leibniz, Primary Truths/New System 336-345
22	Hobbes, Leviathan 100-107		Last day to Q-drop or withdraw
24	Malebranche, Search after Truth 108-117	12	Leibniz, New Essays Preface , 346-357
29	Malebranche, Elucidations 118-125	17	Leibniz, Monadology 358-366
Oct 1	Margaret Cavendish, Broad 132-161	19	Newton, Principia Scholium, Optics 367-376
[2	Friday: 3rd short paper due (midnight)] #	24	Leibniz, Letters to Clarke 377-386
	Mid-semester grades due Oct 5 noon	[29	Sunday: term paper due (midnight)] #
6	Anne Conway, Broad 162-193		# See Guidelines for Short Essays & Research Papers
8	Mary Astell, Broad 187-210		

- The semester grade is based on five 600-word essays that increase in value (5%, 10%, 10%, 15%, 20%) and a 2500-word term paper (40%). Submit essays at [eCampus](#). For writing help, contact the [Writing Center](#), Evans Libr. 214.
- **Student Rule 7: you are expected to attend all online classes and read assigned readings. Miss more than three unexcused classes and you lose a letter grade, two letter grades for more than six unexcused classes, etc.**
- If you violate the Aggie Honor Code (e.g. by plagiarizing from the Internet), you fail the course. See below.
- My expectations rise if you turn in an assignment late, but *you should definitely turn in* late assignments.
- Minimum grades: 90=A, 80=B, 70=C, 60=D.
- **Online Office hours:** MW 3:00-5:00; TR 2:00-3:00. **Phone:** 324-4199 (cell); **email** sdaniel@tamu.edu. **Web:** people.tamu.edu/~sdaniel/. Register at [Zoom.us](#). **Class meeting contact** (ID: 924 5966 3285). **Personal Zoom ID:** 932 700 4383 (for Office Hours).

University Policies:

- **Makeup Work Policy:** Absences related to Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 may necessitate a period of more than 30 days for make-up work, and the timeframe for make-up work should be agreed upon by the student and instructor. The instructor is under no obligation to provide an opportunity for the student to make up work missed because of an unexcused absence. Students who request an excused absence are expected to uphold the Aggie Honor Code and Student Conduct Code.
- **Academic Integrity:** “An Aggie does not lie, cheat or steal, or tolerate those who do.” Texas A&M University students are responsible for authenticating all work submitted to an instructor. If asked, students must be able to produce proof that the item submitted is indeed the work of that student. Students must keep appropriate records at all times. The inability to authenticate one’s work, should the instructor request it, may be sufficient grounds to initiate an academic

misconduct case. You can learn more about the Aggie Honor System Office Rules and Procedures, academic integrity, and your rights and responsibilities at aggiehonor.tamu.edu.

- ADA: Texas A&M University is committed to providing equitable access to learning opportunities for all students. If you experience barriers to your education due to a disability or think you may have a disability, please contact Disability Resources in the Student Services Building or at (979) 845-1637 or visit disability.tamu.edu. Disabilities may include, but are not limited to attentional, learning, mental health, sensory, physical, or chronic health conditions. All students are encouraged to discuss their disability related needs with Disability Resources and their instructors as soon as possible. Texas A&M University is committed to fostering a learning environment that is safe and productive for all. University policies and federal and state laws prohibit gender-based discrimination and sexual harassment, including sexual assault, sexual exploitation, domestic violence, dating violence, and stalking.
- With the exception of some medical and mental health providers, all university employees (including full and part-time faculty, staff, paid graduate assistants, student workers, etc.) are Mandatory Reporters and must report to the Title IX Office if the employee experiences, observes, or becomes aware of an incident that meets the following conditions:
 - The incident is reasonably believed to be discrimination or harassment.
 - The incident is alleged to have been committed by or against a person who, at the time of the incident, was (1) a student enrolled at the University or (2) an employee of the University.
- Mandatory Reporters must file a report regardless of how the information comes to their attention – including but not limited to face-to-face conversations, a written class assignment or paper, class discussion, email, text, or social media post. Although Mandatory Reporters must file a report, in most instances, you will be able to control how the report is handled, including whether or not to pursue a formal investigation. The University’s goal is to make sure you are aware of the range of options available to you and to ensure access to the resources you need.
- Students wishing to discuss concerns in a confidential setting are encouraged to make an appointment with [Counseling and Psychological Services](#) (CAPS). Students can learn more about filing a report, accessing supportive resources, and navigating the Title IX investigation and resolution process on the University’s [Title IX webpage](#). Texas A&M University recognizes that mental health and wellness are critical factors that influence a student’s academic success and overall wellbeing. Students are encouraged to engage in proper self-care by utilizing the resources and services available from Counseling & Psychological Services (CAPS). Students who need someone to talk to can call the TAMU Helpline (979-845-2700) from 4:00 p.m. to 8:00 a.m. weekdays and 24 hours on weekends. 24-hour emergency help is also available through the National Suicide Prevention Hotline (800-273-8255) or at suicidepreventionlifeline.org.
- COVID-19: To promote public safety and protect students, faculty, and staff during the coronavirus pandemic, Texas A&M University has adopted policies and practices for the Fall 2020 academic term to limit virus transmission. Students must observe the following practices while participating in face-to-face courses and course-related activities (office hours, help sessions, transitioning to and between classes, study spaces, academic services, etc.):
 - Self-monitoring—Students should follow CDC recommendations for self-monitoring. **Students who have a fever or exhibit symptoms of COVID-19 should participate in class remotely and should not participate in face-to-face instruction.**
 - [Face coverings](#) (cloth face covering, surgical mask, etc.) must be properly worn in all non-private spaces including classrooms, teaching laboratories, common spaces such as lobbies and hallways, public study spaces, libraries, academic resource and support offices, and outdoor spaces where 6 feet of physical distancing is difficult to reliably maintain. Description of face coverings and additional guidance are provided in the [Face Covering policy](#) and [Frequently Asked Questions \(FAQ\)](#) available on the [Provost website](#).
 - Physical distancing must be maintained between students, instructors, and others in course/course-related activities.
 - Students must follow marked pathways for entering and exiting classrooms and other teaching spaces. Leave classrooms promptly after course activities have concluded. Do not congregate in hallways and maintain 6-foot physical distancing when waiting to enter classrooms and other instructional spaces.
 - To attend a face-to-face class, students must wear a face covering (or a face shield if they have an exemption letter). If a student refuses to wear a face covering, the instructor should ask the student to leave and join the class remotely. If the student does not leave the class, the faculty member should report that student to the [Student Conduct office](#) for sanctions. The faculty member may choose to teach that day’s class remotely for all students.
 - Students required to quarantine must participate in courses and course-related activities remotely and **must not attend face-to-face course activities**. Students should notify their instructors of the quarantine requirement. Students under quarantine are expected to participate in courses and complete graded work unless they have symptoms that are too severe to participate in course activities.
 - Students experiencing personal injury or illness that is too severe for the student to attend class qualify for an excused absence (See [Student Rule 7, Section 7.2.2](#).) To receive an excused absence, students must comply with the documentation and notification guidelines outlined in Student Rule 7. While Student Rule 7, Section 7.3.2.1,

indicates a medical confirmation note from the student's medical provider is preferred, **for Fall 2020 only, students may use the Explanatory Statement for Absence from Class form in lieu of a medical confirmation. Students must submit this Explanatory Statement within two business days after the last date of absence.**