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PHIL 450.01: Classical Modern Philosophers

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Phil. 450; Classical Modern Philosophers
Fall 2005
R.E. Walton, Prof.

SYLLABUS

Philosophy 450 is a relatively new course covering one major philosopher from the modern rationalists (Descartes, Spinoza, Leibniz) and one from the modern empiricists (Locke, Berkeley, Hume). We will study Descartes and Hume, generally acknowledged to be the most important and most influential of these six philosophers. Some attention will be given to the history of these major schools of modern thought, and so to the other principals, especially to Leibniz, one of whose shorter works we will read, and Locke.

TEXTS:

Descartes, *Philosophical Writings of Descartes*, Vol. I, ed. and trans.

Cottingham, Stoothoff and Murdoch (Cambridge)

---, *Meditations, etc.*, trans. John Cottingham (Cambridge)

Hume, *An Inquiry Concerning Human Understanding*, ed. Charles W. Hendel (LLA)

---, *An Inquiry Concerning the Principles of Morals*, (Hackett)

---, *Political Essays*, ed. Knud Haakonssen (Cambridge)

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

Reading:

A list of assigned readings together with an approximate schedule for them by week is given below. As with all philosophy courses, you should regard reading as an independent task to be undertaken and completed in conjunction with class lectures and discussions. Your reading should comprise unassigned texts of Descartes and Hume and secondary material, as your interest dictates. Lectures will include bibliographical notes and recommendations.

Written Work:

Required written work falls into three categories: (a) occasional papers and reports, (b) a commentary, and (c) a comprehensive final. (a) Occasional papers are short papers (3-4 pp.) on a problem from the text under discussion at the time the assignment is given. Four such assignments will be made. Reports on the readings will sometimes be assigned, especially in the latter part of the term. (b) Each student will prepare a commentary on a passage from one of the texts. A portion of the commentary will be presented in class. See the separate description of the commentary task. A list of available passages will be distributed during the second full week of classes. Graduate students' commentaries will be more extensive than those produced by undergraduates. (c) The date and time for the final examination are listed below. Guidance for the examination will be provided during the last week of classes.

FINAL EXAM: Tue., Dec. 13, 1:10-3:10

READING SCHEDULE

TEXT	WEEK

Descartes, Discourse	I
" , Rules for the Direction of the Mind	II, III
" , Meditations	IV, VI
-Various articles on Descartes' work by Miller, Hintikka, Ryle, Kenny and others	VII
Leibniz, Monadology	VIII
Hume, An Inquiry Concerning Human Understanding	VIII-X
" , An Inquiry Concerning the Principles of Morals	XI, XII
" , Political Essays	XIII, XIV