



Philoso 2202F :  
[Western] Early Modern Philosophy

Course Outline 2020 -21

Dr. Benjamin Hill

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Contemporary Western philosophy (both the Anglo-American and Continental streams) often traces its source to the texts and themes of Western early modern philosophy. It is common for Rene Descartes to be presented as "the father of modern philosophy" and for contemporary practitioners to label themselves or their positions "Kantian," "Humean," or "Cartesian." It is also common for classes dedicated to contemporary Western treatments of philosophical topics to begin with selected readings from Western early modern texts. But philosophy in the early modern period (1550-1800 CE) was also its own endeavor, a unique set of philosophical thinkers working within various traditions and against various historical and cultural backgrounds to wrestle with challenges and concerns both universal to the human condition as well as unique to their own times and periods. This course introduces students to several key figures, texts, topics, and themes that arose within the Western European philosophical tradition during the early modern era. It also introduces students to the unique intellectual activity of the history of philosophy and will develop their abilities to use, appreciate, and engage in research in the history of early modern philosophy. Students enrolled in the course can expect to study selected texts from Michel de Montaigne, Rene Descartes, Princess Elisabeth, Margaret Cavendish, Gottfried Leibniz, John Locke, Anton Wilhelm Amo, Émilie du Châtelet, George Berkeley, David Hume, Lady Mary Shepherd, Catharine Trotter Cockburn, Bernard Mandeville, Joseph Butler, François Poulain de la Barre, Baruch Spinoza, Damaris Cudworth Masham, Mary Astell, Edmund Burke, Thomas Paine, Marie Jean Antoine Nicolas de Caritat Marquis de Condorcet, Olympe de Gouges, Julien Raimond, Ottobah Cugoano, and Mary Wollstonecraft. Students can also expect exercises and activities that will deve ( N)-74 ( d)1 (,)TJ ( t)- ( C)-2t3 ( )TJ -0.004 Tc(t)-8 (ivh)-1.1 ( d)1



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REQUIRED TEXTS

Eugene Marshall and Susanne Sreedhar, eds. *A New Modern Philosophy: The Inclusive Anthology of Primary Sources* (New York: Routledge, 2019);

Margaret Cavendish, *Grounds of Natural Philosophy*, edited by Anne M. Thell (Peterborough: Broadview, 2020);

Catharine Trotter Cockburn, *Philosophical Writings*, edited by Patrica Sheridan (Peterborough: Broadview, 2006).

VIRTUAL OFFICE HOURS

We have a closed Facebook group [Earlymodphil2020](#), which you are welcome to join. I will record office hours Fridays 09:30-10:20 EDT\* on Facebook Live and post the video

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