

Philosophy 18
Amherst College
Spring, 2011

Jonathan Vogel
225 Merrill Science
2-5803*

Welcome to Philosophy 18, "Early Modern Philosophy". In this course, we will read and discuss some of the most important works in the history of Western philosophy. These works, written in the 17th and 18th centuries, remain the foundation (or foil) for all schools of philosophy in the West down to the present day. Our goal will be to understand the views of Descartes, Leibniz, Locke, Berkeley, and Hume on such topics as the following: the nature of knowledge, reason, perception, causation, substance, mind, body, freedom, and the existence of God.

Required Texts: Readings in Modern Philosophy, Volumes I and II, edited by Ariew and Watkins, Hackett Publishing Company.

It is important that you buy these particular versions of the readings. They are available under the course listing at Amherst Books, 8 Main Street. You are expected to bring the book we are discussing to class with you.

Schedule

Week 1-3	Introduction; Descartes, <u>Meditations</u>
Week 4-6	Leibniz, <u>Discourse on Metaphysics</u> ; <u>Monadology</u>
Week 7	Locke, <u>Essay</u> (excerpts from Books I and II)
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Week 8-9	Locke, continued.
Week 10-11	Berkeley, <u>Three Dialogues</u>
Week 12-14	Hume, <u>Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding</u>

Written Work: There will be three or more exercises and short papers, and a scheduled final examination. Class attendance is required.

***Contact Information:** My office phone is the least reliable way to reach me. Email (jmvogel@amherst.edu) is better, although I don't check it every day. You may also call me at home, between the hours of 9 a.m. and 9 p.m. (253-0348). My office hours aren't set yet, but I'll let you know about that shortly. In my experience, doing philosophy by email isn't very successful. It's better if you bring things up in class or come to see me in person, and I encourage you to do that.