

**Phil 3200**  
**Early Modern Philosophy**  
**SPRING 2024**

Instructor: Prof. Robert N. Johnson  
MW, 11am-12:15pm

Office hours: by zoom appt.  
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Course Description -- In this course we will study 17th and 18th century European philosophy. The philosophical problems dealt with during this time, the way they were conceived and answered, still have a profound impact on all philosophers today. We will discuss the central views of two whose lasting importance is beyond dispute: René Descartes and David Hume. We will focus on their metaphysical and epistemological views. Metaphysics concerns the nature of reality, e.g., the existence and nature the material world, living things and of God. Epistemological questions concern the possibility, nature and extent of our knowledge of the world. We will evaluate their solutions to the problems they set out to solve.

Required Textbooks:

Descartes, *Meditations on the first philosophy* (Cambridge)  
Hume, *Inquiry concerning human understanding* (Cambridge)

Course Requirements

2 midterm exams— 20% each  
1 final exam - 30%  
1 term paper – 30%

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**Schedule of Topics and Reading Assignments**

1. Jan. 16, 18  
Introduction, *Meditations* I

2. Jan 23, 25  
*Meditations* I (cont.)

3. Jan. 30, Feb. 1  
*Meditations* II

4. Feb. 6, 8  
*Meditations* III

FIRST MIDTERM

5. Feb. 13, 15  
*Meditations* IV, V

6. Feb. 20, 22  
*Meditations* VI

7. Feb. 27, 29  
*Enquiry* §1, §2, §3

8. Mar. 5, 7  
*Enquiry* §4

9. Mar. 12, 14  
*Enquiry* §5

## SECOND MIDTERM

10. Mar. 19, 21  
*Enquiry* §7, 134-47

11. Mar. 26, 28  
SPRING BREAK

12. Apr. 2, 4  
*Enquiry* §10

13. Apr. 9, 11  
*Enquiry* §12

14. Apr. 16, 18

15. Apr. 23, 25

16. Apr. 30, May

FINAL EXAM: