

Introduction to Modern Philosophy



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Office Hours: [TBA]

Office Hours

My office is Room 547 in the Philosophy Department, which is located at 106 Somerset in New Brunswick. (If you're facing the Barnes & Noble, it's just to the right of that!) Office hours are [TBA]. If you need to meet at another time, send me an e-mail and we'll try to work something out.

Textbooks

Note: All of these texts are available online and will be linked on Sakai

Descartes, *Meditations*

Berkeley, *Three Dialogues of Hylas and Philonous*

Hume, *Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion*

Spinoza, *Theological-Political Treatise*

Nadler, *A Book Forged in Hell*

Kant, *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*

Grading Scale:

| | |
|--------|----|
| 85-100 | A |
| 80-84 | B+ |
| 70-79 | B |
| 65-69 | C+ |
| 55-64 | C |
| 50-54 | D |
| 0-49 | F |

Electronic Devices and Class Participation

Philosophy is not a spectator sport. You can only learn how to construct and refute philosophical arguments by doing it, so class participation is extremely important in a philosophy class. I reserve the right to lower your semester grade by a full letter grade if you fail to participate in class discussions. On a related note, non-life-saving electronic devices are not allowed. If you need to take notes, you can do it twentieth-century-style, with pen a paper.

Grading Scheme

Reading Responses: 50% (5 points each)
Argument Maps: 25% (5 points each)
Class Participation: 25%
Discussion Posts: Extra Credit

A Question You Should Never Ask Any Instructor

“Are we doing anything important today?”

A few seconds of thought should suffice for you to realize that it’s a bizarre and insulting question. Similarly, “I have something to do for another class” is never a legitimate excuse for missing this class. I hope you don’t disrespect any of your other instructors by telling them that you have to miss their classes to prepare work for mine either!

Schedule for the Class

We’ll be reading the texts listed above, more or less in that order. Readings for each day will be assigned on the previous day. Each day (after the first session), you’ll turn in a reading response. You’ll also be responsible for posting an argument map on Sakai every weekend in which you represent one unique argument from the text you’re reading that week. We’ll talk more about all of this in class!