Instructor: Prof. Glenn Tiller  
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Phone: 825-6008  
Office hours: Monday & Wednesday 1:15-3:15; Tuesday 11:15-12:15; and by appointment.

Course Description  
This course is an introduction to the leading figures of the Modern philosophy era (1600-1800). The central focus is on the epistemological and metaphysical issues discussed in the writings of Descartes, Spinoza, Locke, and Hume. Our goal is to uncover the presuppositions and analyse the arguments found in both rationalist and empiricist accounts of knowledge, the nature of the universe and our place within it.

Student Learning Outcomes  
Successful completion of the course provides you with a foundational understanding of Modern Philosophy. In particular, you will be familiar with basic logical, epistemological and metaphysical issues that were debated during 17th and 18th centuries in Western Europe. By the end of the course, you will be conversant in key concepts of the modern era (e.g. rationalism, empiricism). You will also be able to compose philosophical essays on topics such as Descartes philosophical methodology, Spinoza’s metaphysics, Locke’s psychology and Hume’s scepticism. Ideally, you will develop a richer, more coherent understanding of the history of Western philosophy. Since much of our time is spent on close textual analysis, you will also improve your reading comprehension skills and strengthen your abilities to construct logical arguments. These outcomes will be measured through in-class quizzes and tests, and take-home essay assignments.

Required Text  
1. To be posted online or distributed in class.

Course Website  
To get to the course website, go to the main philosophy page at: http://philosophy.tamucc.edu/. Click on the tab “Courses” and you’ll find a link for our course. Note: to fully access the philosophy website, login using your “islander” email account.

Attendance
Regular attendance will be taken. All materials discussed in lectures and covered in the readings are the potential basis for quiz and test questions. Students are therefore expected to attend all lectures and keep up with assigned readings. Any student who misses more than three classes without a reasonable excuse (e.g. medical) can expect to be penalized (up to a letter grade) on their final grade. If you don’t attend class, don’t expect to pass.

Requirements
Percentage of Final Mark

1. Participation
Worth 10%
Description: something more than mere physical presence. You don’t have to talk every class but you should be generally engaged with classroom discussions. Whatever you say (assuming it’s on topic) can only help and never hurt.

2. Class Presentation
Worth 10%
Description: 10-15 minute presentation on one of the assigned readings (or a section of one of the readings). Instructions will be distributed in class.

3. In class test, October 8
Worth 20%
Description: General test that cover all materials up to and including October 3 and will take the entire period to write.

4. Essay, November 12
Worth 20%
Description: Essay topic and specific instructions to be distributed in class.

5. In class test, December 10
Worth 20%
Description: General test with the same structure as the first test. Will cover all materials up to and including December 5.

6. Essay, Due by the end of the exam period
Worth 20%
Description: Essay topics and specific instructions for this essay to be distributed in class.
Grading Scale
All grades will be assigned on the standard scale: 90%-100% = A, 80%-89% = B, 70%-79% = C, 60%-69% = D, 59% and below = F.

Missed Test Policy
Students unable to write a test for a medical reason must provide a doctor’s note. If a student is unable to write a test for a similarly serious reason, documentation may be required. Make-up tests will be written at an arranged time under my supervision.

Freedom of Speech and Classroom Etiquette
You are free to ask any question you please about the material. In many cases if you did not understand something, this is because it was not explained clearly to you, so you will be doing your colleagues and yourself a service if you request clarification. You are also free to argue for any philosophical position you find compelling, as long as you provide reasons for your point of view. It is inevitable that during discussions individual points of view will differ. When they do, our reaction will always be to patiently listen to the reasons offered for a particular conclusion and cooperatively evaluate those reasons.

E-etiquette
Turn off all cell phones before entering the classroom. If your cell phone rings during class, I will stop the lecture. Any student who disrupts a lecture by using a personal electronic device will be asked to leave.

Advisement
Academic advisors are available to assist students with course selection, degree plans, and other academic matters. Each college has an academic advising center, staffed by full-time, professional advisors. For the College of Liberal Arts the undergraduate advisor is Linda Miller (825-3466; linda.miller@tamucc.edu). The graduate advisor is Rachelle Stanley (825-5896; Rachelle.stanley@tamucc.edu). Both are located on the second floor of Driftwood. Students who have yet to declare a major are advised by the Academic Advising Transition Center. For more information please call (361) 825-5931 or log on to http://www.tamucc.edu/~aac.

Notice to Students with Disabilities
Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act in making reasonable accommodations for qualified students with disabilities. If you suspect that you may have a disability (physical impairment, learning disability, psychiatric disability, etc.), please contact the Services for Students with Disabilities Office, located in Driftwood 101, at 825-5816. If you need disability accommodations in this class, please see me as soon as possible.
Grade Appeal Process
As stated in University Rule 13.02.99.C2, Student Grade Appeals, a student who believes that he or she has not been held to appropriate academic standards as outlined in the class syllabus, equitable evaluation procedures, or appropriate grading, may appeal the final grade given in the course. The burden of proof is upon the student to demonstrate the appropriateness of the appeal. A student with a complaint about a grade is encouraged to first discuss the matter with the instructor. If the problem cannot be resolved at this level, the student may take the steps below.

1. Presentation of grievance to instructor. (This step must be taken within fourteen calendar days after the beginning of the next term.)
2. Appeal to department chair or area coordinator.
3. Written appeal to the University Academic Standards Grievance Committee.
4. Preliminary review and advising by an ombudsman appointed by the Provost.
5. Submission of file by department chair to the chair of the University Academic Standards Grievance Committee.
6. Review of file by committee chair and submission of case to committee.
7. Proceedings of the University Academic Standards Grievance Committee. (Committee holds hearing, reviews data, presents findings to all parties, and makes recommendation to Provost.)
8. Decision by Provost.
9. Final appeal in writing to the Provost if student or instructor thinks appropriate procedures have not been followed.

For complete details, including the responsibilities of the parties involved in the process and the number of days allowed for completing the steps in the process, see University Rule 13.02.99.C2, Student Grade Appeals, and University Procedure 13.02.99.C2.01, Student Grade Appeal Procedures. These documents are accessible through the University Rules Web site at: http://www.tamucc.edu/provost/university_rules/index.htm. For assistance and/or guidance in the grade appeal process, students may contact the Office of Student Affairs.

Important Dates
September 4, Wednesday Classes begin
September 11, Wednesday Last day to register or add a class
November 15, Friday Last day to drop a class
November 28-29, Thursday-Friday Thanksgiving Holidays
December 9, Monday Last day to withdraw from the University
TOPICS AND READINGS
*Readings and schedule subject to change

Week 1 (Sept. 5): Introduction & Course Mechanics
No Readings

Week 2 (Sept. 11, 12): Descartes: Methodology & The Cogito
Readings: TBA

Week 3 (Sept. 17, 19): Descartes: Physics & Metaphysics
Readings: TBA

Week 4 (Sept. 24, 26): Descartes: Mind & Body
Readings: TBA

Week 5 (Oct. 1, 3): Spinoza: Substance & God
Readings: TBA

Week 6 (Oct. 8, 10): Spinoza: Substance & God (Test 1 Oct. 8)
Readings: TBA

The Fine Print
For all other matters concerning course withdrawal, appeal of grades, academic misconduct, etc, students are strongly advised to consult the rules outlined in the Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi Student Handbook and on the web at: http://studentaffairs.tamucc.edu/.

December 10, Tuesday
Last day of classes
Last day to apply for May 2014 graduation

December 11, Wednesday
Reading Day

December 12-13, Thursday-Friday
Final examinations

December 16-18, Monday-Wednesday
Week 7 (Oct. 15, 17): Spinoza: Mind
Readings: TBA

Week 8 (Oct. 22, 24): Locke: The Origin of Ideas
Readings: TBA

Week 9 (Oct. 29, 31): Locke: Perception
Readings: TBA.

Week 10 (Nov. 5, 7): Hume: On Philosophy
Readings: TBA

Week 11 (Nov. 12, 14): Hume: Ideas & Scepticism
Readings: TBA

Week 12 (Nov. 19, 21): Hume: Sceptical Solution & Causation
Readings: TBA

Week 13 (Nov. 26): Hume: Causation
Readings: TBA

Week 14 (Dec. 3, 5): Hume: The Existence of God
Readings: TBA

Week 16 (Dec. 9): TEST 2
Readings: No Readings