

# PHIL 3100 MODERN PHILOSOPHICAL CLASSICS (3 credit hours)

Elmira College

SPRING 2025

## Required Text:

Steven M. Cahn. *Classics of Western Philosophy* (8th ed.). Hackett Publishing Company, Inc.  
Supplemental readings might be included to illustrate or expand on textbook readings.

**Pre-requisites:** PHIL 2305 Introduction to Logic

## Course Description

This course will focus on the study of selected texts from the modern period of Western philosophy, roughly from the 16th to the 18th centuries. We will examine works by philosophers such as Descartes, Spinoza, Leibniz, Locke, Berkeley, and Hume. The course will explore the development of modern philosophy and its contributions to contemporary thought.

## Course Objectives and Goals

- Understand the key concepts and arguments of major modern philosophers.
- Analyze and evaluate the philosophical positions and arguments presented in the selected texts.
- Identify and explain the main themes and concepts in modern philosophy.
- Analyze and evaluate the impact of modern philosophy on contemporary philosophical debates.
- Develop effective written and oral communication skills in the context of modern philosophy.

## Evaluation of Performance

Your grade will be based upon your performance on exams, assignments, and participation.

3 Reading Reflections	15%
3 Assignments	15%
2 Group Discussions	20%
Paper	10%
Midterm Exam	20%
Final Exam	20%
Total	100%

Grades will be assigned as follows:

A 93% and above    B- 80 - 82%    D+ 67 - 69%

A- 90 - 92%	C+ 77 - 79%	D 63 - 66%
B+ 87 - 89%	C 73 - 76%	D- 60 - 62%
B 83 - 86%	C- 70 - 72%	F 59% or below

**Withdrawal Policy:** Please see Elmira College Bulletin for information on this policy.

**Academic Honesty:** Please read the section on Academic Honesty in the [Code of Conduct](#). Briefly, academic dishonesty includes: cheating, fabrication, facilitating academic dishonesty, and plagiarism. Ask if you have any questions on whether something constitutes as academic dishonesty. All work must be original and new. Past assignments from current or other courses will not be accepted. Academic dishonesty will not be tolerated. It will result in zero on the assignment, and a report will be filed with the school. Continued practice will result in failure of the class. Institutional penalties may also apply with repeated acts of academic honesty.

**Student Responsibility:**

- It is your responsibility to keep track of assignments and due dates.
- You should ask questions concerning assignments and lectures, if you need any clarifications.
- If you are struggling in class, have concerns, and/or unsure about expectations, please stop by during office hours or make an appointment for another time.

**Tentative Schedule of Topics**

<u>Topic</u>	<u>Materials</u>	<u>Tasks &amp; Evaluations</u>
Augustine: On Free Choice of the Will (Selections)	Chapter 1	
Ludwig Wittgenstein: Philosophical Investigations (Selections)	Chapter 2	Reading Reflection 1
J. L. Austin: Sense and Sensibilia	Chapter 3	
René Descartes: Meditations on First Philosophy	Chapter 4	Assignment 1
Baruch Spinoza: Ethics (Parts I, II)	Chapter 5	
Gottfried Leibniz: Discourse on Metaphysics	Chapter 6	Reading Reflection 2
John Locke: An Essay Concerning Human Understanding	Chapter 7	
George Berkeley: A Treatise Concerning the Principles of Human Knowledge	Chapter 8	Group Discussion 1
David Hume: An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding; A Treatise of Human Nature (Selections); Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion	Chapter 9	Midterm Exam
Immanuel Kant: Critique of Pure Reason; Grounding for the Metaphysics of Morals	Chapter 10	
Arthur Schopenhauer: The World as Will and Representation (Selections)	Chapter 11	Assignment 2
Bertrand Russell: The Problems of Philosophy	Chapter 12	Reading Reflection 3
Friedrich Nietzsche: Twilight of the Idols	Chapter 13	
William James: What Pragmatism Means, The Will to Believe	Chapter 14	Assignment 3
Rationalism vs. Empiricism: A Comparative Analysis	Chapter 15	

The Influence of Early Modern Philosophy on Political Thought	Chapter 16	Paper
Theories of Mind and Consciousness in Early Modern Thought	Chapter 17	Final Exam