

# History of Epistemology

01:730:411-001

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## Syllabus (v1)

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## Basic Info

### DETAILS

- Course Format: Synchronous Online
  - Monday/Wednesday, 4:30-5:50PM
  - Platform: WebEx
    - Link: <https://rutgers.webex.com/meet/rjf164>
- Office Hours: Tuesday, 2:00-3:00 and weekly by appointment
  - If you plan to come to Tuesday office hours, you must email me beforehand to establish a particular time
- Course Website: [canvas.rutgers.edu](https://canvas.rutgers.edu)

## COURSE DESCRIPTION

The 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries represent a sea-change in the history of Western philosophy. We will look at key texts from British philosophy in that period, examining the epistemological issues they raise and the solutions they offer, particularly with regard to the mind. There is a puzzle here: the mind is how we think about the world, so if natural philosophy is to be empirical, then we must use the very tool we wish to use to examine the world to examine itself. We'll look at how Locke, Berkeley and Hume did—or didn't—address this puzzle.

## LEARNING GOALS

This course has several goals:

- Departmental learning goals met by this course:
  - Develop the ability to accurately and fairly present others' views.
  - Improve your analytical reading and writing skills.
  - Improve your ability to analyze, evaluate, and construct arguments.
- Other learning goals for this course:
  - Introduce you to classic texts and questions in the history of Western philosophy
  - Cultivate your own thinking about central problems in philosophy, especially as those issues bear on your own life.
  - Develop essential life skills such as time management, communication when encountering difficulties, and thoughtful engagement with others.

## REQUIRED TEXTS

- Texts:
  - Locke, *Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, (Essay), ed. Nidditch, ISBN: 0198245957
  - Berkeley, *Three Dialogues between Hylas and Philonous*, (Dialogues), ed. Adams, ISBN: 0915144611
  - Hume, *Treatise of Human Nature*, (Treatise) ed. Norton & Norton, ISBN: 0198751729
  - Hume, *Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding*, (EHU) ed. Beauchamp, ISBN: 0198752482
- Notes:
  - **It is important that you secure these particular editions,**

- **Especially the Berkeley** (which is cheap)
  - and the Locke (which isn't—sorry).
- It will be difficult to coordinate with your classmates if you use other editions of these books
- Electronic versions that preserve pagination, as sometimes may be found on the internet, are acceptable alternatives
  - Because of the numeration-scheme used in Hume scholarship, [davidhume.org](http://davidhume.org) does work well for the Hume texts and is better alternative than a non-Norton-and-Norton edition.
    - Remember, though, with philosophy it's always nice to have your own copy that you can mark up...
- Other readings will be made available through Canvas

## Policies

### ACADEMIC HONESTY

- You must uphold standards of academic integrity
  - Plagiarism (of words or ideas) is unacceptable
  - Confirmed academic dishonesty will result in automatic failure of the course.
- Familiarize yourself with what plagiarism and academic dishonesty are, and Rutgers's policies:
  - <http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/academic-integrity-policy/>
  - [https://www.libraries.rutgers.edu/avoid\\_plagiarism](https://www.libraries.rutgers.edu/avoid_plagiarism)
  - <https://wp.rutgers.edu/academics/undergraduate/plagiarism>

### PERSONAL CONDUCT

- You are responsible for treating your classmates with courtesy and respect
  - At a minimum, this means respecting their time and effort by putting in time and effort yourself
  - Just as your classmates owe you careful attention and engagement, you owe those things to your classmates as well
  - Be mindful of how topics under discussion may impact different members of the class differently
- This course adheres to the Philosophy Departments policy on norms of discourse: <https://philosophy.rutgers.edu/about-us/discourse>

## COURSE PARTICIPATION

- Students are expected to participate regularly in course discussions
  - 10% of your final grade is determined by participation
  - Participation also facilitates and maintains the feeling of shared engagement with course material
  - Having recourse to the intuitions, brainpower and hard work of your classmates will improve your learning (and *vice versa*)
- In a synchronous, online class, participation means:
  - Participating verbally and on-camera, when possible
  - Using the chat-box when appropriate (contributing resources, seconding questions, *etc.*)
  - Not stepping away for extended periods
  - Actively giving feedback, especially when solicited
- **In order to fully participate in this class, you must have and use:**
  - A webcam
  - A pair of headphones
    - Using headphones to listen to the class prevents audio feedback and other issues
  - A microphone
    - The ability and facility to mute yourself when not speaking, so as to prevent environmental noise from being sent to your classmates
  - A stable internet connection between 4:30 and 5:50 on Mondays and Wednesdays

## ACCOMMODATIONS

- Students needing accommodations should follow the procedures available at <https://ods.rutgers.edu>

## GRADES

### LATE WORK

- There are four types of assignment in this course
  - **Short Papers** will be assessed a -3% penalty per day late, up to ten days late, at which point the penalty stops accruing. (After 10 days, a paper can earn at most 70% credit.)
  - **Reading Engagements** and **Participation Activities** may be completed late, but will be assessed at 1/2 credit, up to one week later. After one week, they cannot be completed for credit.
  - **In-class quizzes** cannot be completed late, though, under extenuating circumstances, they may be excused

## EXTENSIONS

- If you need an extension for written work, email me with a brief description of your situation
  - If I approve an extension, we will work out an appropriate timeline
- Extensions must be requested at least 24 hours before the assignment is due
- There are many very good reasons for extensions: illness, illness in the family, unexpected child care responsibilities, *etc.*
  - Having too much work for other courses is *not* a good reason to request an extension
  - Extension requests citing this reason will not be granted

## ANONYMOUS GRADING

- The papers for this course will be graded anonymously
- Papers submitted through Canvas should not have your name in the text or the filename
- Failure to properly anonymize your submission will result in a -10% penalty to the grade for the paper

## GRADE APPEALS

- If you believe your work deserves a different grade than it received, you may ask in writing for reconsideration.
  - Submit this request within one week but no sooner than one day after your work is returned to you.
- Your written request must explain why you believe the work deserves a different grade.
- Please note that if a change is made, the new grade may be either higher

F	D	C	C+	B	B+	A
<60%	60 - 69.49%	69.5 - 74.49%	74.5 - 79.49%	79.5 - 84.49%	84.5 - 89.49%	>89.5%

or lower.

## GRADE SCALE

- Letter grades will be awarded based on percentage credit earned, according to the following scale:

## CHANGES

- I may need to change any part of this syllabus at any time
- A new, numbered version of the syllabus will be posted to Canvas
- Changes will be announced and explained in course correspondence

# Assignments and Assessment

## **WEEKLY READING ENGAGEMENT - 10% TOTAL**

- A 200-300 word summary of a single argument due before a class meeting about the the texts assigned for that day's class meeting
- Include a single, clear question about the course content for the day
- Class will be divided into two groups
  - One group will submit before Monday class, the other before Wednesday
- Due each class day by 2:00PM, starting Monday, Sept. 14th
- You will determine which argument to address and how to best capture it
- Your worst two attempts will not count toward your final grade

## **TIMED QUIZZES - 10% TOTAL**

- Quizzes will be random and unannounced
- They will take place on Canvas, during class time
- Each quiz will have ten multiple choice or (very) short answer questions
  - Five questions will cover the material from the previous class session
  - Five will cover the material for the class session the quiz is given
- Quizzes will be open note, open book
- There will be between two and ten of these quizzes

## **SHORT PAPERS - 70% TOTAL**

- Three short (1500-2000 word) writing assignments asking you to explain arguments in depth and consider objections
- These papers build on the skills from the reading engagement papers and help you develop your philosophical writing skills, enhancing your ability to interpret and engage with texts
- These papers are due October 16th, November 6th, and the time scheduled for the final exam

## **PARTICIPATION - 10% TOTAL**

- There are two forms of participation: in class and out of class
- In class participation consists in:
  - Contributing to discussion, asking questions, and thinking out loud

- This is paradigmatically done on camera and through microphone
  - Participation in the text chat does contribute (though less)
- It also includes politeness: arriving on time, having read the appropriate material beforehand, having the appropriate material to hand, muting yourself appropriately, paying attention, *etc.*
- Out of class participation consists in:
  - Completing activities and discussion fora as assigned in class
    - Most weeks you will have an activity that calls on you to engage with the authors, your classmates, and me on the class discussion fora
      - I will explain these in class and notify you about them through Canvas
    - These activities will be assessed primarily—*but not solely*—for completion
  - You can also get participation ‘points’ for coming to office hours or corresponding with me about course material

## **1: INTRODUCTIONS AND HISTORY**

### ***03 Sep - Intro to the Course***

Bailey, “But How Do I Participate?”

### ***08 Sep - Distortion***

Bacon, *New Organon* (§1-60)

### ***09 Sept - Imagination***

Hobbes, *Leviathan* (ch.1-3)

## **2: LOCKE**

### ***14 Sep - Against Innate Ideas***

Essay I.ii, I.iv

### ***16 Sep - Simple Ideas***

Essay II.i-viii

### ***21 Sep - Powers of Mind***

Essay II.ix-xi

### ***23 Sep - Complex Ideas, Idea of Space***

Essay II.xii-xiii

### ***28 Sep - Idea of Duration***

Essay II.xiv-xv

### ***30 Sep - Ideas of Infinity, Thinking, Power***

Essay II.xvi-xix, xxi.1-10

### ***05 Oct - Ideas of Substance, Relation, Cause/Effect***

Essay II.xxii, xxiii.1-17, xxv-xxvi

### ***07 Oct - Clear and Distinct, Adequate/Inadequate***

Essay II.xxix-xxxi

### ***12 Oct - True/False, Assoc. of Ideas***

Essay II.xxxii-xxxiii

### **3: BERKELEY**

#### **14 Oct - Against Abstract Ideas**

*Principles* Introduction §1-25

#### **Short Paper #1 due by 11:59PM Oct. 16th**

#### **19 Oct - Primary and Secondary Qualities**

*Three Dialogues* p.7-30

#### **21 Oct - The Master Argument**

*Three Dialogues* p.30-50

#### **26 Oct - Against Matter**

*Three Dialogues* p.50-60

#### **28 Oct - Skepticism, God, and 'Sensible Things'**

*Three Dialogues* p.60-69

#### **02 Nov - Miscellaneous Objections**

*Three Dialogues* p.69-94

### **4: HUME**

#### **04 Nov - Science of Humankind, the nature of ideas**

*Treatise of Human Nature* Intro, 1.1, 1.3.5.3

*Enquiry* 2, 3.1-3

#### **Short Paper #2 due by 11:59PM Nov. 6th**

#### **09 Nov - Ideas of Space and Time**

*Treatise* 1.2, focusing on 1.2.3-4

#### **11 Nov - Space and Time (cont.)**

*Treatise* 1.2, focusing on 1.2.5-6

#### **16 Nov - Reason and Belief**

*Treatise* 1.3.1-5

*Enquiry* 4.1-5

Optional: *Enquiry* 4.6-23

#### **18 Nov - Resolution of these worries**

*Treatise* 1.3.6-8

*Enquiry* 5.3-6

Optional: *Enquiry* 5.7-22

#### **23 Nov - Necessary Connection**

*Treatise* 1.3.14

Optional: *Enquiry* 7

### **Thanksgiving Break**

#### **30 Nov - Skepticism**

*Treatise* 1.4.1

#### **02 Dec - External Objects**

*Treatise* 1.4.2-3

#### **07 Dec - Personal Identity**

*Treatise* 1.4.6

Optional: *Treatise* 1.4.7

### **5: WRAP UP**

#### **09 Dec - Wrap up**

**Third paper due online at the time scheduled for the final exam**



# Course Calendar

## Resources

### ACADEMIC RESOURCES

#### DISABILITY SERVICES (ODS)

*<https://ods.rutgers.edu>  
(848) 445-6800*

The Office of Disability Services works with students with a documented disability to determine the eligibility of reasonable accommodations, facilitates and coordinates those accommodations when applicable, and engages with the Rutgers community at large to provide and connect students to appropriate resources.

#### ACADEMIC SUPPORT

*<https://newbrunswick.rutgers.edu/academics/academic-support>*

This site has links to help you find your academic advising office, understand degree requirements and your progress toward them, and links to services to help you succeed, like:

- Writing Centers (<https://wp.rutgers.edu/writingcenters/writingcenters>)
- Learning Centers (<https://rlc.rutgers.edu>)
- Program in American Language Studies, for non-native English speakers (<https://pals.rutgers.edu>)
- RU1st, for first-generation, underrepresented, and low-income students (<https://diversity.rutgers.edu/ru1st>)

#### LIBRARY TUTORIALS

*<https://www.libraries.rutgers.edu/tutorials>*

The library has a number of helpful tutorials to get you started with searching, understanding the difference between scholarly and popular literature, and avoiding plagiarism. Check them out!

### STUDENT-WELLNESS SERVICES

#### COUNSELING, ADAP & PSYCHIATRIC SERVICES (CAPS)

*<http://rhscaps.rutgers.edu/>*

(848) 932-7884

CAPS is a University mental health support service that includes counseling, alcohol and other drug assistance, and psychiatric services staffed by a team of professional within Rutgers Health services to support students' efforts to succeed at Rutgers University. CAPS offers a variety of services that include: individual therapy, group therapy and workshops, crisis intervention, referral to specialists in the community and consultation and collaboration with campus partners.

### **VIOLENCE PREVENTION & VICTIM ASSISTANCE (VPVA)**

<http://vpva.rutgers.edu>

(848) 932-1181

The Office for Violence Prevention and Victim Assistance provides confidential crisis intervention, counseling and advocacy for victims of sexual and relationship violence and stalking to students, staff and faculty. To reach staff during office hours when the university is open or to reach an advocate after hours, call 848-932-1181.

### **SCARLET LISTENERS**

<http://www.scarletlisteners.com>

(732) 247-5555

Free and confidential peer counseling and referral hotline, providing a comforting and supportive safe space.

### **“JUST IN CASE” WEB APP**

<http://codu.co/cee05e>

Access helpful mental health information and resources for yourself or a friend in a mental health crisis on your smartphone or tablet and easily contact CAPS or RUPD.