

University of Chicago, Winter 2021
HUMA 11600: PHILOSOPHICAL PERSPECTIVES II

I. COURSE DESCRIPTION

Winter Quarter explores metaphysical and epistemological questions as they were confronted by participants and spectators of the “scientific revolution.” Problems of method, skepticism, self-understanding, and the status of knowledge are at the fore. Readings will include selections from Descartes, Francis Bacon, Marlowe, Galileo, Hume, Mary Shelley’s *Frankenstein*, etc.

II. MATERIALS

Our main readings will come from the following books. All are available for purchase in the Seminary Co-Op and the University of Chicago Bookstore. If you choose to purchase them from elsewhere then make sure you have the correct editions.

Descartes, 1641, *Meditations on First Philosophy* (Cambridge Texts, 2017).

Hume, 1748, *Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding* (Hackett, 1993).

Shelley, 1818, *Frankenstein* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2011).¹

Descartes, 1641, *Meditations on First Philosophy* (Cambridge Texts, 2017).

Hume, 1748, *Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding* (Hackett, 1993).

Shelley, 1818, *Frankenstein* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2011).¹

III. ASSIGNMENTS

<u>Assignment</u>	<u>Due date</u>	<u>Portion of final grade</u>
● Class participation and discussion leading	Throughout the course	20%
● Three 250-word Canvas Posts	Throughout the course	20%
● Midterm paper (3-4 pages)	February 24th	20%
● Final paper (6-7 pages)	March 20th	40%

IV. REMOTE FORMAT

1. Our class will consist of synchronous reading and discussion sessions via Zoom. You are expected to be actively engaged, with camera on. If you require an exception, please email me
2. The Recording and Deletion Policies, found in the Student Manual, strictly forbid recording, sharing, or disseminating any course sessions, videos, transcripts, audio, or chats.

¹ This edition is based on the 1818 original text; do not purchase editions based on the 1831 version.

V. COURSE SCHEDULE

Week I

Tuesday, January 12 th	Thursday, January 14 th
Readings and Discussion Topics	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Aristotle, <i>Physics</i>, Bk. II (pp.26-44) - Russell, <i>The History of Western Philosophy</i> (1972): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Part II, “From the Renaissance to Hume”: Ch. II “General Characteristics,” (pp.491-495); and Ch. VI: “The Rise of Science” (pp.525-540)	Introduction: From Aristotle to the Middle Ages and the Scientific Revolution The Soul, Knowledge, Nature

Week II

Tuesday, Jan. 19 th	Thursday, Jan. 21 st
Reading	Discussion Topics
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Copernicus, <i>De revolutionibus [On the Revolutions of the Heavenly Spheres]</i> (1543), excerpt - Galileo Galilei, “Letter to the Grand Duchess Christina” (1615), pp.109-128 only 	“Eppur si muove” Scientific and religious sources of knowledge: An attempt at reconciliation Foucault’s “episteme” and Kuhn’s “paradigm shift”
Suggested (on Canvas): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - listen to the BBC <i>In Our Time</i> podcast, episode on Kepler - John Donne (1572-1631), poem selections: “The Flea,” “The Sun Rising,” “A Valediction: Forbidding Mourning,” and “Meditation 17” 	

Week III

Tuesday, Jan. 26 th	Thursday, Jan. 28 th
Reading	Discussion Topics
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Marlowe, <i>The Tragical History of Doctor Faustus</i> (1592) - Francis Bacon, selections from <i>The Advancement of Learning</i> (1605); and <i>The New Organon [Novum Organum]</i> (1620) 	“ipsa scientia potestas est” The pursuit of knowledge and the God complex I Knowledge is power? Empiricism and method <i>sophia</i> and <i>techné</i> : Theoretical and practical knowledge
Suggested (on Canvas): Paul Feyerabend, <i>Against Method</i> (1975): read the “Introduction to the Chinese Edition,” pp.1-4. Steven Shapin, <i>The Scientific Revolution</i> (1996): read the “Introduction,” pp.1-4.	

→ First 250-word Canvas post on a topic of your choice due by Saturday midnight of week III

Week IV

Tuesday, Feb. 2 nd	Thursday, Feb. 4 th
Readings	Discussion Topics
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Descartes, <i>A Discourse on the Method</i> (1637), Part I (pp.3-11), on Canvas - Descartes, <i>Meditations</i> (1641), First and Second Meditation (pp.3-27) - ---> Watch <i>The Matrix</i> (1999) dir. by the Wachowskis 	<p>“cogito ergo sum”</p> <p>Knowledge: Authority? Experience? Thought? Skepticism and radical doubt What is real? The “I”</p>

→ Second 250-word Canvas post on Descartes and *The Matrix* by Saturday midnight of week IV

Week V

Tuesday, Feb. 9 th	Thursday, Feb. 11 th
Reading	Discussion Topics
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Descartes, <i>Meditations</i>, Third and Fourth Meditation (pp.28-49) 	<p>The proof of God’s existence Truth and error</p>

Week VI

Tuesday, Feb. 16 th	Thursday, Feb. 18 th
Readings	Discussion Topics
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Tuesday: Descartes, <i>Meditations</i>, Sixth Meditation (pp.57-71) - Thursday: Atherton, <i>Women Philosophers of the Early Modern Period</i> (1994), Introduction and Elisabeth of Bohemia (pp.1-21) 	<p>The Mind-Body Problem Women philosophers and the challenge to reason</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Recommended (on Canvas): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Susan Bordo, “The Cartesian Masculinization of Thought,” 1986 o Luce Irigaray/Edith Oberle, “Is the Subject of Science Sexed?,” 1985 	

→ Midterm paper (3-4 p.)

Saturday Feb. 20th: First draft by 11:59pm CST, via email to peer reviewer, instructor, and writing tutor

Monday Feb. 22nd: Peer review meetings with instructor and writing tutor

Wednesday Feb 24th: Final draft by 11:59pm CST, via email to instructor and writing tutor

Week VII

Tuesday, Feb. 23 rd	Thursday, Feb. 25 th
<p>NO CLASS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> work on paper listen to BBC podcast on Hume (on Canvas) Read for Thursday: Hume, <i>Enquiry</i> (1748), Chapters I-V (pp.1-37) 	<p>Discussion Topics</p> <p>The theory of ideas Causation The skeptical 'problem of induction' The skeptical solution</p>

→ Short Canvas post on Hume due by Saturday midnight of week VII

Week VIII

Tuesday, March 2 nd	Thursday, March 4 th
<p>Readings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hume, <i>Enquiry</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ch. VII (pp.39-53), and Ch. XII (pp.102-114) 	<p>Discussion Topics</p> <p>Hume on skepticism and ordinary life Materialism: Man, a Machine?</p>
<p>Suggested (excerpts on Canvas): Julien Offray de La Mettrie, <i>Machine Man</i> (1747)</p>	

Week IX

Tuesday, March 9 th	Thursday, March 11 th
<p>Reading</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Shelley, <i>Frankenstein</i> (1818), excerpts: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> pp.5-6 pp.18-53 pp.61-105 pp.118-125 pp.145-161 	<p>Discussion Topics</p> <p><i>zoon politikon?</i> Knowledge, Isolation, Ethical Responsibility</p> <p>LAST CLASS</p>

READING PERIOD

Week X

Tuesday, March 16th

Conclusion: The Path to Knowledge, Empathy, and Ethical Responsibility

→ Final paper (6-7 pages)

Saturday, March 20th by 11:59pm CST, via email to instructor and to writing tutor

VI. POLICIES

i. Deadlines

Late papers will be marked down 1/3 of a letter grade (e.g., from B+ to B) per day, unless an extension has been agreed in advance with the Instructor.

ii. Statement on Disabilities

If you have a documented disability, I encourage you to register with Student Disability Services. Here is their contact information:

Address: 5501 S. Ellis Avenue

Chicago, IL 60637

Phone: (773) 702-6000

Email: disabilities@uchicago.edu

<https://disabilities.uchicago.edu/>

Disclosure of disability status is always up to you, and that choice is protected by federal law. If you prefer not to disclose your disability status, we can still have a productive conversation about what specific adjustments might make our meetings and interactions more accessible. See the Student Manual for more details (<http://studentmanual.uchicago.edu/disability>).

iii. Academic Integrity

All students are expected to understand and abide by the principles laid out in your Student Manual under Academic Honesty & Plagiarism (<http://studentmanual.uchicago.edu/policies>).

The penalty for plagiarism is zero on that assignment, with no rewrites or makeups. Repeat offenders will fail the course. Any instances of plagiarism (including inappropriate use of online sources or inadequate citation) will be reported to the College Dean of Students in accordance with faculty guidelines.