



UNIVERSIDAD COMPLUTENSE DE MADRID

FACULTAD DE FILOSOFÍA

DEPARTAMENTO DE FILOSOFÍA Y SOCIEDAD

HISTORY OF MODERN PHILOSOPHY

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Office hours: Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday from 11 to 12:30 a.m.

(It is advisable to request an appointment in advance by email)

COURSE DESCRIPTION

The main aim of the lectures is reaching a critical and reflexive understanding of the development, meaning and consequences of modern thought (from roughly the end of the 15th century to the first third of the 19th century). The topics and approaches discussed and held by modern philosophers will be regarded taking into particular consideration the impact of modern philosophy on the emergence of contemporary ideas. Classic philosophical texts will be carefully examined in class in order to obtain first-hand knowledge of modern ideas.

TOPICS AND TEXTS FOR DISCUSSION:

1.- The discovery of the individual in modernity: from theocentrism to anthropocentrism. The modern project: controlling nature and freeing men.

Texts: Giovanni Pico della Mirandola, *Oration on the Dignity of Man*.

2.- Utopia: in search of a better new world. Criticism of the present and the project of a new future.

Texts: Thomas More, *Utopia*; Francis Bacon, *New Atlantis*.

3.- The new science. Man and nature: knowledge is power. Mathematics and the Book of Nature. Starting afresh.

Texts: Francis Bacon, *The Great Instauration*; Galileo Galilei, *Letter to the Grand Duchess Christina*, *The Assayer*.

4.- Uncertainty and subjectivity. *Qué sais-je?* The place of man in the world: Me and my cat.

Texts: Michel de Montaigne, *Essays*.

5.- Looking for certainty: scepticism and methodic doubt. I think, therefore I am. God and reason. Bodies and minds: the dualistic point of view. Freedom in a mechanical world?

- Texts: René Descartes, *Discourse on the Method, Meditations on First Philosophy, Principles of Philosophy*.
- 6.-** Human frailty and the dignity of man. The frailty of reason. Pascal's wager and the meaning of life.
Texts: Blaise Pascal, *Pensées*
- 7.-** New politics for new men. Individuals, freedom and submission to power. Politics without ethics?
Texts: Niccolò Machiavelli, *The Prince*; Étienne de la Boétie, *Discourse on Voluntary Servitude*
- 8.-** Men from a mechanical point of view. Political individualism. The other as enemy and the social pact. The estrangement between ethics and politics.
Texts: Thomas Hobbes, *On the Citizen, Leviathan*.
- 9.-** A different modernity. *Deus sive Natura*. Man and nature. Metaphysical determinism and ethical freedom? Democracy and the laws.
Texts: Baruch Spinoza, *Ethics, Theologico-Political Treatise, Political Treatise*.
- 10.-** Individuals versus atoms. Determinism and freedom. The best of all possible worlds?
Text: Leibniz, *Discourse on Metaphysics, Monadology*.
- 11.-** Enlightenment. Experience versus innatism. Identity and the self. Religious tolerance and the right to property.
Texts: John Locke, *A Letter Concerning Toleration, Two Treatises of Government, An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*.
- 12.-** Experience and subjectivity. The vanishing self. Reason and passions.
Texts: David Hume, *A Treatise of Human Nature*.
- 13.-** Change and progress: looking forward to the future and the making of history. Nature and Society. Liberty, Equality, Fraternity.
Texts: Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Discourse on Inequality, Discourse on Political Economy, The Social Contract*
- 14.-** Thinking for oneself: philosophy in the age of criticism. What can I know? The boundaries of knowledge. What should I do? Freedom and duty. What can I hope for? Progress and happiness.
Texts: Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason, Answering the Question: What Is Enlightenment? , Critique of Practical Reason, Religion within the Bounds of Bare Reason, Perpetual Peace, The Metaphysics of Morals*.
- 15.-** The dubious universality of modern subject.
Texts: Mary Wollstonecraft, *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman*
- 16.-** Idealism, Romanticism and the crisis of the modern project.
Texts: Friedrich Hölderlin, *Hyperion*.

All the TEXTS to be discussed in class will be available in VIRTUAL CAMPUS and also in REPROGRAPHY, if a printed version is desired.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

MAIN WORKS OF MAJOR MODERN PHILOSOPHERS:

- PICO DELLA MIRANDOLA, G., *Oration on the Dignity of Man*.
 MORE, T., *Utopia*.
 MACHIAVELLI, N., *The Prince*.
 DE LA BOÉTIE, E., *Discourse on Voluntary Servitude, or the Anti-Dictator*.
 MONTAIGNE, M. de, *Essays*.
 BACON, F., *The Great Instauration*.
 HOBBS, T., *Leviathan*.
 On the Citizen.
 DESCARTES, R., *Discourse on the Method*.
 Meditations on First Philosophy.
 PASCAL, B., *Pensées*.
 SPINOZA, B., *Ethics, Demonstrated in Geometrical Order*.

Theologico-Political Treatise.
 LOCKE, J., *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding.*
Two Treatises of Government.
 LEIBNIZ G.W., *Monadology.*
 HUME, D., *A Treatise of Human Nature.*
An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding.
 ROUSSEAU, J.J., *Discourse on the Origins and Basis of Inequality Among Men.*
The Social Contract.
 KANT, I., *Critique of Pure Reason.*
Critique of Practical Reason.
Answering the Question: What is Enlightenment?
 WOLLSTONECRAFT, M., *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman*
 HEGEL, G.W.F., *Lectures on the Philosophy of History.*
Lectures on the History of Philosophy.
 HÖLDERLIN, F. *Hyperion or The Hermit in Greece.*

SOME USEFUL BOOKS AND RESOURCES

Ariew, R. y Watkins E., *Modern Philosophy: An Anthology of Primary Sources.* Indianapolis: Hackett, 2009.

Martinich, A.P., Allhof, F. y Vaidya, A.J., *Early Modern Philosophy. Essential Readings with Commentary.* Malden: Blackwell, 2007.

Radcliffe, E.S., McCarty, R, Althoff, F. y Vaidya, A.J., *Late Modern Philosophy. Essential Readings with Commentary.* Malden: Blackwell, 2007.

Tlumak, J., *Classical Modern Philosophy: A Contemporary Introduction.* Abingdon: Routledge, 2007.

<https://ebooks.adelaide.edu.au>

<http://www.earlymoderntexts.com>

ASSESSMENT METHOD

Students should write an **ESSAY** on any of the texts discussed in class.

The **essay** must be a minimum of about 10 pages long (1.5 spaced, Times New Roman 12 pt.) and must include:

- * A summary of the main ideas and arguments.
- * A brief introduction to the main ideas of the philosopher of choice (no more than two or three pages). The point of the essay is not to exposit the philosopher, but rather to present a philosophical problem or evaluation of the philosopher on one issue.
- * Explanation and argumentation of the ideas of the chosen text. This must constitute the core of the essay.
- * Bibliography.

The essay must be **printed on paper** and not just electronically submitted.

Deadline for essay submission: Tuesday, 15 January 2019.

REGULAR ATTENDANCE and **ACTIVE PARTICIPATION** in class are required.