

**UNIVERSITY of the FRASER VALLEY
COURSE OUTLINE**

Course: Philosophy 251b: The Empiricists

Section No.: AB1 (TH 10:00-12:50)

Term: Spring 2011

Instructor: Wayne I. Henry

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Office Hours: Wednesday, 5:00-7:00pm

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Course Format:

Three hours per week in a mix of lecture and class discussion.

Course Prerequisites:

15 university-level credits.

Course Description & Objectives:

For the Empiricist philosophers of the 17th and 18th centuries, anything that can be known about the world or about ourselves is said to be found in sensation and perception. However, this general agreement that knowledge is a function of experience gives way to disagreements about the nature of experience and what it actually enables us to know. In this course, we will examine the fundamentals of early modern empiricism, with a particular emphasis on how major philosophers of the time approached the question of knowledge, ethics, and politics. Philosophers to be covered include John Locke, George Berkeley and David Hume.

Specific learning outcomes include:

- Demonstrate a general knowledge of the origins and major developments in 17th and 18th century empiricist philosophy.
- Demonstrate an understanding of the methods and approaches employed by 17th and 18th century empiricist philosophers.
- Demonstrate an understanding of some of the major works published by empiricist philosophers in the 17th and 18th century.
- Recognize and articulate the connections between major theories advanced by philosophers working in the empiricist tradition.
- Reflect critically in discussion and in writing on the fundamentals of 17th and 18th century empiricist philosophy.

Text:

Ariew, Roger & Eric Watkins *Readings in Modern Philosophy, Volume II: Locke, Berkeley, Hume and Associated Texts*. Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 2000.

Course Requirements:

- Two short essays (3-5 double-spaced pages) worth 10% each.
- One longer essay (8-10 double-spaced pages) worth 25%.
Note: I do not accept essays submitted by email; hard copies only.
- An in-class mid-term worth 20%.
- A final exam worth 25% of the final mark.
- Class participation in the discussions will account for 10% of the final mark.

Grading Profile:

- A+ 87-100
- A 84-86
- A- 80-83
- B+ 77-79
- B 74-76
- B- 70-73
- C+ 67-69
- C 64-66
- C- 60-63
- D 50-59
- F 0-49

SYLLABUS:

WEEK 1

- Introduction: overview of the course and its requirements.

WEEK 2

- Historical context: revolutions in thought.
- Rationalism and the Empiricist program.

WEEKS 3 - 5

- John Locke.

WEEK 6

- Mid-term.

WEEKS 7 - 9

- George Berkeley.

WEEKS 10 - 12

- David Hume.

WEEK 13

- Conclusions: the Empiricist project today.
 - ❖ This syllabus is tentative and will be amended as required. It is the student's responsibility to keep abreast of such changes.

NOTE: It is the responsibility of the student to keep abreast of the readings (that is the point of the syllabus) and, if absent, to secure class notes from another student. These materials are not easy to read and, thus, you must leave ample time for the task. The committed student will have read the assigned material (more than once) before the class in which it is to be discussed and will reread the assigned readings immediately after the class discussion. As well, a committed student will ensure that their essays or other homework assignments are begun well before the due date. A good essay will require, at a minimum, 4-6 hours to produce an outline and first draft, and about an equal amount of time to adequately revise and produce the final version to be submitted. I am happy to read early drafts and outlines, but I am quite a bit less willing to do this the day before the essay is due. Essay topics are distributed well in advance of the due date for just this reason.

POLICIES:

University of the Fraser Valley has policies on Academic Appeals (including appeal of final grades), Student Conduct, Cheating and Plagiarism, Academic Probation and other educational issues. Copies of these and other policies are distributed to all students during the registration process and are also available in the University Calendar and in the Library. Following are some specific items I wish to draw to your attention:

Respect in the Classroom:

I strive to create an environment of mutual respect for all participants in the classroom so they can feel comfortable contributing to the class discussions and so on. The standard rules of courtesy apply here, but this is one I insist upon: **all cell phones are shut off while in the classroom. No exceptions!**

Absenteeism:

Regular attendance is a requirement of this course. All missed classes will require documentation. A student that is absent for more than four classes and, thus, not adequately participating in class will not be permitted to write the final exam, even with documentation. For similar reasons, I will not accept submitted work from those who are absent for more than four classes.

Missed Assignments:

There is no provision for make-up assignments. Thus, students lose the portion of the grade associated with any missed work.

Late Assignments:

Late assignments are not accepted except at the instructor's discretion in cases of illness or bereavement. Documentation will be required.

"I" Grade:

Not normally given.

Class Participation:

The grade for class participation is based on both the frequency and the quality of the student's comments, questions and observations, with the emphasis on quality. The quality is determined by, among other things, the relevance, insight and clarity of remarks.

English Usage:

Proper English usage is essential to the enterprise of presenting and defending one's ideas; if the instructor cannot understand what the student is trying to say, it is impossible to evaluate the student's work. Thus, any submitted work that is seriously grammatically flawed will be returned unmarked, and the student will be required to resubmit the work for evaluation with a penalty of five points. This offer will not apply to final term essays or assignments, which will be given a mark of zero. If it is anticipated that there will be problems meeting this requirement, it is incumbent on the student to seek help from, for example, the Writing Centre on campus.

Plagiarism and Cheating:

Plagiarism is the deliberate presentation or submission of the research, work, ideas, illustrations or diagrams of others as one's own without citation or credit. Cheating includes the use of unauthorized aids, assistance or materials in the preparation of assignments or in examinations. During examinations, it is considered cheating to communicate with others to obtain information, to copy from the work of others, or to deliberately expose or convey information to others. The resubmission of one's own work for which credit has already been granted in another course, without the instructor's permission, is also cheating. Penalties for academic dishonesty may include a grade of zero on the examination or assignment, a failing grade for the course, suspension from the university, or expulsion from the university.

Office Consultation:

My official office hours will be Wednesdays, 5:00-7:00pm. However, you can consider me to be available to help you whenever I am on campus. This means you can feel free to visit me at my office at any time, or approach me at any time and any place. If I am busy or for some reason unable to help you at that moment, we will schedule a time that is convenient for both of us. As a matter of personal preference, I think it's much more civil to have discussions over a cup of coffee and I can often be found in the cafeteria. Should you see me there, please feel free to join me to discuss the course, or anything else for that matter. I am also available by email, but please allow up to two working days for a response.