THE UNIVERSITY OF WESTERN ONTARIO
DEPARTMENT OF PHILOSOPHY
GRADUATE COURSE OUTLINE 2018-19

Philoso 9xxxA: Survey of Early Modern Western Philosophy of Language

Fall Term 2018
M 11:30-2:30
StvH 1145

Benjamin Hill
StvH 3140,
Mon 9:30-10:30
Wed 10:30-11:30
by appointment
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Description

This is a graduate level survey course.

The early modern era was a time of revolutionary philosophical developments and profound conceptual changes. Among many others, it produced significant changes in Western Philosophy's conceptions of mind and language. Indeed, the core of the contemporary Western conceptions of mind and language were formed during this era. More importantly, these changes are not unrelated. This graduate level survey course will explore what those changes were, how they emerged, and why they happened. The change was **from** a largely formalistic conception of language that considered language an inessential "gift from God," reflective of human thought and by and large continuous with natural expressions and animal communication and **toward** a more activity-based conception of language that emphasized it was distinctly human, spontaneously emerging from human nature, constitutive of human thought and cognition, and radically non-natural. Figures to be studied will include Lorenzo Valla, Michel de Montaigne, Antoine Arnauld and Pierre Nicole, Geraud Cordemoy, John Locke, John Wilkins, Gottfried Leibniz, Etienne Bonnot de Condillac, Thomas Reid, Adam Smith, Denis Diderot, Johann Gottfried von Herder, and Wilhelm von Humboldt.

Learning Outcomes:

During this seminar, students will:
1) Develop an understanding and appreciation of the role the history of philosophy plays (or should play) in contemporary Western philosophical development;
2) Develop an understanding of the nature of research, especially contextualist research, in the history of early modern European philosophy;
3) Develop the capacity to plan and engage in research in the history of early modern European philosophy;
4) Develop an understanding of dynamics of the variety of philosophical thinking about language and mind in late sixteenth-, seventeenth-, and eighteenth-century Europe;
5) Develop an understanding of the philosophical intersections between the natural law, virtues, and rightness in early modern European thinkers;

6) Develop an understanding of and appreciation for the philosophical arguments used to defend various positions regarding the nature of language by European philosophers in the early modern period;

7) Develop an understanding of and appreciation for the unique conceptions of language, mind, and their connections in early modern European philosophy and their conceptual strengths and weaknesses;

8) Develop an understanding of and appreciation for the significance that non-canonical texts, themes, areas, and figures play in the evolution of early modern European philosophy of language;

9) Develop an understanding of and appreciation for the important and significant ways that investigation of and research into the non-canonical directly impacts our understandings and interpretations of canonical figures, areas, texts, and themes.

10) Develop the capacity and confidence to orally present their original research in the history of early modern European philosophy.

Required Text:
Cameron, Margaret et al., eds.. *Sourcebook in the History of Philosophy of Language: Primary Source Texts from the Pre-Socratics to Mill*. (Switzerland: Springer Nature, 2017). Available as an e-book via Weldon Library. A personal copy may be purchased directly from the publisher here: https://www.springer.com/us/book/9783319269061.

Requirements and Assessments:
Attendance Extra Credit (up to 02%): Students will receive an extra 02% added to their course average for a perfect record of attendance (based on class hours). For attendance less than perfect but greater than 80%, extra credit will be pro-rated according to class hours present.

Primary Literature Presentation, Assessment of Philosophical Reading (20%): Students are required to submit ONE (1) *critical analysis* of an assigned reading for distribution to the class (12%) and orally present your analysis to the class within 30 minutes (08%). The written portion should be submitted by 18:00 the day before the class meeting covering that material. Sign-up and a more detailed guideline for the assignment is available via OWL.

Paper Projects, Assessments of Philosophical Writing (80%): There are two tracks for written assessment. Students opt for either Track A or Track B. **Due before Monday October 1** is a written declaration of which Track they chose to follow and be assessed for. More detailed guidelines for each of the Tracks and their subcomponents are available via OWL.

Track A: Conference Presentation Style Projects: Students are required to submit TWO (2) conference-style papers of 3000-4000 words, notes excluded, each (6000-8000 in total) plus for each paper (i) a 500-750 word abstract, (ii) an analysis of the work of secondary literature primarily engaged in each paper, and (iii) a one-page outline expressing each paper's argument and laying out its argument structure. Papers in this range typically have a reading time of 20-30 minutes.
This option is a good choice for students looking to develop their abilities to conceptualize, organize, and compose papers suitable for submission to generalist conferences with sessions on the history of philosophy, like the CPA or the APA, or to specialist seminars series, like the many regional seminars in the history of early modern philosophy. It is also a good

choice for students looking to have a draft of a paper for submission to a future CFP. It is also a good choice for students who want to have the course wrapped up before end of semester break so that they can concentrate on other papers or projects during the break.

Paper 1 (40%):

    Due Oct 05 (23:59:59) — Submission of Abstract/Project Proposal (02%)

    Due Oct 19 (23:59:59) — Submission of Secondary Literature Analysis (04%)

    Due Oct 26 (23:59:59) — Submission of Argument Outline (04%)

    Due Nov 02 (23:59:59) — Submission of Final Draft (30%)

Paper 2 (40%):

    Due Nov 23 (23:59:59) — Submission of Abstract/Project Proposal (02%)

    Due Nov 30 (23:59:59) — Submission of Secondary Literature Analysis (04%)

    Due Dec 07 (23:59:59) — Submission of Argument Outline (04%)

    Due Dec 14 (23:59:59) — Submission of Final Draft (30%)

Track B: Journal Article Style Project: Students are required to submit ONE (1) journal article style paper of 8000-10000 words, notes included, plus (i) a 1000 word minimum paper prospectus, (ii) an annotated bibliography containing at least 10 works to be substantially engaged with annotations of a minimum of 75 words each (minimum of 750 words total), and (iii) a two-page outline expressing the papers argument and laying out its structure.

This option is a good choice for students preparing for longer projects with more original theses and for developing their skills to conceive, research, organize, and complete papers suitable for submission to specialist history of philosophy journals. It is also a good choice for students looking to draft a future submission to a scholarly journal. It is also a good choice for students looking to extend their engagement with the course material through the end of semester break.

Journal Paper (80%)

    Due Nov 16 (23:59:59) — Submission of Prospectus (04%)

    Due Nov 30 (23:59:59) — Submission of Annotated Bibliography (08%)

    Due Dec 17 (23:59:59) — Submission of Argument Outline (08%)

    Due Jan 04 (23:59:59) — Submission of Final Draft (60%)

Statement on Academic Offences

"Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, at the following Web site:

http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_discipline_grad.pdf

"All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism-detection software under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted for such checking will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system. Use of the service is subject to the licensing agreement, currently between The University of Western Ontario and Turnitin.com (http://www.turnitin.com).

Tentative Schedule of Topics and Reading Assignments:

Sept 10   Course Introduction
Late Scholastic Philosophy of Language: Terms, Signification, and Supposition
- Peter of Spain
- John Poinsot

Sept 17   Early Use-based Conceptions
- Lorenzo Valla
- Michel de Montaigne

Sept 24   Cartesian Logic: Mental Structures
- Antoine Arnaul and Pierre Nicole

Oct 1   Cartesian Language:
- Gerauld Cordemoy

Oct 8   Happy Thanksgiving — No Class

Oct 15   Locke's Philosophy of Language: Mental Structures + Common Use
- John Locke

Oct 22   Universal Languages
- John Wilkins
- Gottfried Leibniz

Oct 29   Analogical Uses of Language
- Cajetan
- Berkeley

Nov 5   Lockean Developments: Language over Mind
- Etienne Condillac

Nov 12   Naturalism in France
- Denis Diderot

Nov 19   Scottish Enlightenment Naturalism
- Thomas Reid
- Adam Smith

Nov 26   German Naturalistic Tradition
- Johann von Herder
- Wilhelm von Humboldt

Dec 3   Finale