Florida A&M University

COURSE NO. AND TITLE: PHI-3400  Modern Philosophy
COURSE CREDIT: 3 Credit Hours
COURSE LEVEL: Advanced
PRE-REQUISITES: None
Semester: Spring 2013
Instructor: Dr. Michael C. LaBossiere

By remaining enrolled in this class you indicate you have read, understood and accepted this syllabus. There are no exceptions to the policies set in this syllabus.

Course description: Modern Philosophy is designed to introduce students to the thinkers of the modern era, specifically historic theories, critical terminology, and the practical application of philosophical techniques and critical approaches. Specifically, students familiarize themselves with a diverse collection of approaches to modern thought, including historical and feminist approaches. Through examination of the theories through both print and technological means, students study critically various approaches to modern thought and present written critical analyses of primary sources.

Required Text: Students are required to have the course readings and paper information. These are available in electronic format at http://www.mclphilosophy.wordpress.com Alternatively, a student can bring a blank CD-R/CD-RW or a USB disk key in during my office hours.

Content Objectives (subject to revision)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Part 1 Introduction, Hobbes &amp; Descartes</th>
<th>Locke, Excerpts from Two Treatises of Government</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>Berkeley, Excerpts from A Treatise Concerning the Principles of Human Knowledge</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hobbes-Excerpts from Leviathan</td>
<td>Part IV Hume and Kant</td>
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<tr>
<td>Descartes-Medications I,II, III</td>
<td>Hume, Excerpts from A Treatise of Human Nature</td>
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<td>Part II Spinoza &amp; Leibniz</td>
<td>Hume, Of the Immortality of the Soul</td>
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<tr>
<td>Spinoza-Excerpts from Ethics</td>
<td>Kant, excerpts from Prolegomena to Future Metaphysics</td>
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<tr>
<td>Leibniz-Excerpts from The Monadology &amp; Theodicy</td>
<td>Kant, excerpts from Fundamental Principles of the Metaphysics of Morals</td>
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<tr>
<td>Part III Locke and Berkeley</td>
<td>Locke Excerpts from An Essay Concerning Human Understanding</td>
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Generic teaching competencies and skills addressed Tests and written assignments in which the students develop and exercise the relevant skills and knowledge; provides exposure to diverse points, to present concepts and principles at different levels of complexity so they are meaningful to all students; represents concepts through a variety of methods, such as analogies, metaphors, models, and concrete materials; utilizes appropriate learning media, computer applications, and other technology to address learning objectives; selects activities that support the critical thinking processes; demonstrates knowledge of applications of computer technology to the teaching of ethics; demonstrates knowledge of methods, concepts and vocabulary; and develops critical philosophic skills.

Specific behavioral objectives: The students read the text, prepare written assignments, take exams and quizzes; react to class discussion, and learn critical philosophic skills.

Teaching Methods: The class combines elements of traditional lecture with active class participation. Traditional teaching methods are supplemented with email support and web based course material.

Methods of Evaluation: Students are evaluated on the basis of the following-

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<th>Category</th>
<th>Counted/Total</th>
<th>Points Each</th>
<th>% of Grade</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Paper</td>
<td>1/1</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exams</td>
<td>3/4</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weekly Quizzes</td>
<td>10/15+</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>30%</td>
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Paper: There is no make-up for the paper. The paper is governed by additional polices (see below).

Exams: The best three count. Make-ups are permitted with the obvious exception of the final.

Quizzes: There will be approximately fifteen quizzes. The best ten count. The others are used as “make up” or “extra” quizzes. There are no additional make-ups for quizzes.

Grade | % | Grade | % | Grade | % | Grade | % | Grade | %
A     | 90-100 | B   | 80-89 | C   | 70-79 | D   | 60-69 | F   | 0-59 |

Office: 203 Tucker Hall
Phone: (850) 561-2839
Email: ontologist@aol.com, Michael.labossiere@famu.edu
Office Hours: - Tuesday: 3:25-4:25 Wednesday: 11:00-4:00 Thursday: 9:50-10:50, 3:25-4:25
**Additional Course Material:** Notes and supplementary materials are available at [http://www.mclphilosophy.wordpress.com](http://www.mclphilosophy.wordpress.com) and Blackboard.

**General Policies** (see [http://www.mclphilosophy.wordpress.com](http://www.mclphilosophy.wordpress.com) for additional information).

**Academic Honor Policy:** This class complies with the university academic honor policy.

**After the Semester:** When the semester is over, it is over. No extra credit, retakes of exams, turning in of late papers or any other such things are allowed. This does not apply to incompletes.

**Attendance:** Attendance is mandatory. Students are fully responsible for any work, notes, announcements, or other information from missed classes.

**Behavior:** Behavior that disrupts the class or interferes with the learning process will not be tolerated.

**Cancelled Classes:** If a class is cancelled (for any reason) any scheduled exam or any work due will be rescheduled for the next class. If classes are cancelled for an extended period of time, then special arrangements will be made.

**Changed Class Room or Time:** If the class room or time is changed by the Registrar or another FAMU official, it is your responsibility to learn the new location. First, look for a sign listing the new room or, if there is another class there, ask the instructor. Second, check my office door or the web site for the new room. Third, call me during my office hours or email me. If you missed a test/quiz/assignment or did not turn in a paper “because” of the room change, the following policy applies: For quizzes and assignments the "make-ups" are built in - hence there is no special make-up for them. If the test date was the first class in the new room, you have until my next office hours to make it up. If a paper was due in the first class in the new room, you have until my next office hours to turn the paper in without a late penalty. Otherwise the normal rules apply.

**Cheating:** Cheating, in any form, will not be tolerated. Anyone caught cheating will be treated accordingly.

**Children in the Class:** I have been informed that it is against state law for students to bring children to class. Students are required to comply with this law.

**Compliance:** The University’s Americans with Disabilities ACT Policy Statement and the University’s Non-Discrimination Policy Statement can be viewed at [www.famu.edu](http://www.famu.edu). This class is taught in compliance with these policies.

**Email:** Be sure that your email address is up to date on iRattler. Important information about the class will be provided via email.

**Enrollment:** Students who are not enrolled in the class will not receive a grade. It is the student’s responsibility to make sure he/she is properly enrolled in the class. If you expect to be reinstated do not simply stop attending class-contact me as soon as possible.

**Excuses:** I only accept legitimate, official excuses, such as those from coaches and Deans’ offices. Unofficial excuses (such as doctor’s notes, letters from relatives or employers) and photocopies are not acceptable. You only need an excuse if you miss a test or have extensive absences (see below). Students are required to provide any excuse within ten (10) days of the last day of the absence. In any case, any excuse must be provided prior to the end of the semester.

**Extensive absences:** A student who has an extensive number of excused absences and elects to not withdraw from the class must meet with me to discuss the situation within one week of the student’s return to class. Failure to do so results in a non-negotiable “O” on all missed work. Any extensive makeup work takes place entirely at my discretion.

**Five Point Bonus:** Turning in the paper by the deadline results in a +5 “on time” bonus on the paper. A paper turned in after the deadline does not get the bonus. It is, after all, a bonus for doing the work on time.

**Grade Discussion:** I will not discuss individual grades during class time. Such discussions take place during my office hours. A grade discussion can never result in a lowered grade (unless the discussion reveals that cheating or plagiarism has taken place).

**Grade Information:** Grades cannot be given by phone or posted in public. Grade reports can be sent via SASE, email, or given in person. Grades are also posted on a secure web site. Use the “check your grades” link on the class web site. You will need to get your ID and password from me. You are expected to check your grades regularly online. You are required to check your grades on the website or during my office hours at least twice-once during the midterm week and once in the last week of classes prior to my last office hours. You are required to report any discrepancies immediately and supply the relevant evidence. If you fail to inform me of a discrepancy and fail to provide the supporting evidence by the end of the final exam, the grade(s) will not be changed.

**Grade Averages:** The averages shown on the grade reports are not accurate until all the grades have been entered. This is because I have set the software to drop the lowest scores (see above) and this will result in an inaccurate average until all the grades are entered. For example, if three tests have been given, but you only took two and scored 70% on both, then your average would be listed as 70%. However, your real average would be 46.7%, since the 0 would be dropped when the average was calculated. Be sure that you know your correct average before making decisions relating to the course (such as deciding not to take a test). Near the end of the semester I will “zero out” the remaining grades so as to provide a possible “worst case” grade scenario.

**Incompletes:** Requirements: 1) At least half the course work has been completed. 2) The minimum requirements have not been completed. 3) The student has at least a “C” average for the completed work. 4) The failure to complete the work is not the student’s fault. 5) Valid, signed excuses from his/her dean’s office must be provided. 6) The student must make the request no later than one week prior to my last office hours. 7) The student must complete the incomplete form and have it approved by me no later than the end of my last office hours. You must meet all these requirements to qualify for an incomplete.

**Make-ups:** Requirements: 1) A valid excuse covering the relevant date must be provided when the makeup is taken. 2) The make up for a test must be completed by the date of the next test. 3) The makeup must be taken during my office hours. Failure to meet the
conditions will result in a non-negotiable grade of “0” for the work. There are no make ups for quizzes or assignments. Papers are either late or on time. In no case will make up work be permitted after the end of the semester.

**Mercy:** Each student has one nontransferable “Mercy.” The mercy can be used once and only once. One use is as an excused absence to make up one test that was missed. Simply tell me you are using your mercy when you arrive to take the makeup. If you do not use your Mercy, it automatically becomes the “extra” 100% grade on the mercy quiz—there is no need to tell me to count it as this quiz. If you use the mercy, you do not get that bonus.

**Mobile Phones & Other Devices:** Please put your mobile phone and other communication devices on silent ring. If you must take a call during class, please leave the room quietly and go far enough away that your conversation does not distract others. You can use a smart phone, tablet or laptop during normal class (not during exams), provided that your activity is not distracting or annoying.

**Paper:** There are additional polices covering the paper. These are specified in the files for the paper. Students are required to be familiar with this information. Ignorance of these polices is no excuse.

**Returned Work:** You are expected to pick up your work when it is returned. Quizzes that are not picked up when they are returned will be discarded. Unclaimed exams and papers will be kept in my office for one year. If you wish to dispute a grade, you are required to present the work in question.

**Test Policy:** During exams you must clear your desktop of all items except your pen or pencil. Mobile phones and other communication devices are to be turned off unless you are legitimately required to be in constant contact (for example, you are a police officer). If you use a mobile phone or other communication device during an exam, then this will be considered cheating and you will receive a grade of zero (0) on the exam (unless you are legitimately required to be in constant contact, the call is one you are legitimately obligated to take and you have supplied legitimate documentation prior to the exam). Answer sheets are photographed.

**The Last Day:** All class related business (except the final) must be completed by the end of my office hours on the last day I hold my regular office hours. This will be in the last week of classes, not finals week. I do not hold normal office hours during finals week.

**Unusual/Special Circumstances:** Reasonable accommodations will be made for all legitimate circumstances. It is the student’s responsibility to make me aware of such relevant circumstances as soon as possible. Do not wait until the end of the semester! A form is provided with this syllabus for requesting special accommodations for special circumstances.

**Academic Learning Compact for Modern Philosophy:** Students will refer to the ALC page for additional information.
http://www.famu.edu/assessment/

In accord with the ALC students enrolled Ethics will:
1. Demonstrate proficiency in written communication. Implementation will be via written papers and evaluation will be via appropriate rubrics.
2. Demonstrate competence in critical thinking. Students will receive training in argumentation and philosophical reasoning. Assessment will be via appropriate rubrics.
3. Demonstrate familiarity with the critical concepts and methods of Philosophy and/or Religion. Students will be exposed to these concepts via instruction and will be assessed via appropriate rubrics.
4. Demonstrate understanding of diverse cultures and/or world views. Students will be exposed to a diversity of philosophical views. Assessment will be via appropriate rubrics.
5. Demonstrate ability to do research and to generate original written contributions to Philosophy and/or Religion. Assessment will be via appropriate rubrics.

**Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP):** “Enhancing Performance in Critical Thinking”. This class enhances quality by including extensive material on critical thinking in the form of general and ethical reasoning.

**Schedule** (subject to revision)

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<tr>
<th>Exam #1: January 29</th>
<th><strong>Draft Deadline:</strong> April 11</th>
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<tr>
<td>Draft Due: February 5</td>
<td>Paper “On Time Bonus” <strong>Deadline:</strong> April 16</td>
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<tr>
<td>Deadline to Make Up Exam 1: February 26</td>
<td>Paper “Emergency” <strong>Deadline:</strong> April 18</td>
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<tr>
<td>Exam #2: February 26</td>
<td>50% Grade Paper <strong>Deadline:</strong> April 23</td>
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<tr>
<td>Deadline to Make Up Exam 2: April 2</td>
<td>Last Class: April 25</td>
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<tr>
<td>Exam #3: April 2</td>
<td>Last Office Hours: April 25</td>
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<tr>
<td>Extension Request <strong>Deadline:</strong> April 9</td>
<td><strong>Final Exam:</strong> Thursday May 2 10:00-12:00</td>
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**Paper Due Dates, Deadlines and Extensions**

**Printed Copies/Blackboard:** Drafts need to be printed. The final version of the paper must be turned in via Blackboard. If you want comments on the final version of your paper you will also need to submit a printed copy. The date and time the paper is turned in is determined by which version (printed or Blackboard) is turned in last. When turning in a final version via Blackboard be absolutely certain that you are turning in the correct paper. No Blackboard related excuses are accepted.
Due Dates and Deadlines

There are various due dates and deadlines for the paper. Each is specified below.

**Draft Due Date:** This is the day the paper draft is due. The drafts will be collected, commented on and graded. The draft grade will be entered as a “temporary” grade. This grade will be replaced by the rewrite grade, assuming the grade on the final version of the paper is better (and assuming that plagiarism does not occur). Paper drafts can be turned in before this due date. Drafts must be printed copies, except in classes that are entirely online. In such classes, drafts can be turned in via Blackboard.

**Draft Deadline Date:** This is the last day to turn in a draft. Papers turned in after the draft deadline will be considered final revisions and will be graded as such. Any number of drafts can be turned in prior to this date and these will be commented on and graded. The draft deadline cannot be extended. Before the deadline drafts can be turned in during my office hours or class. On the draft deadline day, you can turn in a draft during my office hours (or class, if it occurs before my last office hours that day). I will read the drafts on a first-come-first-serve basis until my office hours end. To be fair, I will take the amount of time remaining and divide it by the number of drafts. Any drafts I do not get to or those turned in after the draft deadline will be treated as final drafts (unless the draft has clearly printed on it “do not grade as the final version” or something similar). Drafts must be printed copies, except in classes that are entirely online. In such classes, drafts can be turned in via Blackboard.

**Paper “On Time Bonus” Deadline Date:** This is the last day to turn in a paper and receive the +5 bonus. I must receive the paper by the end of class or the end of my office hours that day, whichever is later. The final version of the paper must be turned in via Blackboard.

**Paper “Emergency” Deadline Date:** This is the last day to turn in the paper and receive full credit. All other deadline conditions still apply. I must receive the paper by the end of my office hours on this date. This date can be extended by requesting an extension (see below). Papers must be turned in via Blackboard.

**50% Grade Paper Deadline Date:** This is the last date to turn in a paper and receive 50% credit. Papers turned in after this date will receive a 0. If you have a draft paper grade and it is higher than the 50% grade on the final version, than the draft paper grade will score as your paper grade (except in cases involving plagiarism). I must receive the paper by the end of my office hours on this date. Papers must be turned in via Blackboard.

**I'm So Confused!!** Here is the simple version: 1) Turn in your draft on or before the draft deadline if you want comments on your paper so you can rewrite it. 2) Turn in the paper on or before the paper “on time” deadline if you want the +5 bonus. 3) Turn in the paper by the paper “emergency” deadline if you want full credit. 4) Turn in the paper on or before the 50% paper deadline if you want half credit. 5) Turn in the paper after the 50% paper deadline (or never turn it in) if you want a zero.

**Paper Extensions & Excuses**

Simply providing an excuse will not change the deadlines for you. The following details the policies for requesting an extension. There are no exceptions to these rules. Please do not ask. If you are in special circumstances that affect more than the paper, you will also need to complete the special circumstances form.

**Extension**: A student who faces circumstances that seriously impede his/her ability to complete the paper can request an extension to the paper “emergency” deadline. To qualify for an extension a student must be in a situation that is 1) unavoidable by reasonable means and 2) such that it prevents working on the paper for a significant amount of time. An extension must be requested by the extension request deadline, which is specified on the syllabus. A student must also provide legitimate documentation from the university and complete the extension request form. Failure to meet these conditions will result in an automatic refusal of an extension request. Extensions are entirely at my discretion.

Examples of qualifying situations would include military service and debilitating medical conditions that prevent a student from being able to write (such as broken hands). Situations that can be reasonably avoided or do not prevent a student from working on the paper for a significant amount of time do not qualify. Examples of situations that would NOT qualify include having a court date, having car problems, having a minor illness for a short duration, and so on.

An extension will extend the “emergency” deadline for the paper by a specified amount. This will vary depending on the conditions but will typically match the duration of the impeding situation. In no case will an extension extend the paper deadline beyond my last office hours.

**Special Extension**: A student who faces dire and unexpected circumstances that arise after the extension request deadline but before the paper “emergency” deadline can make an appeal for a special extension. To qualify for a special extension a student must be in a dire situation that is 1) unavoidable by reasonable means and 2) such that it prevents the student from completing and turning in the paper by the paper deadline. A student must also provide legitimate documentation from the university and complete the extension request form. Failure to meet these conditions will result in an automatic refusal of a special extension request. Special Extensions are at my discretion.

Examples of qualifying situations would include a sudden serious injury or illness requiring an extensive hospital stay or being suddenly called up for National Guard service due to a natural disaster or war. Situations that can reasonable be avoided or that do
not prevent a student from completing or turning in the paper do not qualify. Examples of situations that would NOT qualify include minor illnesses, automobile problems or a scheduled court date.

A special extension will extend the “emergency” deadline for the paper by a specified amount. This will vary depending on the conditions but will typically match the duration of the impeding situation. In no case will a special extension extend the paper deadline beyond the end of the class final.
**Paper Extension Request Form**

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<th>Name:</th>
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<td>Email:</td>
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**Class (for which the extension is requested):**

**Brief Description of Situation (Attach supporting documentation from the university):**

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<th>Relevant Dates of the Situation:</th>
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**Date to which the extension is requested:**

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<th>Signature:</th>
<th>Date:</th>
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Dr. LaBossiere’s Special Circumstances Form

Contact Information

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Phone</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Email</td>
<td>Student ID</td>
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Classes (With Dr. LaBossiere)

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Description of Circumstances: Please clearly and concisely describe the relevant circumstances. For example: “I will miss at least two tests and one paper in ethics due to being called up by the National Guard.”

Do you have documentation for these circumstances? Yes [ ] No [ ] If “yes”, please provide the documentation.

Request: Please specify the request you are making in regards to your special circumstances. Be sure to specify dates where relevant. For example: “I will mail you the paper by the deadline and take the tests by March 15.”

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Signature/Date

Dr. LaBossiere’ Reply

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Signature/Date

Revised: 12/24/2010