

The Modern Worldview (PHIL 3500)

Spring, 2009. Western Michigan University
4:00pm – 5:40 pm & 6:00pm – 7:40pm TR Moore 1115

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Office Hours: Moore Hall 3031, Monday & Wednesday 4-5 pm

Course Description

The modern worldview is sometimes associated with what is called the ‘*Scientific-Worldview*,’ the beginnings of which are often connected to the 17th century. But what is a worldview? What are the characteristics of a worldview that make it scientific? To what extent if any were people prior to the 17th century interested in science? What factors led to the Scientific Revolution; more specifically, how did people coordinate their religious, philosophical, and scientific beliefs up until and during the modern period? Our course is a tour of intellectual history, especially the development of ‘natural philosophy’ up to the 17th century with a special focus upon the relevant philosophical issues pertinent to these questions. This course will introduce you to the history that brought about the world with which you are familiar and give you resources to think more about the development of your own worldview as you study more recent material from other classes and beyond.

Grading, Assignments, Etc.

Grading will consist of Attendance & Participation (10%), Quizzes (30%), a Midterm (30%), and a Final (30%).

92-100 A	72-77 C
88-91 BA	68-71 DC
82-87 B	60-68 D
78-81 CB	0-60 E

Any extra credit offered in this course will be provided on the quizzes or tests. I do not offer any alternative options for extra credit. Your total grade will be rounded up when the tenths place is 0.5 or larger.

Other Policies

Attendance & Participation: You are given 4 free absences for any reason whatsoever.

You do not need to email me each of these times to tell me why you missed class. After your 4 absences are used up, your 10% will drop by 1% for each extra absence, unless you can prove the absence was for an emergency. Participation is determined by your participation in the class and any Surprise Writing Assignments I ask of you, such as if I believe the class is not reading the assignments.

Academic Integrity: Students are expected to follow Student Code of Conduct regarding academic integrity and honesty. Definition of academic honesty violations can be found at http://www.osc.wmich.edu/academichonesty/definitions_of_violations.html. Cheating and plagiarism *will not be tolerated*. Be aware that culling material from web sources is extremely easy to discover. Cheating will result in the minimum of receiving a grade of 'E' for the class, and you may be reported to the university. Each semester I find a handful of students who are surprised when they are caught cheating, and then take a failing grade. Be wise by doing your own work, have integrity for yourself, respect your fellow classmates by following rules of fairness, and respect your professor by not being a liar.

Special Accommodations: If you have a disability that requires special testing accommodations or other classroom modifications, please notify both myself and the office of Disabled Student Resources and Services as soon as possible. The office of Disabled Student Resources and Services can be found at Disability Resources and Services can be found at <http://dsrs.wmich.edu/> or (269) 387-2116.

Religious Observances: The university's religious observances policy (MOA-07/02) states that students "who must be absent from scheduled classes to fulfill religious obligations or observe practices associated with their faith not be disadvantaged. However, it is the student's responsibility to make arrangements with his/her instructors in advance. It is in the student's best interests to approach each instructor expeditiously and with sufficient notice that the rights and responsibilities of the instructor are not disrupted." It is *your* responsibility to check the class meeting schedule and inform me of possible observance conflicts at least 3 weeks before the observance date.

Miscellaneous: Computers and cell phones are prohibited – unless you speak with me about it. So, print your readings and lectures!

Course Materials

Many of the course readings will be made available on E-Learning (EL) in the form of a PDF file, which can be opened by Adobe Acrobat Reader (www.adobe.com). If you cannot open this on your home computer, a computer in the WMU library can access the file. E-Learning can be accessed through your WMU portal.

Other Required Course Materials:

- John Henry, *The Scientific Revolution and the Origins of Modern Science*, 3rd edition (Palgrave, 2008).

There will be a *significant* amount of reading in this course.

Tentative Schedule and Readings*

* RQ = Reading Questions;

*Date | Class Activity | Reading (NOTE: Quizzes Not Listed Below)

1-12	Introduction to Course & Logic Introduction	No Reading Due
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1-14	Lecture 1: What is a Worldview & Why Should You Care?	Matthews, "Science, Worldviews and Education: An Introduction" parts 1-4; RQ
1-19	Prolegomena to Thinking About Worldview Questions: What is Truth? Lecture 1 Slides on Truth	Lynch, Chapters 3 & 8; RQ
1-21	Reasoning About Worldviews & Nature of Science Questions. Finishing Lecture 1	Gauch, "Science, Worldviews, and Education," skip sect. 8. RQ
1-26	Lecture 2: Natural Philosophy Before Aristotle	Lindberg, Chapter 2
1-28	Finish Up Lecture 2	
2-02	Discussion of Epicurus & Atomism	Epicurus, "Letter to Herodotus"; RQ
2-04	Discussion of Plato	Plato, "Timaeus"; RQ
2-09	Lecture 3: Aristotle	Lindberg, ch. 3
2-11	Discussion of Aristotle Texts	Aristotle Readings; RQ
2-16	Lecture 4: Hellenistic Period 1	Lindberg, ch. 5
2-18	Discussion of Ptolemy's Almagest	Ptolemy, Preface to the <i>Almagest</i> , RQ
2-23	Lecture 5: Ancient Medicine & Galen	Hippocratic Texts
2-25	Finishing up Lecture 5	Galen Article
3-02	Spring Break	
3-04	Spring Break	
3-09	Lecture 6: The Middle Ages (sort of)	No reading due
3-11	Finish up Lecture & Condemnation of 1277	Bishop Tempier, Condemnation of 1277
3-16	Aquinas Lecture	Aquinas, 5 Ways
3-18	Renaissance Lecture	No Reading Due
3-23	(Renaissance Lecture continued)	No Reading Due
3-25	Two Renaissance Philosophers: Ficino & Pico	Kristeller (both); Pico; Ficino
3-30	Renaissance Skepticism: Montaigne	Schiffman article; Montaigne 1
4-01	Discussion of Montaigne continued	Montaigne 2
4-06	Lecture on Bacon	Inductive Method & The New Atlantis (from first new paragraph on page 30 to end); and http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/New_Atlantis
4-08	Discussion of Descartes	Both Descartes Readings
4-13	Lecture 8: The New Astronomy 1 & Maybe Discussion of Copernicus	Copernicus
4-15	Lecture 9: The New Astronomy 2	No Reading Due
4-20	Discussion of Galileo Texts	Both Galileo Texts
4-22	Wrapping Up Course	No Reading Due
4-26	FINALS WEEK (Time of Exam TBA)	