

**THE UNIVERSITY OF WESTERN ONTARIO  
DEPARTMENT OF PHILOSOPHY  
Undergraduate Course Outline 2017-18**

**Philosophy 3031: Women in Early Modern Philosophy**

**Winter Term 2018  
P&AB 150  
M 13:30-15:20  
W 14:30-15:20**

**Instructor: Benjamin Hill  
STVH 3142:  
519-661-2111 x80143  
Office Hours: M, 9:30-10:20  
W, 13:30-14:20  
Email: Please use OWL Messages  
Emergencies Only: bhill28@uwo.ca**

**DESCRIPTION**

During the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries, female philosophers began participating in public philosophical discussions and debates. This course will survey many of the significant contributors to these discussions. In addition to introducing the main protagonists and their thoughts, the course will consider how their contributions were received by their contemporaries as well as today and explore what their contributions tell us about the nature of philosophy in the early modern period.

Prerequisites: Philoso 2

You may be removed from this course and it will be deleted from your record. This decision may not be appealed. You will receive no adjustment to your fees in the event you are dropped from a course for failing to have the necessary prerequisites.

**NOTES**

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**Attendance is mandatory for this course and unexcused absences will adversely affect the valuation for information about how attendance is graded.**

In this course students will develop:

1. A familiarity with several non-canonical thinkers and the capacity to articulate, explain, and defend their philosophical contributions to the development of early modern philosophy;
2. The capacity to historically contextualize ideas, arguments, and texts;
3. The capacity to philosophically analyze unfamiliar and complicated ideas, arguments, and texts;
4. The capacity to present, explain, and discuss alternatives to the standard, canonical narratives of early modern philosophy;

5. The capacity to present, explain, and discuss the rich variety and diversity of early modern philosophers, early modern philosophical topics and projects, and early modern philosophical practices and modes of expression.

### **TEXTS**

All texts are available at The Bookstore at Western for your convenience.

Cavendish, Margaret. *Observations upon Experimental Philosophy*. Edited by Marshall, Eugene. Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing, 2016. ISBN 9781624665141.

Clarke, Desmond, ed.. *The Equality of the Sexes*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013. ISBN 9780199673513.

Wollstonecraft, May. *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman*. Edited by Philip Barnard and Stephen Shapiro. Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing, 2013. ISBN 9781603849388.

### **METHODS OF EVALUATION**

**Examinations (40%)** Students are required to complete two self-administered, timed essay and short answer examinations. The examinations will be available for a limited time (48 hours) via OWL and are to be completed during that window. The examinations will be open-book, open-

**Term Paper (30%)** Students are required to write and submit a 1500-1750 word analytic Term Paper. The paper is due at midnight on Wednesday April 11<sup>th</sup>. More details can be found on OWL under the “Assignments” tab. It is the student's responsibility to make sure that the paper is uploaded or emailed *before* midnight according to the upload/email timestamp. Take steps to ensure that your paper is not refused or counted late because of a slight error in timing. No papers can be accepted after midnight on Wednesday April 11<sup>th</sup> per departmental and Senate policy. As of Thursday April 12<sup>th</sup>, all students who have failed to submit a paper will be awarded a score of 0, unless they receive decanal approval for an accommodation. Papers failing to fall within the required word count will not be accepted and will not be considered submissions; they will be awarded a score of 0 for the assignment on Thursday April 12<sup>th</sup>.

An analytic essay or paper differs from an exegetical paper because it *defends a thesis*, and in the case of a philosophical essay or paper the thesis should be a philosophically important and interesting one. *A defense of a thesis* is an argument that shows the truth of the thesis. Because this is a course in the history of philosophy, your paper should be appropriate for the methodology of the history of philosophy. There are a variety of types of projects that would be appropriate for an analytic history of philosophy paper, *but they all must critically and substantially engage with a primary text assigned in this course*:

- (a) Defending a philosophical analysis of a specific doctrine or argument presented in the primary text;
- (b) Defending a philosophical assessment of a specific doctrine or argument presented in the text in a way that is sensitive to the text's historical context;
- (c) Critiquing an existing interpretation of a doctrine or text;
- (d) Defending a novel or alternative interpretation of a doctrine or text against the established interpretation(s) of it.

Papers will be graded largely on the nature of their thesis (its historical and philosophical importance and interest, the clarity and precision with which it is expressed, and contribution that it makes to our continuing discussions about and understanding of the texts in question) and the adequacy of their defense of that thesis (its clarity, coherence, and plausibility, its power and fruitfulness, and the depth and relevancy of the material marshalled in its support). There is no “research” requirement for this paper, but students are encouraged to do so if they want. It is generally helpful and fruitful and there is a correlation between doing such philosophical “research” and writing stronger and better papers. Students electing to do “research” are strongly encouraged to seek out and use only reliable, scholarly vetted and peer-reviewed sources. For example, wikipedia and self-published web or blog postings are *prima facie* frowned upon and should be used with caution. Students choosing to use such material rather than peer-reviewed articles and books or webposting recommended by the instructor or GTA should be prepared to justify his or her selection and use of such material within the paper's footnotes. Students are strongly encouraged to ask questions and seek help in the development of their paper projects, their thesis, and their argument. If an optional paper writing seminar is offered, students are strongly encouraged to participate.

**Attendance (10%)** All students are required to attend every class. A sign-in sheet will be distributed. Signing-in and leaving, arriving quite late and signing in nonetheless, signing in another student, and other ways of falsifying the record of attendance constitutes academic fraud and will be treated as such. Attendance does not connote mere physical presence in the



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