



ARTS3368

Modern European Philosophy

Term One // 2021

Course Overview

Staff Contact Details

Convenors

Name	Email	Availability	Location	Phone
Associate Professor James Phillips	j.phillips@unsw.edu.au	2-3 pm Wednesdays	Morven Brown 369	9085 2987

School Contact Information

School of Humanities and Languages

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Opening Hours: Monday - Friday, 9am - 5pm

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Course Details

Credit Points 6

Summary of the Course

This course will examine major traditions, themes, and figures in the development of modern European philosophy. Examples of traditions that may be explored include: German Idealism, Phenomenology, Hermeneutics, Critical Theory and Poststructuralism. Themes the course may cover include: recognition, subjectivity, experience, and freedom. Figures that may be examined include Kant, Fichte, Hegel, Adorno, Heidegger, Arendt, Honneth, amongst others.

Course Learning Outcomes

1. Explain fundamental themes and concepts in social and political philosophy.
2. Apply critical and conceptual thought to contemporary social and political reality.
3. Evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of different approaches to the course themes and within social and political philosophy more broadly.

Teaching Strategies

The course is designed to develop your capacity to comprehend and independently engage in contemporary debates on key themes in social and political philosophy. It is structured around weekly readings, lectures and tutorial discussions on the readings. Preparation by reading the set texts is crucial for successful participation in the course. There will be introductory lecturing that provides background information and introduces theoretical and analytical perspectives and debates that are explored in or exemplified by the specialised weekly readings. The tutorials will be extensive and involve in-depth discussion of the readings and related contemporary and scholarly debates and approaches. You are encouraged to participate in the class actively, by presenting questions, and trying to think of answers to the questions posed.

Assessment

Assessment Tasks

Assessment task	Weight	Due Date	Student Learning Outcomes Assessed
Short essay	40%	19/03/2021 04:00 PM	1, 2, 3
Long essay	60%	30/04/2021 04:00 PM	1, 2, 3

Assessment Details

Assessment 1: Short essay

Details:

Short essay, maximum 1500 words. Feedback is provided via individual comments or rubric.

Additional details:

Essay topics on the readings for weeks 1-4

- 1) Evaluate Kant's model of a republic, paying attention to its component parts, its goals and its realisability.
- 2) Examine and compare the concept of recognition in Hegel, Kojève and Lacan.
- 3) Reconstruct and assess the debate between "Western morality" and Nietzsche's critique of it.
- 4) Discuss happiness in Freud, its prospects and obstacles.
- 5) Looking at the concept of aggression in the readings for weeks 1-4, set two or more of the thinkers in critical dialogue.

Students are welcome to devise their own topics but must obtain the course convenor's approval of the topic prior to submission.

Turnitin setting: This assignment is submitted through Turnitin and students can see Turnitin similarity reports.

Assessment 2: Long essay

Details:

Longer essay, 2500 words. Feedback is provided via individual comments or rubric. This is the final assessment for attendance purposes.

Additional details:

Essay topics on the readings for weeks 5-10

- 1) Expound and evaluate Schmitt's purist concept of the political.
- 2) Discuss the role of critique in social change for Benjamin and Adorno.
- 3) Examine Arendt's account of the place of truth in politics.
- 4) Review Habermas's defence of qualified toleration.
- 5) What has COVID-19 revealed about Western governments and societies? What lessons can we learn? What dangers have come to the fore? Draw on the readings for week 10.

Students are welcome to devise their own topics but must obtain the course convenor's approval of the topic prior to submission.

Turnitin setting: This assignment is submitted through Turnitin and students can see Turnitin similarity reports.

Attendance Requirements

Students are strongly encouraged to attend all classes and review lecture recordings.

Course Schedule

[View class timetable](#)

Timetable

Date	Type	Content
Week 1: 15 February - 19 February	Seminar	<p>Immanuel Kant (1724-1804).</p> <p>Themes: war and peace among nations; monarchies vs. republics; the public sphere; the Enlightenment; reason in politics.</p> <p>Required reading: Immanuel Kant, "Toward Perpetual Peace: A Philosophical Sketch" in id., <i>Toward Perpetual Peace and Other Writings on Politics, Peace, and History</i>, ed. Pauline Kleingeld, trans. David L. Colclasure (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2006), 67-109.</p> <p>Possible questions: How has war changed over the centuries? What is applicable and what is inapplicable in Kant's text to current circumstances? Does trade contribute to peace? What is the role and standing of the public sphere in contemporary societies? Is there a complex story to tell about social media and government accountability? Does the public sphere need an educated populace to function in the way Kant wants?</p>
Week 2: 22 February - 26 February	Seminar	<p>G. W. F. Hegel (1770-1831) / Alexandre Kojève (1902-68) / Jacques Lacan (1901-81).</p> <p>Themes: fear; work; recognition; self-consciousness; externalisation; progress.</p> <p>Required readings: G. W. F. Hegel, "Self-Sufficiency and Non-Self-Sufficiency of Self-Consciousness: Mastery and Servitude" in id., <i>The Phenomenology of Spirit</i>, trans. Terry Pinkard and Michael Baur (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018), 108-116.</p> <p>AND</p> <p>Alexandre Kojève, "In Place of an Introduction" in id., <i>Introduction to the Reading of Hegel</i>:</p>

		<p><i>Lectures on the Phenomenology of Spirit</i>, trans. James H. Nicholls, ed. Allan Bloom (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1969), 1-30.</p> <p>AND</p> <p>Jacques Lacan, "The Mirror Stage as Formative of the Function of the I as Revealed in Psychoanalytic Experience" in id., <i>Écrits: A Selection</i>, trans. Alan Sheridan (Abingdon: Routledge, 2001), 1-8.</p> <p>Possible questions: What are the psychological effects of repression and enslavement? What does work tell us about ourselves? What do the contemporary conditions of labour tell us about the constitution of the self? What are the advantages and disadvantages for political action of Hegel's teleology of history? What does it mean to recognise oneself? What is involved in being recognised by others? If, following Lacan, recognition always involves alienation, what does this imply for identity politics (both left and right)?</p>
<p>Week 3: 1 March - 5 March</p>	<p>Seminar</p>	<p>Friedrich Nietzsche (1844-1900).</p> <p>Themes: slavery; morality; will to power; truth and the body.</p> <p>Required reading: Friedrich Nietzsche, excerpts from <i>On the Genealogy of Morals</i>, trans. Carol Diethe in <i>The Nietzsche Reader</i>, eds. Keith Ansell Pearson and Duncan Large (Oxford: Blackwell, 2006), 390-435.</p> <p>Possible questions: What does a moral code reveal about a society and an age? What independence do science, morality and philosophy enjoy from political power? How does Nietzsche's image of the slave relate to Hegel's? What are the conditions of possibility of social critique?</p>
<p>Week 4: 8 March - 12 March</p>	<p>Seminar</p>	<p>Sigmund Freud (1856-1939).</p> <p>Themes: happiness; aggression; the self; human nature and history; the civilising process.</p> <p>Required reading: Sigmund Freud, <i>Civilization and Its Discontents</i>, trans. Joan Riviere and James Strachey (London: Hogarth Press, 1973), 1-82.</p> <p>Possible questions: What can be said for and against the idea of human nature? Is happiness the measure of a society? What are the ramifications of</p>

		Freud's enlarged and conflicted picture of the human self for liberal democracy and the legitimization of government through consent? Do repression and control take the same forms in every age and society? Has Freud translated into biology what was political in Nietzsche?
Week 5: 15 March - 19 March	Seminar	<p>Carl Schmitt (1888-1985).</p> <p>Themes: sovereignty; legitimacy of the laws; states of emergency; dictatorship; the political in relation to economics, ethics and aesthetics.</p> <p>Required reading: Carl Schmitt, <i>The Concept of the Political</i>, trans. George Schwab (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2007), 19-79.</p> <p>Possible questions: What makes a nation? What is the purpose of the state? How does a thinker's biography influence how we interpret and evaluate his or her work? What has enabled a resurgence of right-wing populism in our own day? Where do you see the convergences and divergences between contemporary right-wing populism and the fascist movements of the interwar period?</p>
Week 6: 22 March - 26 March	Reading	No classes this week.
Week 7: 29 March - 2 April	Seminar	<p>Walter Benjamin (1892-1940) / Theodor Wiesengrund Adorno (1903-69)</p> <p>No class on 2 April - Good Friday public holiday</p> <p>Themes: bias in historiography; messianism and revolution; liberal democratic ideology; critique.</p> <p>Required readings:</p> <p>Walter Benjamin, "On the Concept of History" in id., <i>Selected Writings: 1938-1940</i>, trans. Edmund Jephcott et al., eds. Howard Eiland and Michael W. Jennings (Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2003), 389-400.</p> <p>AND</p> <p>Theodor W. Adorno, "Opinion Delusion Society" in id., <i>Critical Models: Interventions and Catchwords</i>, trans. Henry W. Pickford (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998), 105-22.</p> <p>Possible questions: What do we ask of history as an academic discipline? To what extent is the</p>

		<p>Marxist notion of revolution indebted to the Judeo-Christian concept of the messianic? What are the assets and liabilities that come with this debt? Is an opinion a belief? Where does opinion begin and end? Have the operations of public opinion changed since Adorno's text was published in 1963?</p>
Week 8: 5 April - 9 April	Seminar	<p>Hannah Arendt (1906-75)</p> <p>Themes: lying; facts; political action; opinion.</p> <p>Required reading: Hannah Arendt, "Truth and Politics" in id., <i>Between Past Future: Eight Exercises in Political Thought</i> (New York: Viking Press, 1968), 227-64.</p> <p>Possible questions: What is the relationship between democracy and truth? What limits, if any, should be placed on freedom of speech? Can freedom of opinion not only be compatible with tyranny, but furthermore enable it? What can be done to restore truth to its rightful place in political life? Is Trump's effect on American life reversible?</p>
Week 9: 12 April - 16 April	Seminar	<p>Jürgen Habermas (1929-)</p> <p>Themes: multiculturalism; tolerance; religion; autonomy.</p> <p>Required reading: Jürgen Habermas, "Equal Treatment of Cultures and the Limits of Postmodern Liberalism", trans. Jeffrey Flynn, <i>Journal of Political Philosophy</i> 13, no. 1 (2005): 1-28.</p> <p>Possible questions: What is a culture and how do we tell cultures apart? How much does social cohesion depend on the conduct of non-state actors? What is diversity? What kind of state demands assimilation? What kind of state does not? What are the social and political costs and benefits of diversity (and who bears those costs and receives those benefits)?</p>
Week 10: 19 April - 23 April	Seminar	<p>Giorgio Agamben (1942-) / Jean-Luc Nancy (1940-) and others</p> <p>Theme: Contemporary philosophy on COVID-19 and the contemporary state</p> <p>Required readings: Giorgio Agamben, "Reflections on the Plague", <i>European Journal of Psychoanalysis</i> (2020)</p>

AND

Michel Foucault, Giorgio Agamben, and Sergio Benvenuto, "Coronavirus and Philosophers", *European Journal of Psychoanalysis* (2020)

AND

Jean-Luc Nancy, Roberto Esposito, Divya Dwivedi, Shaj Mohan, Rocco Ronchi, and Massimo de Carolis, "On Pandemics", *European Journal of Psychoanalysis* (2020)

Possible questions: What have we learnt about our states and our societies in the past year? What has changed and what should change in our dealings with one another and with the natural world? What does the effectiveness of different states' responses to COVID-19 say about their respective countries' political culture?

Resources

Prescribed Resources

The set readings for the course are accessible via Leganto on Moodle and marked as mandatory.

You will also find lecture notes for each week posted on the Friday on Moodle.

Recommended Resources

On Moodle you will find commentaries for each week's primary texts via Leganto.

These make up only a small portion of what has been written on these works. I include them in order to give you some idea of the range of views that critics have developed. I do not want you to treat them as authorities to whom you should defer: it is more in keeping with philosophy if you approach them as interlocutors with whom you conduct a dialogue, listening to what they say and coming up with a position of your own.

Course Evaluation and Development

Students have the opportunity to provide feedback on the course both formally - via the end-of-term MyExperience survey - and informally - via e-mail or face-to-face.

This is the second time ARTS3368 Modern European Philosophy has run. I have dropped the reading by Foucault and added a series of texts on COVID-19. As the course will be conducted wholly on-line this term, I plan to use the breakout room feature in Blackboard for more small-group discussions.

Submission of Assessment Tasks

Turnitin Submission

If you encounter a problem when attempting to submit your assignment through Turnitin, please telephone External Support on 9385 3331 or email them on externalteltsupport@unsw.edu.au . Support hours are 8:00am – 10:00pm on weekdays and 9:00am – 5:00pm on weekends (365 days a year). If you are unable to submit your assignment due to a fault with Turnitin you may apply for an extension, but you must retain your ticket number from External Support (along with any other relevant documents) to include as evidence to support your extension application. If you email External Support you will automatically receive a ticket number, but if you telephone you will need to specifically ask for one. Turnitin also provides updates on their system status on Twitter.

Generally, assessment tasks must be submitted electronically via either Turnitin or a Moodle assignment. In instances where this is not possible, it will be stated on your course's Moodle site with alternative submission details.

For information on how to submit assignments online via Moodle: <https://student.unsw.edu.au/how-submit-assignment-moodle>

Academic Honesty and Plagiarism

Plagiarism is using the words or ideas of others and presenting them as your own. It can take many forms, from deliberate cheating to accidentally copying from a source without acknowledgement.

UNSW groups plagiarism into the following categories:

Copying: using the same or very similar words to the original text or idea without acknowledging the source or using quotation marks. This also applies to images, art and design projects, as well as presentations where someone presents another's ideas or words without credit.

Inappropriate paraphrasing: Changing a few words and phrases while mostly retaining the original structure and/or progression of ideas of the original, and information without acknowledgement. This also applies in presentations where someone paraphrases another's ideas or words without credit and to piecing together quotes and paraphrases into a new whole, without appropriate referencing.

Collusion: working with others but passing off the work as a person's individual work. Collusion also includes providing your work to another student before the due date, or for the purpose of them plagiarising at any time, paying another person to perform an academic task, stealing or acquiring another person's academic work and copying it, offering to complete another person's work or seeking payment for completing academic work.

Inappropriate citation: Citing sources which have not been read, without acknowledging the "secondary" source from which knowledge of them has been obtained.

Duplication ("self-plagiarism"): submitting your own work, in whole or in part, where it has previously been prepared or submitted for another assessment or course at UNSW or another university.

Correct referencing practices:

- Paraphrasing, summarising, essay writing and time management
- Appropriate use of and attribution for a range of materials including text, images, formulae and concepts.

Individual assistance is available on request from The Learning Centre (<http://www.lc.unsw.edu.au/>). Students are also reminded that careful time management is an important part of study and one of the identified causes of plagiarism is poor time management. Students should allow sufficient time for research, drafting and proper referencing of sources in preparing all assessment items.

UNSW Library also has the ELISE tool available to assist you with your study at UNSW. ELISE is designed to introduce new students to studying at UNSW but it can also be a great refresher during your study.

Completing the ELISE tutorial and quiz will enable you to:

- analyse topics, plan responses and organise research for academic writing and other assessment tasks
- effectively and efficiently find appropriate information sources and evaluate relevance to your needs
- use and manage information effectively to accomplish a specific purpose
- better manage your time

- understand your rights and responsibilities as a student at UNSW
- be aware of plagiarism, copyright, UNSW Student Code of Conduct and Acceptable Use of UNSW ICT Resources Policy
- be aware of the standards of behaviour expected of everyone in the UNSW community
- locate services and information about UNSW and UNSW Library

Some of these areas will be familiar to you, others will be new. Gaining a solid understanding of all the related aspects of ELISE will help you make the most of your studies at UNSW.

<http://subjectguides.library.unsw.edu.au/elise/aboutelise>

Academic Information

For essential student information relating to:

- requests for extension;
- late submissions guidelines;
- review of marks;
- UNSW Health and Safety policies;
- examination procedures;
- special consideration in the event of illness or misadventure;
- student equity and disability;
- and other essential academic information, see

<https://www.arts.unsw.edu.au/current-students/academic-information/protocols-guidelines/>

Image Credit

Protesters on the River Seine - December 2018. Photographer: Oliver Morin (AFP)

CRICOS

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Acknowledgement of Country

We acknowledge the Bedegal people who are the traditional custodians of the lands on which UNSW Kensington campus is located.