What makes Descartes (1596-1650), Spinoza (1632-1677), Berkeley (1685-1753), Hume (1711-1776), Kant (1724-1804), among others, “modern” philosophers? What does ‘modern’ refer to and what is this ‘modernity’ that arguably still continues—or else has let itself subside, leaving us with a ‘post’ modernity? The western history of philosophy is generally divided into four periods: ancient (500 BCE-300), medieval (300-1600), modern (17th and 18th century) and contemporary (or alternatively 19th and 20th century) philosophy. The Ancients include the Pre-Socratics, Plato and Aristotle, the Skeptics and Stoics, all the way up to neo-Platonists such as Plotinus (204-270). Medieval philosophy is dominated by Christian, Muslim, and Jewish thinkers who grounded their philosophical systems on revelation, such as Augustine, Aquinas, Maimonides, Avicenna. Where to begin modern philosophy? With Bacon (1561-1626), who is said to have formulated the method of science? With Machiavelli (1469-1527), who shifts the origin of power from the divine to human will? With Descartes, who invents the concept of subjectivity, the person? Whichever source we take, the mark of modernity is the suspension of the absolute authority of faith.

Faith and reason. Which to trust? Are they different? Is a trust in reason not, after all, simply a faith in reason? Perhaps there is no avoiding faith... But faith in what and for what end? In a supernatural being for salvation? Faith in divine justice, that the wrongs of this world will be redeemed somehow, somewhere? In the necessary truths of human thinking?

Our guiding question in this class will be: What is the source, form, and implications of the modern conception of reason?

What is reason? Is it a substance? What is rationality? Is it an activity? Who has it? A being? Is it a principle (logos)? Is it something to be had? Is it a property? What does it do? Where does it come from? Is it the same everywhere, for everyone? What and from whom do the rationalists inherit this idea, this faculty, ‘reason’? What are their sources? Are the empiricists and the rationalists consistent in their understanding and use of this concept? What is the ratio that allows us to group Descartes, Spinoza and Leibniz as ‘rationalists’? What is the empeiria that unites Berkeley, Locke, and Hume as ‘empiricists’? What is the role of reason in experience, and vice versa? What is, then, our modern inheritance? Are we moderns with respect to reason, or post-modern?

Topics will include, among others, philosophical method, the nature of substance, the relationship between mind and body, and existence of God.

Course Objectives: This course aims to help students develop

• an understanding of the importance of the history of philosophy;
• an interest in, and appreciation of, 17th and 18th century philosophy;
• the skills of describing, interpreting, explaining, and evaluating the philosophical ideas of main figures of the modern period;
• the ability to articulate philosophical ideas verbally and in writing;
• the ability to think philosophically.

**Course Requirements:** You are expected to **complete assigned readings and homework** before class begins and to participate in all class activities. Plan to spend 5-6 hours preparing (reading and writing) for each class meeting. Graded work will include **two take-home midterm exams (25% each), a cumulative take-home final exam (25%), five short quizzes (15%), and attendance/participation (10%).** Quizzes will consist of short-answer questions, take place at the end of class, and test your comprehension of the reading and class discussion. The exams will contain three essay questions.

**Attendance:** For every class meeting you will be assigned readings from the book. I expect you to come to class having completed the reading and have your book with you in class. 10% of your grade is based on your performance in class discussions and active participation in group activities and in-class exercises. Absences and coming to class unprepared will negatively impact your participation grade. You will be counted as absent if you come to class late or leave before class is over. There will be no make-ups offered for missed in-class work.

**Phones/Laptops/Tablets:** Phones are *not* permitted in class; having them out will be considered non-participation and will adversely affect your grade. Laptops and tablets are not allowed in class.

**Absences:** Arrangements to make up graded coursework should be made at least **two-weeks** in advance for university-sponsored obligations (such as athletic competitions or student research presentations). **Make-up quizzes or exams are allowable only due to extraordinary circumstances and only if arrangements are made with the professor in advance.** It is your responsibility to acquire notes for missed class content and follow announcements regarding any changes to the schedule. I recommend that you exchange e-mails/phone numbers with a few of your classmates – to find out what you have missed, but also to discuss readings, and form study groups.

**Office Hours and Email:** No appointment is necessary to see me during my office hours. If you cannot meet during my office hours, send me an email, at least 2 days in advance, to set up an appointment. In all your email correspondence with me, indicate the class (PHIL 303) and the reason for your message (appointment, absence, etc.). Make sure you properly address the recipient (“Hi Professor”, etc.) and sign your email with your full name.

**Academic Integrity:** The commitment of acts of cheating, lying, and deceit in any of their diverse forms (such as the use of substitutes for taking examinations, the use of illegal cribs, plagiarism, and copying during examinations) is dishonest. Academic dishonesty in any form is grounds for unconditional failure for the course and a report to the Dean of Undergraduate Studies.

**Disability Accommodations:** CSUB encourages qualified persons with disabilities to participate in its programs and activities. If you anticipate needing any type of accommodation in this course or have questions about physical access, please contact the professor as soon as possible.

**Final grades will be assigned as follows:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>92-100</td>
<td>A</td>
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<tr>
<td>90-91</td>
<td>A-</td>
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<td>82-87</td>
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<td>78-79</td>
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<td>72-77</td>
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<td>below 60</td>
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### Tentative Schedule

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Readings (# refer to pp. from A &amp; W)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jan 5</td>
<td>Introduction to the Course</td>
<td>Syllabus</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jan 7</td>
<td>The Ancients and the Medievals</td>
<td>Handout (skepticism and scholasticism)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jan 12</td>
<td>Descartes: Method</td>
<td>16-34</td>
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<td>Jan 14</td>
<td><em>Meditations</em> I and II</td>
<td>Quiz 1</td>
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<td>Jan 19</td>
<td><em>Meditations</em> III &amp; IV</td>
<td>47-61</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jan 21</td>
<td>Med VI, Third &amp; Fourth Set of Objections</td>
<td>61-68, 76-92</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jan 26</td>
<td>Spinoza: <em>Ethics</em> Part I</td>
<td>93-98, 144-160</td>
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<td>Jan 28</td>
<td><em>Ethics</em>: Part II (props 1-13)</td>
<td>Quiz 2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Feb 2</td>
<td><em>Ethics</em> Part IV</td>
<td>164-172</td>
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<tr>
<td>Feb 4</td>
<td>No class</td>
<td>First Take-home Exam*</td>
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<tr>
<td>Feb 9</td>
<td>Ideas and their origin: Locke <em>Essays</em></td>
<td>316-318, 322-336, 357-367</td>
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<td>Feb 11</td>
<td>Locke contd.</td>
<td>386-403</td>
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<td>Feb 16</td>
<td>Origin of Ideas: Leibniz <em>Preface</em></td>
<td>Quiz 3</td>
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<td>Feb 18</td>
<td>Berkeley: <em>Three Dialogues</em></td>
<td>265-8, 422-33, Letter to Sophie Charlotte</td>
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<td>Feb 23</td>
<td>Berkeley contd.</td>
<td>454-474</td>
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<td>Feb 25</td>
<td>Hume: <em>Treatise</em></td>
<td>Quiz 4</td>
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<td>Mar 1</td>
<td>Hume: <em>Enquiry</em></td>
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<td>Mar 3</td>
<td>Hume contd.</td>
<td>533-548</td>
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<td>Mar 8</td>
<td>Kant: Copernican Revolution</td>
<td>548-575</td>
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<td>Mar 10</td>
<td>Kant: Transcendental Aesthetic</td>
<td>Quiz 5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mar 11</td>
<td><strong>Final Take-home Exam</strong></td>
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* The dates for the take-home exams are the dates I will make the assignment available to you. Your answers are due the following Monday, @ 5 pm. The final exam is due March 16, 5 pm.