

COURSE OUTLINE: PHIL 3002
17th CENTURY PHILOSOPHY
Fall 2026: Tuesdays and Thursdays, 1:05 – 2:25 PM

Professor M. Frankel
Office: Paterson Hall 3A48
Office Hours: TBA; see Brightspace
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Course description:

(from the Undergraduate Calendar)

European philosophy of the 17th century. Representative works of writers such as Francis Bacon, Descartes, Spinoza, Leibniz, and Locke.

Prerequisite: 0.5 credits in philosophy and second-year standing in a philosophy program, or permission of the department.

(for Fall 2026)

The early modern period of philosophy in Europe, which (depending on how one counts these things) covers philosophical work from the late 16th to late 18th century, is often associated with the work of 17th century philosopher René Descartes, sometimes called the ‘father of modern philosophy.’ Without taking a position on the accuracy of this narrative, in this class we will look in depth at some of the epistemological and metaphysical themes that Descartes articulates, and the ways in which some of his contemporaries and successors in the 17th century develop those themes. We will consider theories of substance and cause - how many substances / kinds of substances are there? One, two, an infinite number? Do substances causally interact with one another - can substances be causes at all, or is God the only possible cause? We will consider questions about God and the creation of the universe - can we prove that God exists? What is our relation to God? Does God create the best of all possible worlds - or is this perhaps the only possible world? We will explore these and other questions primarily through the work of Descartes, Malebranche, Spinoza, and Leibniz.

Required text (available at the Carleton bookstore, or online, through Ares Course Reserves):

Modern Philosophy: An Anthology of Primary Sources (Third Edition). Eds. Roger Ariew and Eric Watkins. Hackett 2019. **Current cost of this text at the Carleton bookstore: \$89 CAD (new).**

If you purchase this anthology (which I recommend), please bring it to class with you, as we will be reading the texts carefully together.

An electronic copy of the anthology will also be on reserve through the library’s Ares Reserve System, which is accessible through the Brightspace page for the course. Please note that the library has a **limit of 3 users at a time** for this electronic copy.

Course material may also sometimes include readings that are not in the required anthology. Those readings will be made available on Brightspace.

Important information about the required text:

Note about anthology editions: For this course, I am assigning the **third edition** of this anthology. When I assign readings, I will only provide references to the third edition. In addition, some assigned readings may only be available in the third edition. If you choose to use a different edition, you will be responsible for finding page numbers, and for finding readings that are not available in that edition. Please be aware that for all citations, you must use the third edition.

Note about online sources: I know that many of the primary sources in this anthology can also be found online. However, online sources are often abridged or otherwise altered (or weirdly translated). If, knowing this, you still wish to consult an online source (why?), you *must* discuss this with me, so I can help you evaluate whether the source is appropriate. But truly, you should just use the course anthology; if you don't purchase it, it is available online, through Ares.

Note about other versions / editions of the primary texts: You may decide that you wish to purchase some of the primary sources individually (rather than in an anthology.) If you wish to do this, please let me know. I will be happy to recommend specific editions of the texts. As always, though, you must still use the course anthology for all citations.

Important information about citations: All references in all course assignments, including the final exam, must be to the third edition of the anthology. *If you use the electronic copy of the anthology* (e.g., through Ares Course Reserves), you must switch to the PDF version of the text in order to get the correct page numbers for citations.

References to any source outside of the required text will affect your assignment grades.

You are welcome to contact me to discuss any of this!

Email:

You can email me using the email address at the top of this course outline, or through Brightspace. Please be sure that your email is sent from your **official Carleton email address**. You should also check your Carleton email account regularly, because when I send you emails, it will be to that email address. Please allow 24-48 hours for an email response; if I do not respond after 48 hours, please feel free to send me a gentle nudge.

Office hours:

Office hours this semester will be in person. You will find my office hours listed on the Brightspace page for the course. I am also available (and happy!) to meet virtually (e.g., on Zoom), outside of office hours, by appointment; send me an email and we will work out a time.

Brightspace:

It is important for you to regularly check the Brightspace page for the course, which is where you will find (among other things) the most up-to-date information regarding our schedule of readings and dates for assignments and tests, which are open for revision through the semester.

Students are responsible for reading and responding appropriately to all information distributed through Brightspace. Information provided on Brightspace will be considered to have been provided to all registered students within 24 hours of posting.

Technology requirements:

This course is an **in-person** course. The majority of the course will take place on campus, during regularly scheduled course hours. That said, some elements of the course require use of technology, including supplemental readings. I may also occasionally schedule Zoom class meetings or Zoom office hours, if needed. If you anticipate having any problems with technology or internet access, please email me so that we can discuss possible solutions.

Evaluation:

1. Passage discussions (2 x 10%)

At two points during the semester, you will be provided with a short prompt on Brightspace. For each prompt, I will provide a passage from the assigned readings. You will be asked to write a short discussion of that passage (about 1.5 pages, double-spaced), connecting the text to the material that we go over in class. Each passage discussion will be worth **10%** of your final grade, for a total of **20%**.

Not all students will be provided with the same two prompts. Instead, the class will be divided into three groups (Group 1, Group 2, and Group 3) on Brightspace. Group membership will be randomly assigned on Brightspace. Your group membership will determine which passage discussion prompts will be assigned to you.

Please note: even though group membership determines your prompts, passage discussions must be the result of individual work; collaboration is not permitted.

Passage discussions will be due two weeks after prompts are made available on Brightspace. Passage discussions should be in either .doc, .docx, or .pdf format, and should be uploaded to Brightspace. I will not accept emailed documents.

Passage discussion dates for Fall 2026 (tentative):

- Group 1:
 - Passage 1 assigned on Tuesday, Sept 22; due on **Tuesday, Oct 6**
 - Passage 2 assigned on Tuesday, Nov 3; due on **Tuesday, Nov 17**
- Group 2:
 - Passage 1 assigned on Tuesday, Sept 29; due on **Tuesday, Oct 13**
 - Passage 2 assigned on Tuesday, Nov 10; due on **Tuesday, Nov 24**
- Group 3:
 - Passage 1 assigned on Thursday, Oct 1; due on **Thursday, Oct 15**
 - Passage 2 assigned on Thursday, Nov 19; due on **Thursday, Dec 3**

2. In-class tests (2 x 25%)

There will be two in-class midterm tests. These tests will be non-cumulative. Tests will be each be worth **25%** of your final grade, for a total of **50%**.

Tests will be closed-book, but you will be permitted to bring a one-page, double-sided “cheat sheet” to each, on which you may write or type whatever you like, using whatever sized fonts / margins you like. (Note however that you will not be permitted to use any visual aids such as magnifying glasses during the test.)

In-class test dates for Fall 2026 (tentative):

- Test 1: **Tuesday, Oct 20**
- Test 2: **Thursday, Nov 26**

3. Take-home exam (1 x 30%)

There will be one cumulative take-home examination, which will count towards **30%** of your final grade. The exam will primarily be essay-based; you will be expected to adhere to the normal requirements for essays, including citation requirements.

Collaboration on this exam is not permitted.

Instructions for the take-home exam will be available on Brightspace on the last day of classes for the semester: **Friday, December 11.**

Take-home exam due date (firm) (seriously):

- The take-home exam will be due at the end of final exam period: **Wednesday, December 23**

It is university policy that no student work for the Fall 2026 semester may be accepted after December 23, 2026. As such, I will not be accepting late take-homes, and no extensions will be granted.

If you require extra time, you will need to obtain a deferral through the Registrar’s Office. Please feel free to let me know if this is the case, as I will be glad to support you through the deferral process, if such support is desired.

Course policies for tests and assignments:

Lateness penalties for passage discussion assignments: Passage discussion assignments will be penalized by one third of a grade per day for every day that they are late. For instance, an assignment marked B+ on its merits will be reduced to a B on the first day that it is late, and to a C- on the fifth day.

Extensions for passage discussion assignments: Extensions for passage discussions *may* be granted if requested at least 24 hours in advance and with a valid reason (e.g., medical reason).

Academic Integrity Policy (please read this carefully):

You can find the full Carleton Academic Integrity Policy here: <https://carleton.ca/secretariat/wp-content/uploads/Academic-Integrity-Policy-2021.pdf>. Please look through it carefully.

According to the Academic Integrity Policy, there are a number of activities that constitute violations of academic integrity, including plagiarism, collaborating on non-collaborative assignments, misrepresenting or falsifying your work, and more.

All assignments in this course must be the result of individual work, including passage discussion assignments and the take-home final. Collaboration on any assignment in this course will constitute a violation of the Academic Integrity Policy.

Misrepresentation or falsification includes citations. In all assignments, all sources must be fully cited, including page numbers. If your citations are lacking information (e.g., lacking page numbers) or if they are false (are fabricated or misrepresent their source), then at minimum, this will affect the grade for your assignment, and more maximally, this may constitute a violation of the Academic Integrity Policy.

You may not use any unauthorized computer applications or tools for this course, including any Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools. For this course, any use of unauthorized computer applications or tools, such as Generative AI / LLMs, will automatically be considered to be violations of the Academic Integrity Policy.

I reserve the right to ask you to submit evidence of your work, including e.g. rough notes, drafts, or a verbal or written explanation of the steps taken in completing the assignment or of the material discussed in the assignment.

If you are at all unsure about what constitutes plagiarism or a violation of academic integrity, please feel free to contact me and we can discuss it. You can also find more discussion of plagiarism, including some examples, in the Philosophy department policies, below.

Philosophy Department and University policies:

See the next page of this course outline for some Philosophy Department and University policies.

You can also find these policies listed on the Philosophy Department website, here: <https://carleton.ca/philosophy/current-students/departamental-policies/>

Department of Philosophy and Carleton University Policies (Fall/Winter 2026-27)

Assignments:

Please follow your professor's instructions on how assignments will be handled electronically. We no longer allow hard copies to be placed in the department's essay box.

Evaluation:

Standing in a course is determined by the course instructor subject to the approval of the Faculty Dean. This means that grades submitted by the instructor may be subject to revision. No grades are final until they have been approved by the Dean.

Deferrals for Term Work:

If students are unable to complete term work because of illness or other circumstances beyond their control, they should contact their course instructor no later than *three working days* after the due date. Normally, any deferred term work will be completed by the last day of the term. Term work cannot be deferred by the Registrar.

Deferrals for Final Exams:

Students are expected to be available for the duration of a course including the examination period. Occasionally, students encounter circumstances beyond their control where they may not be able to write a final examination or submit a take-home examination. Examples of this would be a serious illness or the death of a family member. If you miss a final examination and/or fail to submit a take-home examination by the due date, you may apply for a deferral no later than *three working days* after the exam date or original due date (as per the University Regulations in [Section 4.3 of the Undergraduate Calendar](#)). Visit the [Registrar's Office](#) for further information.

Plagiarism:

The University Academic Integrity Policy defines plagiarism as '*presenting, whether intentionally or not, the ideas, expression of ideas or work of others as one's own.*' This includes reproducing or paraphrasing portions of someone else's published or unpublished material, regardless of the source, and presenting these as one's own without proper citation or reference to the original source.

Examples of sources from which the ideas, expressions of ideas or works of others may be drawn from include but are not limited to books, articles, papers, literary compositions and phrases, performance compositions, chemical compounds, artworks, laboratory reports, research results, calculations and the results of calculations, diagrams, constructions, computer reports, computer code/software, material on the internet and/or conversations

Examples of plagiarism include, but are not limited to:

- any submission prepared in whole or in part, by someone else, including the unauthorized use of generative AI tools (e.g., ChatGPT);
- using ideas or direct, verbatim quotations, paraphrased material, algorithms, formulae, scientific or mathematical concepts, or ideas without appropriate acknowledgment in any academic assignment;
- using another's data or research findings without appropriate acknowledgement;
- submitting a computer program developed in whole or in part by someone else, with or without modifications, as one's own;
- failing to acknowledge sources with proper citations when using another's work and/or failing to use quotations marks.

Plagiarism is a serious offence that cannot be resolved directly by the course's instructor.

The Associate Dean of the Faculty follows a rigorous [process for academic integrity allegations](#), including reviewing documents and interviewing the student, when an instructor suspects a violation has been committed. Penalties for violations may include a final grade of "F" for the course.

It is the responsibility of each student to understand the full meaning of 'plagiarism' as defined in the Undergraduate or Graduate Calendars, and to avoid both committing plagiarism and aiding or abetting plagiarism by other students. ([Section 10.1 of the Undergraduate Calendar Academic Regulations](#))

Statement on AI:

As our understanding of the uses of AI and its relationship to student work and academic integrity continue to evolve, students are required to discuss their use of AI in any circumstance not described in the course outline with the instructor to ensure it supports the learning goals for the course.

Mental Health:

As a student you may experience a range of mental health challenges that significantly impact your academic success and overall well-being. If you need help, please speak to someone. There are numerous resources available both on- and off-campus to support you. For more information, please consult <https://wellness.carleton.ca/>.

Academic Accommodation:

Carleton is committed to providing academic accessibility for all individuals. You may need special arrangements to meet your academic obligations during the term. The accommodation request processes, including information about the Academic Consideration Policy for Students in Medical and Other Extenuating Circumstances, are outlined on the Academic Accommodations website (<https://carleton.ca/accessibility/accommodations/>). Examples of special arrangements include:

- *Pregnancy or religious obligation:* write to your professor with any requests for academic accommodation during the first two weeks of class, or as soon as possible after the need for accommodation is known to exist. For more details visit the [EIC](#) website.
- *Academic accommodations for students with disabilities:* The [Paul Menton Centre](#) for Students with Disabilities (PMC) provides services to students with Learning Disabilities (LD), psychiatric/mental health disabilities, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD), chronic medical conditions, and impairments in mobility, hearing, and vision. If you have a disability requiring academic accommodations in this course, please contact PMC at 613-520-6608 or pmc@carleton.ca for a formal evaluation. If you are already registered with the PMC, contact your PMC coordinator to send your Letter of Accommodation at the beginning of the term, and no later than two weeks before the first in-class test or exam requiring accommodation. After requesting accommodation from PMC, meet with your professor to ensure accommodation arrangements are made.
- *Survivors of Sexual Violence:* As a community, Carleton University is committed to maintaining a positive learning, working and living environment where sexual violence will not be tolerated, and where survivors are supported through academic accommodations as per [Carleton's Sexual Violence Policy](#).
- *Accommodation for Student Activities:* Carleton University recognizes the substantial benefits, both to the individual student and for the university, that result from a student participating in activities beyond the classroom experience. Reasonable accommodation must be provided to students who compete or perform at the national or international level. Please contact your instructor with any requests for academic accommodation during the first two weeks of class, or as soon as possible after the need for accommodation is known to exist.

Important Dates:

Sept. 9	Fall term begins.
Sept. 22	Last day for registration and course changes for fall term and fall/winter (two-term) courses.
Sept. 30	Last day for entire fee adjustment when withdrawing from fall term or two-term courses.
Oct. 12	Statutory holiday. University closed.
Oct. 26-30	Fall Break – no classes.
Nov. 15	Last day for academic withdrawal from fall term courses. Last day to request Formal Examination Accommodations for December examinations and two-term midterm examinations.
Nov. 27	Last day for summative tests or examinations, or formative tests or examinations totaling more than 15% of the final grade, before the official examination period.
Dec. 11	Last day of fall term classes. <i>Classes follow a Monday schedule.</i> Last day that can be specified by a course instructor as a due date for term work for a fall term course.
Dec. 12-23	Final examinations for fall term courses and mid-term examinations in two-term courses. Examinations are normally held all seven days of the week.
Dec. 23	All take-home examinations are due.
Jan. 6	Winter term begins.
Jan. 19	Last day for registration and course changes in the winter term.
Jan. 31	Last day for a full fee adjustment when withdrawing from winter term courses or from the winter portion of two-term courses.
Feb. 15	Statutory holiday. University closed.
Feb. 15-19	Winter Break – no classes.
Mar. 15	Last day for academic withdrawal from fall/winter and winter courses. Last day to request Formal Examination Accommodations for April examinations.
Mar. 25	Last day for summative tests or examinations, or formative tests or examinations totaling more than 15% of the final grade, in winter term or fall/winter courses before the official examination period.
Mar. 26	Statutory holiday. University closed.
Apr. 9	Last day of two-term and winter term classes. Last day that can be specified by a course instructor as a due date for two-term and for winter term courses.
Apr. 10	No classes or examinations take place.
Apr. 11-23	Final examinations for winter term and two-term courses. Examinations are normally held all seven days of the week.
Apr. 23	All take-home examinations are due.

Addresses:

Department of Philosophy:
www.carleton.ca/philosophy
520-2110

Registrar's Office:
www.carleton.ca/registrar
520-3500

Academic Advising Centre:
www.carleton.ca/academicadvising
520-7850

Writing Services:
<https://carleton.ca/csas/support/>
520-3822

MacOdrum Library
<http://www.library.carleton.ca/>
520-2735