**PHIL 282 (F21) History of Modern Philosophy**

Time: T/Th, 2-3:40pm

Place: New North 204 & Zoom (see Modes of Instruction below)

Instructor: Professor Huaping Lu-Adler, hl530@georgetown.edu

Office hours: W 4:15-5:15pm & by appointment (over Zoom, or in person [outdoors] by request)[[1]](#footnote-1)

History, as nearly no one seems to know, is not merely something to be read. And it does not refer merely, or principally, to the past. On the contrary, the great force of history comes from the fact that we carry it within us, are unconsciously controlled by it in many ways, and history is literally present in all that we do. It could scarcely be otherwise, since it is to history that we owe our frames of reference, our identities, and our aspirations.

— James Baldwin, *The White Man’s Guilt* (1965)

**A Quasi-Autobiographical Course Description,**

**or Why I am Adopting a Radically New Approach to This Course**

This course typically focuses on the seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Western European philosophy (often it also extends to the nineteenth century, but again with a focus on Western philosophers). That’s at least how I was taught in graduate school (I received my PhD in 2012). That’s also basically how I have taught it over the last few years. You may be concerned, as you should be, upon hearing the description. You may ask: why don’t other philosophical traditions—African, Arabic, Buddhist, indigenous-American, and so on—have a place in a survey course on the history of modern philosophy? Well, someone may respond, those traditions—*if* they count as *philosophical* at all—are old, whereas we are talking about the particular period of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries; the European Enlightenment movements—French, Scottish, and German, etc.—defined this period, when nothing philosophically worthwhile was happening in the rest of the world; therefore, …. Very few will say this out loud, but it’s an operative line of reasoning that’s implicit in how we professional philosophers tend to approach a course titled “History of [Early] Modern Philosophy.” I’ll let you figure out how good such a response is. (If you are interested in digging further, I recommend [*Taking Back Philosophy: A Multicultural Manifesto*](http://cup.columbia.edu/book/taking-back-philosophy/9780231184373) by Bryan Van Norden, published in 2017.)

 Also, it was once—and still is to a large extent—cliché to present the seventeenth- and eighteenth-century history of philosophy in terms of struggles between *rationalism* and *empiricism*—with René Descartes, Baruch Spinoza, and G. W. Leibniz representing the former and John Locke, George Berkeley, and David Hume, the latter—that ended with a conciliatory synthesis in Immanuel Kant’s *transcendental philosophy*. This account goes hand-in-hand with the view that early modern philosophy revolved around epistemology and thus distinguished itself from past traditions by an “epistemological turn.” Most survey textbooks in use are still written along these lines. This approach, however, is simplistic and misleading to say the least. It also serves to perpetuate the problematic tendency to omit brilliant *women* philosophers, as well as a good number of male philosophers who were much more significant and impactful than someone like Berkeley.

 Over the last few years, I tried to expand the canon by including important women philosophers (for a partial list of them, visit [Project Vox](https://projectvox.org/philosophers/)) and approaching the course with a more nuanced historical narrative. I always did so with this caveat: the period of seventeenth and eighteenth centuries “left us with an enormous amount of highly complex philosophical legacies. Precisely due to its complexity, it is not feasible to survey it from every angle. It is important to recognize that, from whichever angle we choose to tell this history, the narrative is inevitably selective and limited” (quoted from last fall’s syllabus for this course). In other words, try as I might, I could never construct a truly inclusive syllabus just by adding this or that philosopher who is not yet part of the old canon. It will always remain an arbitrary decision on my part as to who of all the important and interesting philosophers I choose to include in the syllabus.

 So, this semester, I’ve decided to approach the problem from the opposite direction. If we can never be inclusive enough, why don’t we investigate, at a *meta-philosophical* level, how the *mechanisms of exclusion* took hold in the first place. We will mainly look at race- and gender-based exclusions. If non-white, non-Western, and women philosophers have been largely absent from the old canon, it’s not because such philosophers were non-existent. Their *omission* from a historical narrative was rather rooted in the mistaken assumption that non-whites (e.g., Amerindians, black Africans, and Chinese), whitish non-Europeans (e.g., Persians and Northern Africans), and women were *incapable* of *philosophy properly so called* (the “Orientals” were sometimes granted “wisdom,” but not true philosophy worthy of an aspiring philosopher’s time). Today’s historians, me included, who are *in theory* opposed to such an assumption may nevertheless inadvertently reinforce it *in practice*—by, for instance, focusing on a narrow set of philosophical issues (e.g., the mind-body problem) as the *core* ones, while ignoring or downplaying many other topics as merely tangential, uninteresting, and so on. Some of the topics included in this syllabus belong in the latter category. For example, what makes a “race”? What should be the place of women in a society? How does one’s social position affect one’s self-knowledge or, for that matter, one’s knowledge of the world? By including these oft-neglected issues, I intend to show how the historical past is nevertheless present—as Baldwin concisely put it in the passage quoted above.

 A more general message I wish to convey, one that we should always keep in mind as aspiring students of philosophy in today’s world, is that philosophers are spatiotemporally located *human beings* first and foremost. No matter how much they claim or attempt to transcend the empirical constraints of their world, their worldview is *always a* *view from somewhere*. So, we should not study them just as someone whose views we should read and analyze, but as examples of how one *philosophizes* in the real world. All the philosophical writers included in this syllabus were, in one way or another, responding to the world as they saw it. We may disagree with—in some cases feel utterly repelled by—their views. But even their mistaken ways of thinking can have humbling lessons for us. How would *we* have philosophized if we occupied a similar social location? How could *we* do better? Or could we?

**Doyle Seminar Designation**

This course is a Doyle Seminar, part of the [Doyle Engaging Difference Program](https://doyle.georgetown.edu/), a campus-wide curricular initiative that gives faculty the opportunity to enhance the student research component of upper-level seminars that address questions of national, social, racial, cultural, religious, moral, and other forms of difference. The Doyle Seminars are intended to deepen student learning about diversity and difference through enhanced research opportunities, interaction with thought leaders, and dialogue with the Georgetown community and beyond. The Doyle program provides the modest honoraria for all the guest-speakers listed in this syllabus. It also funds your visits to the Smithsonian National Museum of Natural History and other related activities.

**Doyle-Related Learning Goals**

Taking this course in the spirit of the Doyle program mentioned above, the students can go beyond pouring over a bunch of historical texts. The program’s focus on inclusion and diversity brings a layer of *meta-cognition* and *critical thinking* to the course. Specifically, the students are to

1. Gain contextualized understanding of certain themes and arguments from the early modern period.
2. Be able to evaluate a philosophical theory in terms of the quality of its content, regardless of what status historians have assigned to its author.
3. Learn about and critically reflect on different ways in which history of early modern philosophy has been and can be told.
4. Appreciate, more generally, that there are many ways to construct a history and that the now-canonical ways of presenting it may be (i) historically inaccurate, (ii) incomplete, (iii) biased, or (iv) accidental and dependent on, say, who happens to be the narrator.
5. Develop transferable skills for engaging one another in a respectful and open-minded way, with the shared goal of pursuing knowledge and becoming a better thinker in community with others.

**Commitment to Active-Authentic Learning & Pedagogies of Care**

I believe that true learning happens in a class only when *all* students are encouraged and given opportunities to be actively involved in the learning activities and when each of them can find a way to connect the course materials with real-world issues that they, based on their own *lived experience*, care about. I also believe that learning is an emotional and social process as well as an intellectual one.

For these reasons, I am committed to fostering a caring and supportive—as well as intellectually responsible and rigorous—learning community where each of you feel that you *belong* and have a voice. Although some of the topics we discuss may sound remote to you (you are studying philosophical ideas from a few centuries ago after all), you’ll see that many of the fundamental problems that intrigued past philosophers and their perspectives on those problems continue to be relevant. Interrogating them may give us an occasion to reflect on certain issues that have become more salient during the current pandemic. It may require courage for us to take up such reflections with honesty and with a willingness to be vulnerable with one another in the shared physical or virtual space of this class. So, here I share an untitled poem by Beth Strano.



[[2]](#endnote-1)

**The Engelhard Project**

Because of its attention to pedagogies of care, this course has been named an Engelhard course through Georgetown’s [Engelhard Project for Connecting Life and Learning](https://engelhard.georgetown.edu/). The goal of Engelhard courses is to integrate college health and well-being issues into course content and/or pedagogy by creating meaningful connections between students’ lived experiences and what/how they are learning. You will be asked to reflect on this practice in your “meta-cognitive reflection,” due near the end of the semester (explained below).

I believe that **feeling well and happy makes you a better learner**. Please monitor and *prioritize* your mental health and wellness throughout the semester. Take advantage of the many [institutional recourses](https://studenthealth.georgetown.edu/mental-health/on-campus-resources/) that our university has to offer. Depending on your taste, you can also find many useful tips and tools from these podcast series that draw on current scientific understandings as well as philosophical traditions: [Chasing Life](https://www.cnn.com/audio/podcasts/chasing-life) (hosted by CNN’s science correspondent, neurosurgeon Dr. Sanjay Gupta); [The Science of Happiness](https://greatergood.berkeley.edu/podcasts/series/the_science_of_happiness) (run by UC Berkeley’s Greater Good Science Center); [The Happiness Lab](https://www.happinesslab.fm/) (hosted by Yale professor Dr. Laurie Santos); [Ten Percent Happier](https://www.tenpercent.com/podcast) (this one has short, themed meditations guided by expert practitioners).

**Modes of Instruction**

The majority of our meetings are in person. For pedagogical reasons (e.g., guest-speaker events or discussions that may be more effective if conducted online), I will occasionally hold the class over Zoom (as indicated in the schedule below). To attend the virtual meetings, please use the link provided in Canvas>Zoom Conferencing. Please mute your microphone upon entry. But you must *keep your camera* *on* for the entire duration of the class (unless I tell you otherwise). If you use a virtual background for your camera appearance, please choose a minimalist and static one to avoid distraction. Please also mute your phone and all other devices that can distract you. The wisest thing to do is to keep them out of reach altogether, so that you can be fully present during the entire session.

Typically, I will arrive at the (physical or virtual) classroom about 5 minutes before the class. I encourage you to arrive a few minutes early as well. This way, we can check in with one another. The design of “learning cohorts” (see Participation below) is partly intended to make such check-ins less awkward but more fun, intentional, and therefore rewarding.

After each meeting, I’ll stay for a few minutes. You should feel free to stay and ask me any lingering questions you may have.

All Zoom sessions will be recorded. The recordings will be password protected. A link for each recording will be posted on Canvas>Pages shortly after the class is over, for limited-time access. If synchronous attendance is a problem for you, please see Participation below.

**Covid-Related Norms and Policies**

* Unless you are instructed otherwise, you should put away your personal electronic devices while you are in the class (virtually or physically). **Be fully present** for each other. This is always important, of course. But it’s particularly important during the pandemic. Unauthorized use of electronic devices during the class may affect your participation grade.
* When we are in the same physical space indoors, each of us **must wear a mask and do so properly** (consult the CDC guidelines regarding mask wearing: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/about-face-coverings.html>). Anyone who refuses to follow this public health policy may be asked to leave the classroom and count as absent for that day, or I may have to end the class early.
* Please write down the names of people who are sitting in your close vicinity **each time we meet in person** (please record this information in your “learning portfolio,” explained below). If you don’t remember their names, you should feel free to ask them. This is a precautionary step, just in case any of us is infected with covid and the close contacts need to be quarantined.
* While no physical distancing is required in class, please keep in mind that not everyone will feel comfortable being very close to another person. Please make sure to communicate with each other about your respective comfort zones. **Open and respectful communication** is the key here.
* When we meet in person, please vacate the classroom as fast as you can after the class ends, to leave the next professor sufficient time to set things up. All the new technologies that we have to use during this period can be very complicated.
* I will respect everyone’s **privacy**. If you contact me and tell me, for instance, that you tested positive for covid (fingers crossed that this won’t happen!), I will approach the matter with the greatest discretion possible and keep it between you and me.
* Teaching/studying during the pandemic can be extremely challenging and stressful. Let’s remind ourselves and each other that **we are in this together**. Be patient and understanding. Be compassionate both toward yourself and toward others. If someone doesn’t seem to be in a good mood on a given day, try not to take it personally. Check in with them. Remember: communication is the key.

**Academic Integrity and Academic Support**

It’s your responsibility to understand [our university’s Honor System](https://honorcouncil.georgetown.edu/system/policies/). All assignments submitted through Canvas will undergo an automated screening process. I will report all suspected cases of academic dishonesty. If the Honor Council confirms a violation, the violator will receive an F for the course.

Any students with disabilities will receive appropriate accommodations with a letter from the Academic Resource Center: <http://academicsupport.georgetown.edu>.

**Assignments & Assessment**

1. **Participation (15%).** The grade is based on the following.
2. **Attendance.**
* Unless you’ve been granted special accommodation, you are expected to attend each of our meetings at the scheduled time. An accumulation of 2 *unexcused* absences will disqualify you from receiving a participation grade of A. 6 unexcused absences will result in an F as your participation grade. 9 unexcused absences will result in an F for the course.
* If your circumstances prevent you from attending a meeting, please contact me as much in advance as possible. Please do so with a *specific proposal* as to what a reasonable plan may look like for you to make up for the lost class time—especially the lost opportunity to have a quality discussion of the materials with your peers and/or the guest-speakers.
1. **Quality of your participation in discussions in class**.[[3]](#footnote-2)
* A close acquaintance with the assigned readings is essential to an informed and thoughtful participation. You are expected to arrive at each meeting with thoughts and questions about the readings.
* During a typical Zoom meeting, I assign you to (randomly generated) “breakout rooms” to share your thoughts about the assigned readings with your peers. I move from room to room and listen in quietly. When we reconvene, I call on one student from each room to debrief the rest of the class. The points and questions that emerge from these debriefings will then provide the launchpad for further discussion and/or a mini lecture on my part.
* During a typical in-person meeting, a similar arrangement for discussion will also be made.
* I value the following practices most: you show that you’ve been *listening attentively* to others by, for example, picking up a thread from what they just said and adding to it or raising a question about it; and, if you are asked to summarize the main takeaways from your group’s discussion, you do so by *synthesizing* them in your own words, not merely repeating this or that remark that others made.
1. **The quality of peer feedbacks** that you are required to give on certain assignments.
2. **Your contribution to community building** in this class. Each of you will be assigned to a “learning cohort,” with 3-4 students in each cohort. This arrangement is meant to ensure that *everyone* in this class feels genuinely supported by and supportive of one another. Besides regularly checking in with the peers within one’s own cohort, each cohort will also take turns to figure out how to foster connections within the entire class in meaningful and nurturing ways. I will provide more detailed instructions about this once I’ve set up all the cohorts.

1. **Digital Scholarship project (20%)**. This will be your first graded project.
2. **Learning portfolio** (**10%**, completion requirement). You will maintain a portfolio of your learning experiences in this class. The basic idea is that you will keep brief records of, say, your initial reactions to a reading before the class, whether you’ve gained a new appreciation of the same reading after the class, or something of the sort. I will create a google doc, with detailed instructions, for each of you and share it with you. This way, I can easily follow you along throughout the semester. I may comment on your portfolio now and then (you are also encouraged to discuss any parts of your portfolio with me). But you should feel free to write down your thoughts without feeling judged. The intention behind the portfolio is to provide you with a **low-stakes opportunity to develop meta-cognitive skills and habits** on a regular basis. You can also use this opportunity to collect materials and develop ideas for the next three items.
3. **Meta-cognitive reflection** (**5%**, up to 1,000 words). You will write about your learning experience in this class with respect to some of its pedagogical designs (e.g., the Engelhard component, the arrangement of learning cohorts, the use of learning portfolios, the involvement of guest-speakers, etc.). You will write an honest and instructive account of whether any of them made a significant and positive difference to your learning experience. This will help me to decide whether to keep/modify them in future iterations of this class. I will give you a more detailed prompt in due time.
4. **Mid-term paper** (**20%**, around 2,000 words, including notes/bibliography). Instructions TBA.
5. **Final paper** (**30%**, around 3,000 words, including notes/bibliography). Instructions TBA.

*Points to letter grade conversion*: A=95-100; A-=90-94.9; B+=87-; B=84-86.9; B-=80-83.9; …

In case you wonder, I do *not* grade on a curve. If everybody has *earned* an A (not easy for this class), then everybody gets an A. I do not worry about grade distribution. Also, when you calculate your final grade, please *do not rely on the results that Canvas shows* you (the percentages of the various categories of assessment are not reflected there). Instead, you should create a spreadsheet and calculate the grades yourself, in accordance with the assessment criteria listed above.

**Schedule (subject to change)**

**Week 1**

**Aug. 26** **(Th, Zoom)** Introduction (no preparation required).

**Natural Philosophy, Colonialism, and Raciology**

**Week 2**

**Aug. 31 (T)** Introduction: philosophy, history, and geography

*Required readings:*

* Friedrich von Schiller (1759-1805), “The Nature and Value of Universal History” (1789)
* Immanuel Kant (1724-1804), *historical and philosophical cognition* (excerpt from 1770s)
* Kant, *announcements about physical geography* (1757 & 1765)

(Please read these in the order in which they are listed.)

**Sept.2 (Th)** Francis Bacon (1561-1626): “New World” and a new way to do philosophy

*Required reading:*

* Bacon, *The Great Renewal* (1620, excerpts)

*Supplementary/optional reading:*

* John Gascoigne, “Crossing the Pillars of Hercules: Francis Bacon,the Scientific Revolution and the New World” (2013)

**Week 3**

**Sept.7 (T)** Robert Boyle (1627-91): skin color as a topic of experimental philosophy

*Required readings:*

* Boyle, “Notes on a Good and Excellent Hypothesis” (1660s)
* Boyle, “The Cause of the Blackness of … ‘Negroes’” (1664)
* Boyle, “General Heads for a Natural History” (1666, especially the highlighted part)

(Please read these in the order in which they are listed.)

*Supplementary/optional reading:*

* Sarah Irving, *Natural Science and the Origins of the British Empire* (excerpts on Boyle and the Royal Society)

**Sept.9 (Th)** Georges Buffon (1707-88): human varieties and degeneration

*Required readings:*

* Buffon, *On the Varieties of the Human Species* & *Of the Degeneration of Animals* (excerpts)

*Supplementary/optional reading:*

* Nicholas Hudson, “From ‘Nation’ to ‘Race’: The Origin of Racial Classification in Eighteenth-Century Thought”

**Week 4**

**Sept.14 (T)** Johann Blumenbach (1752-1840): skulls and human varieties

*Required reading:*

* Blumenbach, *On the Natural Variety of Mankind* (excerpts)

*Supplementary/optional reading:*

* John Gascoigne, “Blumenbach, Banks, and the Beginnings of Anthropology at Göttingen”

*Podcast (optional): Stuff the British Stole*, ep.4. [The Head Hunter](https://www.abc.net.au/radionational/programs/stuff-the-british-stole/the-headhunters/12868026)

[Note: although the three podcast episodes assigned here are optional, you should listen to them regardless. They are short, captivating, and edifying. They can be connected with the assigned readings in interesting ways. Most importantly, they are meant to inspire ideas for your first research project.]

**Sept.16 (Th, Zoom)** **Guest-speaker** on indigenous philosophies (Jorge Sanchez Perez)

*Required background reading:*

* Perez, “Is the Huarochirí Manuscript a Source of Indigenous Philosophy? – Reconceptualizing the Idea of Philosophical Sources” [portfolio entry is required as usual, but you don’t have to follow the usual format; just write about whatever stands out to you and pose a question that you may have for the speaker]

**Week 5**

**Sept.21 (T)** J. G. Herder (1744-1803): cultural relativism and critique of colonialism

*Required reading:*

* Herder, *Outlines of a Philosophy of the History of Man* (excerpts)

*Supplementary/optional reading:*

* Chunjie Zhang, “Johann Gottfried Herder: Historicism, Cultural Relativism, and the Iroquois Perpetual Peace”

*Podcast (optional): Stuff the British Stole*, ep.2. [Blood Art](https://www.abc.net.au/radionational/programs/stuff-the-british-stole/blood-art/12867832)

**Sept.23 (Th, Zoom)** **Guest-speaker** on Africana philosophy ([Chike Jeffers](https://www.dal.ca/faculty/arts/philosophy/FacultyandStaff/our-faculty/chike-jeffers.html))

*Required background material:*

* [Podcast](https://historyofphilosophy.net/africana-introduction), “Something Old, Something New: Introducing Africana Philosophy” [portfolio entry is required as usual, but you don’t have to follow the usual format; just write about whatever stands out to you and pose a question that you may have for the speaker]

**Week 6**

**Sept.28 (T)** Kant’s scientific racialism and racism

*Required readings:*

* Kant, “Determination of the Concept of a Human Race”
* Kant, *Anthropology Menschkunde* (excerpts)
* Kant, remarks about history of philosophy

(Please read these in the order in which they are listed.)

*Supplementary/optional reading:*

* Peter Park, “The Exclusion of Africa and Asia from the History of Philosophy: The Formation of the Kantian Position”

*Podcast (optional): Stuff the British Stole*, ep.3. [Best Named Dogs Ever](https://www.abc.net.au/radionational/programs/stuff-the-british-stole/best-named-dog-ever/12867932)

**Sept.30 (Th)** Heinrich von Kleist (1777-1811): the tragedy of racialization

*Required readings:*

* Kleist’s letter on a “Kant crisis”
* Kleist, *The Betrothal in Santo Domingo*

*Supplementary/optional reading:*

* Kontje, “Passing for German: Politics and Patriarchy in Kleist, Körner, and Fischer” (67-74)

*Podcast (optional, but highly recommended)*: [BBC Radio 4 discussion](https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b04lsqgs) of the Haitian Revolution (1791-1804), which was the backdrop of Kleist’s *Betrothal*.

[If you prefer not to listen to this podcast, you should still do some background research about the Haitian Revolution, which was first known as the slave revolt in St. Domingo. This background knowledge will deepen your understanding of Kleist’s novella.]

**Week 7**

**Oct.5 (T, Zoom)** Workshop on first project, with presentation on Digital Scholarship (instructions TBA).

Digital project due at 8pm on Friday, Oct.29 (roughly three weeks after the workshop)

**From Social Contract to Sexual/Racial Contract**

**Oct. 7 (Th)** Thomas Hobbes (1588-1679): from the state of nature to the commonwealth

*Required reading:*

* Hobbes, *Leviathan* (excerpts)

**Week 8**

**Oct.12 (T)** Bernard Mandeville (1670-1733): from state of nature to morality

*Required reading:*

* Mandeville, *An Enquiry into the Origin of Moral Virtue* (excerpts)

**Oct.14 (Th)** Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712-78): the origin of inequality

*Required reading:*

* Rousseau, *On the Origin and the Foundations of Inequality among Men* (excerpts)

**Week 9**

**Oct.19 (T)** Rousseau and Kant on the difference between the sexes

*Required readings:*

* Rousseau, education of Emile vs Sophie (excerpts)
* Kant, “The Character of the Sexes”

**Oct.21 (Th)** François Poulain de la Barre (1648–1723): “the mind has no sex”

*Required reading:*

* De La Barre, *On the Equality of Two Sexes* (excerpts)

**Week 10**

**Oct.26 (T)** Mary Wollstonecraft (1759-97): women deserve more

*Required reading:*

* Wollstonecraft, *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (excerpts)

**Oct.28 (Th)** Philosophy and racial/sexual contract

*Required readings:*

* Charles Mills, *The Racial Contract* (excerpt)
* Carole Pateman, *The Sexual Contract* (excerpt)

**Week 11**

**Nov.2 (T, Zoom)** **Guest-speaker** on standpoint epistemology and epistemic oppression ([Briana Toole](https://www.brianatoole.com/))

*Required background reading:*

* Briana Toole, “From Standpoint Epistemology to Epistemic Oppression” (2019) [portfolio entry is required as usual, but you don’t have to follow the usual format; just write about whatever stands out to you and pose a question that you may have for the speaker]

**Nov.4 (Th, Zoom)** Workshop on the mid-term paper (instructions TBA).

Mid-term paper **draft** due at 8pm ET on Monday, Nov.8; **guided peer reviews** on the draft

due at 8pm ET on Thursday, Nov.11; **final revised version** due at 8pm ET on Monday, Nov.15.

**Gender/Race, Self-Knowledge, and Happiness**

**Week 12**

**Nov.9 (T)** René Descartes (1596-1650) vs. Princess Elisabeth (1618–80): passions, reason, and happiness

*Required readings:*

* Descartes-Elisabeth correspondence on passions (excerpts)
* Descartes, *Passions of the Soul* (excerpts)

(Please read these in the order in which they are listed.)

*Supplementary/optional reading:*

* Schmaltz, “Princes Elisabeth of Bohemia on the Cartesian Mind: Interaction, Happiness, Freedom”

**Nov.11 (Th)** (Re)configuring true friendship

*Required readings:*

* Michel de Montaigne (1533-92), *Of Friendship*
* John Norris (1657 – 1711) & Katherine Philips (1632-64) on friendship (two pieces combined in one document)

(Please read these in the order in which they are listed.)

**Week 13**

**Nov.16 (T)** Émilie du Châtelet (1706-49): some illusion is good for happiness

*Required reading:*

* Du Châtelet, *Discourse on Happiness*

*Required supplementary materials (but you don’t have to talk about these in your portfolio):*

* [Part 1](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QefQbkN2CNE) of [Part 2](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aXhHcqQTrIg) of Prof. Andrew Janiak’s presentation on Émilie du Châtelet.

(Both videos are short, under 4 minutes each. They together provide a concise and informative account of Du Châtelet as a leading philosopher of science in her days and a very influential one for that. Although we are not reading her work on philosophy of science, you may find it interesting to keep that background in mind as you read her piece on happiness.)

**Nov.18 (Th, Zoom)** Madeleine de Scudéry (1607–1701): knowing oneself vs. knowing others

*Required reading:*

* Scudéry, “Of the Knowledge of Others, and of Our Selves”

*Supplementary/optional reading:*

* Briana Toole, “From Standpoint Epistemology to Epistemic Oppression” (2019)

[This article, which was already assigned above, introduces you to a rich set of conceptual tools that can help to stretch your philosophical imagination a bit more when you read the Scudéry piece. It may also inspire ideas for your term paper.]

From Standpoint Epistemology to

Epistemic Oppression

**Week 14**

**Nov.23 (T, Zoom)** Caroline Auguste Fischer (1764-1842): race and self-knowledge

*Required readings:*

* Fischer, *William the Negro*
* Olaudah Equiano (c.1745-97), *The Interesting Narrative* … (excerpt)

[This Equiano excerpt gives you a realistic sense of what the “task” might be that Fischer’s title character William sought to accomplish in America.]

*Supplementary/optional reading:*

* W. E. B. Du Bois, *The Souls of Black Folk* (excerpt on double consciousness)

[Reading this excerpt can give you an angle to explore Fischer’s novella at a deeper level.]

--------------- Happy Thanksgiving! ------------

**Week 15**

**Nov.30 (T, Zoom)** **Guest-speaker** on how to make history of philosophy inclusive ([Robert Bernasconi](https://philosophy.la.psu.edu/people/rlb43/))

*Required background reading:*

* Bernasconi, “Facing up to the Eurocentrism and Racism of Academic Philosophy in the West” [portfolio entry is required as usual, but you don’t have to follow the usual format; just write about whatever stands out to you and pose a question that you may have for the speaker]

**Dec.2 (Th, Zoom)** **Guest-speaker** on philosophy and lived experience ([Elvira Basevich](https://www.elvirabasevich.com/))

*Required background reading:*

* Basevich, “What It’s Like to Grow up Poor, but Fall in Love with Philosophy” [portfolio entry is required as usual; same guidelines as above]

**Pedagogical reflection** due at 8pm ET on Thursday, Dec.9.

**Term paper** due at 8pm ET on Sunday, Dec.19.

(Although we will not go through an official draft-peer review-revision process for this project, you are advised to arrange one within your cohort or in collaboration with another cohort. You can use the same guidelines that we used for peer-reviewing the mid-term paper.)

1. Office hours are for many purposes. You can come to discuss your ideas about upcoming projects, lingering questions about the readings, and other things of the sort. But I would also like to use this opportunity to get to know each of you a bit more as a person. Although you are not required to come, I hope that you will at least once. You are also encouraged to walk with me back to my office and chat along the way after the class (when the meeting is in person). It’s fine if multiple students want to do this at the same time, unless someone would like to talk to me alone. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. I originally shared a version of this poem attributed to Mickey ScottBey Jones (“Invitation to Brave Space”). I then learned that it was plagiarized from Strano’s version (<https://sojo.net/articles/progressive-christian-leader-admits-plagiarizing-influential-poem>). The copy of Strano’s poem I am using here is from <https://www.facinghistory.org/resource-library/untitled-poem-beth-strano>. [↑](#endnote-ref-1)
3. If you suspect that you are an introvert and that this affects your participation, check out Susan Cain’s [Quiet Revolution](https://www.quietrev.com/), her fabulous [TED talk](https://www.ted.com/talks/susan_cain_the_power_of_introverts/discussion?nolanguage=en%C2%A0%C2%A0) about the power of introverts, or a longer [TED Interview](https://www.ted.com/talks/the_ted_interview_susan_cain_takes_us_into_the_mind_of_an_introvert?language=en) with her on that subject. Reading her book *Quiet* a few years ago fundamentally changed how I approach teaching, as well as empowered me personally (I am one of those super introverts, although it’s not always obvious to others). [↑](#footnote-ref-2)