PLEASE NOTE CAREFULLY:

The full set of school regulations and procedures is contained in the Undergraduate Student Handbook which is available online at your MyAberdeen Organisation page. Students are expected to familiarise themselves not only with the contents of this leaflet but also with the contents of the Handbook. Therefore, ignorance of the contents of the Handbook will not excuse the breach of any School regulation or procedure. 

You must familiarise yourself with this important information at the earliest opportunity.

COURSE CO-ORDINATOR/COURSE TEAM

Dr. Beth Lord  
Old Brewery room G12  
01224 272367  
s.b.lord@abdn.ac.uk  
Office hour: TBA

Discipline Administration:  
Miss Lisa Roberts  
50-52 College Bounds, Room CB001  
01224 273986  
philosophy@abdn.ac.uk
TIMETABLE
Students will attend two one-hour lectures and one one-hour tutorial per week. Lectures begin in week 1. Tutorials begin in week 2.

Students can view their university timetable at http://www.abdn.ac.uk/infohub/study/timetables-550.php

COURSE DESCRIPTION
How does the human mind relate to the world? This course introduces two major systems of thought from the history of philosophy that take different approaches to answering this question. Students will first learn about 17th century rationalism by focusing on Rene Descartes’ Meditations on First Philosophy. Through reading this text, students will learn about Descartes’ rationalist approach to knowledge and reality, including his method of doubt, his doctrine of the separation of mind and body, and his argument for the existence of God. We will then turn to David Hume’s Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding as a key text of 18th century empiricism. Students will learn how Hume criticized rationalism and turned to experience to provide a foundation for knowledge. We will look at Hume’s distinction between impressions and ideas, the problem of induction, his account of causality, and his critique of miracles. Throughout the course we will critically compare and examine Descartes’ and Hume’s texts and arguments by drawing on their readers and critics.

COURSE AIMS

- To introduce students to central topics in 17th and 18th century rationalism and empiricism
- To introduce key philosophical questions about experience, knowledge, and reality
- To introduce students to the philosophical texts and arguments of Descartes and Hume
- To develop students’ skills of reading and engaging critically with primary texts
• To develop students’ skills of reasoning, argumentation, and debate

**LEARNING OUTCOMES**

• Students will have acquired knowledge of central topics in 17th-18th century rationalism and empiricism and of key philosophical questions about experience, knowledge, and reality
• Students will understand the main ideas of Descartes and Hume, and will be able to explain the major differences between their philosophies
• Students will have critically engaged with primary texts
• Students will have articulated the results of their learning clearly and systematically in written form and discussion

**LECTURE/SEMINAR PROGRAMME**

The table below indicates the topics and readings to be covered each week. “Descartes” and “Hume” refer to the texts listed under “Texts to Buy”, below. A more detailed course timetable will be provided on MyAberdeen.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Required Reading</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>Descartes: Preface</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Being doubtful</td>
<td>Descartes: First Meditation and selected Objections and Replies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Thinking and the existence of the mind</td>
<td>Descartes: Second Meditation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Thinking and the existence of God</td>
<td>Descartes: Third Meditation and selected Objections and Replies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Thinking truly and erroneously; thinking about material things</td>
<td>Descartes: Fourth and Fifth Meditations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Thinking and the existence of material things</td>
<td>Descartes: Sixth Meditation, and selections from the Correspondence with Princess Elisabeth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Empiricism, rationalism, and</td>
<td>Hume: Sections I and X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter</td>
<td>Topic</td>
<td>Texts mentioned</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------</td>
<td>-------</td>
<td>----------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Sensing, representing, and associating</td>
<td>Hume: Sections II, III, and IV(i)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Inferring, following custom, and forming beliefs</td>
<td>Hume: Sections IV(ii) and V</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Imagining and falling prey to scepticism</td>
<td>Hume: Sections VII and XII</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Philosophy and common sense</td>
<td>Selections from Thomas Reid</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**TEXTS TO BUY**

Students are expected to have done the week’s required reading in advance and to bring the text to every tutorial. **You should therefore buy your own copies of the two main course texts.** It is best to buy these editions so that we all follow the same pagination. These editions will be available in the university bookshop, and are also available to buy new or second-hand online.


All other required course readings will be provided on MyAberdeen.

**SECONDARY READING**

A list of suggested secondary reading will be provided on MyAberdeen. Students may find it helpful to read one or both of the following introductory guides. These are designed to be read alongside the main course texts listed above (they are not a replacement for reading the main texts!):


**ASSESSMENT**

First Attempt:
1 x 1500 word essay (50%)
1 x 2-hour written examination (50%)

Resit: 1 x 1500 word essay (100%)

In addition, students may be required to complete unmarked formative assignments for tutorials.

*Click to view the University Level Descriptors (ANNEX A).*
*Click to view the University Assessment Scale Band Descriptors (ANNEX B).*

PLEASE NOTE: In order to pass a course on the first attempt, a student must attain a Common Grading Scale (CGS) mark of at least E3 on each element of course assessment. Failure to do so will result in a grade of no greater than CGS E1 for the course as a whole.

**ESSAYS**

Essay topics will be provided on MyAberdeen.

Essays should be approximately 1500 words long and must be double-spaced.

The word count includes footnotes but excludes bibliography. Students will be penalised for essays that are significantly too short or too long.

**ASSESSMENT DEADLINE**

Essay due date: **Wednesday 28 October (week 7), 3:00 PM**
SUBMISSION ARRANGEMENTS
Submit one paper copy with a completed essay cover sheet to the drop boxes in CB008 in 50-52 College Bounds and one electronic copy to Turnitin via MyAberdeen. Both copies to be submitted by 3.00pm on the due date.

Please note: Failure to submit both an electronic copy to TurnitinUK and an identical paper copy, with the digital receipt attached, will result in a deduction of marks.

Failure to submit to TurnitinUK will result in a zero mark.

EXAMINATION

Information about the structure of the exam will be provided on MyAberdeen.

Past exam papers can be viewed at http://www.abdn.ac.uk/library/learning-and-teaching/for-students/exam-papers/