

Philosophy 306: The Rationalists (Winter Session 2020, First Term [Fall])
Section: A01 (CRN: 12450 S)

MARKING SCHEME:

Your work in this course will be evaluated exclusively by means of *four* take-home essay-style assignments consisting of one or more long-answer questions. These assignments are scheduled at roughly equal intervals throughout the semester. (Please refer to the separate course schedule provided in Brightspace.) Each assignment is worth 25% of your overall grade. All grading in this course will be done by the course instructor (not by teaching assistant).

Letter grades correspond to the following marks: A+ = 90 - 100, A = 85 - 89, A- = 80 - 84, B+ = 77 - 79, B = 73 - 76, B- = 70 - 72, C+ = 65 - 69, C = 60 - 64, D = 50 - 59, F = 0 - 49.

MAIN EVALUATION CRITERIA:

that I am led to conclude that that student has an excellent understanding of the subject. In such a case the value I attach to the use of examples might increase significantly, and I might lay less emphasis on the fact that the student has failed (for instance) to cover as many points as other students.

CLASS ATTENDANCE, IN-CLASS DISCUSSION AND PARTICIPATION:

In this course you can assume that all essay topics are intended to test you on *the material covered in class*. You are of course permitted and encouraged to supplement class lectures and discussion of the subject with outside material, but the minimum expectation is that you deal with the material covered in class, and that you address the points raised there about that material. This does not mean that for essays you are expected merely to repeat the in-class proceedings. Rather, it means that *you are expected to take explicit account of the texts and passages covered in class and to do justice to the in-class discussions of them. Needless to say, the best way to ensure that you take account of the texts and passages covered in class, is to attend class.*

I cannot stress enough how important attendance is for writing your essay assignments. These constitute the sole means by which you are to be evaluated in this course, and the questions asked in those assignments are based solely on class lectures and discussions not discussion group presentations, not class participation assignments, etc. The essay assignments for this course constitute part of a continuous whole with the lectures and in-class discussions. They do not float free of the work done in class, but are deliberately constructed to incorporate what goes on there. Certainly, these essays also provide you with room to explore topics more deeply than they have been treated in class, and good

discussion to a higher/deeper level.

Another reason attendance is so important in this course is that, in general, there is not a lot of time between the date on which essay-assignment topics are made available to you and the date on which they are due for submission. In this course, the due dates for all essay-question assignments fall approximately after every six classes. However, from the time the topics are made available to you to the time they are due for submission, there are usually only three classes. This leaves a relatively short window of opportunity to research your answers, which in turn makes classroom attendance significantly more important, since that is where you will find the key information.

In normal times my classes tend to involve lots of discussion, and my hope is to replicate this as closely as possible in the new, online format. I encourage and greatly value your in-class contributions, and I can assure you that other students do too. It is a frequently

likely that others have the same one too. So, go ahead and ask your question, or make your comment: it helps me, you, and your classmates. If, however, you are more res af2

these are just summaries, not detailed class-notes. They do little more than list the key themes covered in the lecture on a given day. Thus, without the context of the classes in which to frame them, they are not particularly informative. Finally, though every class will be recorded hearing the class after-the-event is never quite the same learning experience as participating in it at the time.

STRONG FOCUS ON PRIMARY TEXTS:

This course is *highly text-focused*, which means that both in instruction and in evaluation (testing) emphasis is put on your ability to understand the assigned readings and class discussions of them. In this course we will not be relying on secondary literature or commentary, though of course you are always welcome to supplement your reading and class lectures/discussions with secondary material.

Because there is such a focus on the texts, students are strongly encouraged to make sure they use the specifically assigned textbook for this course. The philosopher(s) studied in this course originally wrote in languages other than English, so the readings in this course are all translations. Because translations can sometimes differ greatly, it will be of great benefit to you if you use the assigned translation (textbook), on which both class discussion and essay questions/topics will be based. Using the assigned textbook will allow you to work from the same page (literally and figuratively) as everyone else in the class.

DOING PHILOSOPHY BY SYNCHRONOUS ZOOM CLASS:

Likely most students and instructors of philosophy agree that the best way to teach and study the subject is by attending and participating in real-time (live), in-person classes. Obviously, in-person classes are not a possibility as things currently stand. The good news, however, is that at least half of this formula – namely, the back-and-forth of *real-time (live)* instruction discussion – still applies. This is what Zoom provides and we shall be endeavoring to make the most of it. However, please note: because Zoom lacks the in-

p *it is especially important that you make sure to attend and participate in the twice-weekly live sessions in which this course is being delivered.* In other words, attending live classes is absolutely vital.

Overall, this greater emphasis on attendance and participation in the live Zoom sessions in this course means that I will be making great efforts, during the class time, to enhance that live experience. You have *a standing invitation to ask questions or make comments*

effort to replicate the to-and-fro of live, in-calling for volunteers to answer questions about the material.

In an effort to approximate more closely the in-person classroom experience, you are

you to do. You should note, however, that turning your video function on during your Zoom class uses up more bandwidth, so if this is an issue for you, you might want to

forego that option. If you wish to turn on your video during the session, I ask that you keep in mind that it is often possible, depending on the equipment you have, to participate by video using a virtual background of your own choosing.

ONLINE STUDENT CONDUCT:

dismissal from the university.
policy:

mic Integrity

*Leibniz,
Leibniz: Perception, Apperception and Thought,*

*Leibniz: Logic and Metaphysics,
Leibniz and Confucianism: The Search for Accord.*

Logic and Reality in Leibniz's Metaphysics

*Leibniz, An Introduction to his Philosophy
The Philosophy of Leibniz,
Leibniz
A Critical Exposition of the Philosophy of Leibniz,*