

PIU11054 — History of Western Philosophy I B

Module Information	
Module Code	PIU11054
Module Title	History of Philosophy I B
Department	Philosophy
Year Group	Junior Freshman
Module Personnel	Dr. James Levine Dr. Jamie Turner
Academic Year	2026-27
Credit Weighting	5 ECTS
Semester	2
Contact Hours	22 hours of lectures; four hours of tutorials

Module Content	
Module Description	The 17th and 18th centuries mark the beginning of what is called “modern” (western) philosophy. Stimulated by the scientific revolution, western philosophers—including Descartes, Spinoza, Leibniz, Locke, (Trinity’s own) Berkeley, and Hume—addressed issues regarding the ultimate nature of the universe, our knowledge of it, and what view of God it is reasonable to accept. The module is divided into two components. The first will focus on the so-called “rationalists”—Descartes, Spinoza, and Leibniz. The second will focus on the so-called “empiricists”—Locke, Berkeley, and Hume.
Module Learning Aims	To understand the context in which early modern philosophy arose, and the central issues addressed by early modern philosophers. To gain experience in examining in detail and assessing arguments made by the philosophers discussed.
Learning Outcomes	At the end of this module, students will be able to:

Module Content

	• Read early modern philosophical texts in their historical context. • Describe some main differences between major early modern philosophers and schools. • Critically evaluate arguments and positions in early modern philosophy.
Indicative Reading / Resources	An extensive and detailed reading list will be made available at the start of the module, and readings will be made available on Blackboard, but the focus will be on the following primary readings: Descartes <i>Meditations</i> (1641) Spinoza <i>Ethics</i> (1677) Leibniz <i>Discourse on Metaphysics</i> (1686) <i>Monadology</i> (1714) Locke <i>An Essay concerning Human Understanding</i> (1689-91) Berkeley <i>A Treatise concerning the Principles of Human Knowledge</i> (1710) Hume <i>An Enquiry concerning Human Understanding</i> (1748)

Assessment

Assessment Components	One essay (50%). In-person final exam (50%).
Assessment Details	While students can choose which component their essay concerns, their exam answer must concern the component on which they did not write their essay. Word-limit for the essay: 1,000 words. Final exam: One hour.

Additional Information

Prerequisites	None.
Co-requisites	None.