

PHL-364-01 History of Modern Philosophy



"The seeker after truth must, once in the course of his life, doubt everything, as far as is possible."

– Rene Descartes

"If we take in our hand any volume; of divinity or school metaphysics, for instance; let us ask, Does it contain any abstract reasoning concerning quantity or number? No. Does it contain any experimental reasoning, concerning matter of fact and existence? No. Commit it then to the flames: for it can contain nothing but sophistry and illusion." – David Hume

Course Overview

Professor Information

Professor's Name: Dr. Jeremy W. Skrzypek

Email Address: skrzypej@ohiodominican.edu

Phone Number: 614-305-7599

Meet with me in Office Hours: Monday-Friday, 1:00pm-2:00pm, or by appointment

My Office Location: Sansbury Hall, Room 241, or we can meet virtually on Zoom or Microsoft Teams

Course Information

Course Title: PHL-364 History of Modern Philosophy

Course Section: 01

Academic Division: Arts and Letters

Division Chair: Dr. Martin Brick

Semester: Spring 2025

Class Meeting Days: Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays

Class Meeting Times: 9:00am-9:50am

Classroom Location: Erskine 323

Course Format

Traditional face-to-face course: We will attend each class meeting in our designated classroom on campus.

Additional resources and materials will be provided in [PantherLearn](#).

Course Description

A period course that examines the developments in philosophy from the Renaissance through the nineteenth century. Thinkers covered may include Descartes, Spinoza, Locke, Leibniz, Berkeley, Hume, Kant, Hegel, Kierkegaard and Nietzsche.

Course Learning Objectives

Upon successful completion of this course, you will be able to:

Knowledge:

1. Students will become familiar with the central questions that are particular to modern philosophers.
2. Students will learn the methods of inquiry that are distinctive of the major modern philosophers.

Skills:

1. Students will develop the ability to read challenging philosophical texts in a critical manner.
2. Student will learn to identify and evaluate philosophical arguments.
3. Students will develop their ability to express themselves clearly through writing and oral class participation.

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Attitudes/Dispositions:

1. Students will develop an appreciation for the insights of the Western philosophical tradition.
2. Students will develop an appreciation of the serious nature of philosophical inquiry.

Required Course Materials

Slingshot, the ODU Campus Bookstore, provides access to required course materials by the first day of class through the Slingshot Choice Subscription model. This includes physical textbooks, workbooks, and even lab equipment gathered for you into one box without needing to place any orders yourself. You will be notified via email when your subscription box and any other digital materials are available and how to access them. Be sure to keep an eye on your ODU Email! All materials are charged to your ODU student account and are returnable for any reason in the first 7 days of class. All *new* students are automatically opted into the subscription model and *returning* students can opt in at any time. To update or verify your Slingshot preferences, login at odu.slingshotedu.com or for more information visit odu.slingshotedu.com/#/faq.

If you choose to opt out of the Slingshot Choice Subscription, you may purchase the following textbooks by visiting the ODU Campus Store in the Griffin Student Center, ordering directly from the [Bookstore website](#), calling (614) 251-4545, or emailing ohiodominican@slingshotedu.com:

1. Roger Ariew and Eric Watkins (editors), *Modern Philosophy: An Anthology of Primary Sources*, Third Edition. Indianapolis, IN: Hackett Publishing, 2019. ISBN: 978-1624668050.

If you have difficulty accessing your required textbooks for any reason, feel free to contact me directly. Please also note that the ODU Library is an excellent resource for course materials and other research materials helpful to you in this course. They may have an item on Course Reserves behind the Circulation Desk, they may offer an eBook through their library collection, or they may be able to help you find an item through OhioLINK, depending on publication year and availability. Visit the [Ask a Librarian](#) website to chat with a librarian, make an appointment, or email the reference librarians for assistance.

Grade Breakdown

Your final grade will be earned by successful completion of the following assignments, calculated as such:

Types of Assignments	Number of Each Type	Percentage of Each Assignment	Total Percentage of Each Type
Attendance and Participation	1	10%	10%
Reading Summaries	2	10%	20%
Final Paper	1	40%	40%
In-Class Exams	2	15%	30%
Grand Totals:	6		100%

Assignment Details

An overview of major course assignments is provided below; check PantherLearn for additional details. See due dates in the Course Schedule at the end of the syllabus.

1. Attendance and Participation

Alignment with Course Learning Objectives: The Attendance and Participation portion of your grade will primarily assess your ability to express yourself clearly through oral class participation (S3), and your appreciation for the insights of the Western philosophical tradition (D1).

Instructions: I will be taking daily attendance in this course. You are permitted three unexcused absences without penalty. Any unexcused absences beyond those three will reduce your grade in the Attendance and Participation category by 1 percentage point per day. In terms of participation, I am looking to see that you have come to class having done the assigned reading, having brought your own copy of the assigned reading, and having prepared some thoughts and questions about the material to share with the rest of the class. You do not need to participate in class discussion every class in order to receive a perfect grade in this category. But I will be looking for occasional, thoughtful contributions from each student.

2. Reading Summaries

Alignment with Course Learning Objectives: The Reading Summaries will primarily assess your ability to read challenging philosophical texts in a critical manner (S1) and your ability to express yourself clearly through writing (S3).

Instructions: Over the course of the semester, each student is required to choose TWO of the assigned readings from the semester schedule below, and to write a summary, in approximately two double-spaced pages, of each. Each reading summary should identify the topic being discussed and offer a brief summary of the author's contribution. Your summary should include a brief description of any views or positions defended by the author and any views or positions critiqued or dismissed by the author. Each summary must be turned in no later than one week after we are scheduled to cover that reading in class. Students must complete at least one reading summary before the midterm exam and the other by the final exam, though students are welcome to complete both readings summaries before the midterm. Students will also be allowed to rewrite their lowest scoring summary by the end of the semester for a better grade.

3. Final Paper

Alignment with Course Learning Objectives: The Final Paper will primarily assess your familiarity with the central questions and methods of inquiry that are particular to modern philosophers (K1, K2), your ability to identify and evaluate philosophical arguments (S2), and your appreciation of the serious nature of philosophical inquiry (D2).

Instructions: For the final paper, each student is required to give a summary and analysis, in eight-to-ten double-spaced pages, of one of the recurring philosophical topics or themes discussed in class. The essay should include a description of the topic or theme, a summary of the views or positions of at least two modern philosophers whom we have read and who discuss this topic or write on this theme, and a comparative analysis of their views or positions. Roughly two weeks before the final paper is due, each student will be required to submit a brief proposal for his or her paper, which should include a clear topic, a rough outline, and a provisional list of sources.

4. In-Class Exams

Alignment with Course Learning Objectives: The In-Class Exams will primarily assess your familiarity with the central questions and methods of inquiry that are particular to modern philosophers (K1, K2), as well as your ability to identify and evaluate philosophical arguments (S2).

Instructions: There will be two in-class exams in this course, each of equal weight (15% of your overall final grade). The Midterm Exam will cover all of the readings and topics discussed in class up to that point. It will include multiple-choice questions, short-answer questions, and a brief essay question. The Final Exam will cover all of the readings and topics discussed during the second half of the semester. Like the Midterm, it will also include multiple-choice questions, short-answer questions, and an essay question, but it will be slightly longer. The dates on which these in-class exams will be held are indicated below on the course schedule.

Grading Scale

The letter grades you receive in this course correspond to the following percentage:

Letter	Percentage
A	93-100%
A-	90-92%
B+	87-89%
B	83-86%
B-	80-82%
C+	77-79%
C	73-76%
C-	70-72%
D+	67-69%
D	63-66%
D-	60-62%
F	Below 60%

Course Practices, Expectations, and Policies

If you experience any challenges meeting these expectations, please contact me as soon as possible, and we will work together to find a solution. To request any accommodations, contact

AccessibilityServices@ohiodominican.edu.

Communication Practices

We will communicate and interact in a variety of ways throughout this course. Please communicate early and often.

- **Email:** It is expected that you and I will both use our university email addresses for all official course communications. I will check email very regularly and respond as quickly as I can, which is typically within a few hours. It is vital that you check your [ODU email account](#) on a regular basis so that you will not miss communications.
- **Office Hours:** I have designated my weekly office hours and office location above. This is dedicated time for us to meet and discuss any questions or concerns you may have. You may drop into my office freely during this time, and if you are unavailable at this time, you may contact me to schedule an appointment at a different time.
- **PantherLearn:** I will also use News Items on our PantherLearn course homepage to communicate information and updates about our course. You may communicate directly with me or with your classmates by accessing the Classlist from the Tools menu, selecting a name, and then emailing them directly.
- **Teams:** All ODU faculty and students have access to Teams as part of Microsoft Office 365. I recommend downloading the [Teams app](#) as an additional way to connect through chat and video calls.

Attendance and Workload Expectations

- **Attendance:** I will be taking attendance in this course every time we meet, and your attendance will be a part of what determines the attendance and participation portion of your grade (discussed above). If you have a university-approved excused absence that affects your ability to attend class (especially on days in which exams are held), or your ability to complete or turn-in assignments, please inform me as soon as possible, so that I can determine a fair policy and make the appropriate accommodations.

- **Acceptable Classroom Behavior:** In this class, I expect you to observe basic classroom etiquette. That means arriving to class on time and staying for the entirety of our scheduled meeting. It means not sleeping, or sending text messages, or watching videos, or listening to music, or carrying on private conversations during class. Eating during class time is permitted as long as it is generally permitted in our classroom and as long as it does not create a disturbance for me or the other students. In the event that you need to get up and leave during class, please do so quietly and sparingly. If you have any questions about what counts as acceptable classroom behavior, please do ask. Part of the college experience is learning how to conduct oneself in a professional setting.
- **Workload:** Since this is a 3-credit course, in addition to spending 3 hours per week in the classroom, you should plan to dedicate at least 6 hours per week studying or completing assignments for this course. And you should plan to do the same for all of your 3-credit courses.
- **No Shows:** Per ODU policies, you will be reported to the Registrar as a “no show” if you have not participated in the course during the first full week of classes. Participation includes attending class in person or completing any graded or non-graded assignments in PantherLearn, such as an Introduce Yourself discussion post. When you are reported as a “no show,” the Registrar’s office will then remove you from the class, and you will need my permission to be re-enrolled.

Late Policy

Unless specified otherwise, all assignments are due by the beginning of class on the dates listed below, barring any adjustments in the schedule by me. Any assignments not received by the beginning of class on the date they are due will receive a TEN POINT deduction (based on the assignment’s 100-point scale) PER DAY. No assignments will be accepted more than five days after they are due.

Classroom Conduct

Our community is committed to fostering a learning environment that is conducive to academic study and discourse. Such a community exists on the basis of shared values and principles, upheld by certain standards of conduct in the classroom, on and off campus, and online. These standards are embodied within a set of core values foundational to Ohio Dominican’s culture of care and student code of conduct, including integrity, responsibility, respect, social justice, and community. Read more in the [Student Handbook](#).

Dominican scholars are expected to speak your minds openly, fully, and responsibly, while listening to others carefully, critically, and respectfully. During discussions we may argue points with passion and debates may sometimes become heated, but we must do so with care. Personal attacks, inappropriateness, and deliberate harm have no place in our community.

Academic Integrity Expectations

Since academic honesty is a core Dominican value, you are expected to maintain a high degree of academic integrity throughout this course. Submitting academic work that is not your own violates the mutual trust necessary to sustain our learning community. By “work that is not your own”, I mean work completed by other students, work that you have paid someone else to complete for you, and any work featuring AI-generated or AI-edited content (such as written work generated or edited by ChatGPT or Grammarly). All written assignments may be checked for originality by Turnitin. If you submit an assignment that violates ODU’s [Academic Integrity Policy](#), it will receive a score of zero, and I will complete the Academic Disciplinary Form to submit to the Office of Academic Affairs, which will be added to your student file. The ODU Library offers a detailed guide covering the various forms of academic dishonesty and how to practice academic integrity in all areas of study, which may be accessed through the [ODU Library Academic Integrity website](#).

ODU Policies

ODU Email Policy

I will use your university email address for all official course communications. It is vital that you check your [ODU email account](#) on a regular basis so that you will not miss communications for which you will be held accountable. If you need help with management of your email account, please contact the [Helpdesk](#).

Title IX Policy

In compliance with Title IX, Ohio Dominican University does not discriminate in its admissions practices, in its employment practices, or in its educational programs or activities on the basis of sex or gender, which includes pregnancy, childbirth, and related conditions. Questions regarding Title IX, including its application and/or concerns about noncompliance, can be directed to the Title IX Coordinator. Review the complete [Title IX policy](#) and find up to date contact information to report any concerns.

Diversity Commitment

Ohio Dominican University, in fostering our Catholic and Dominican identity, respects and honors the dignity of each person regardless of age, race, ethnicity, religion, socioeconomic status, sexual orientation, gender identity, country of origin, disability, and other expressions of human individuality. Therefore, Ohio Dominican University is committed to ensuring an inclusive environment that welcomes all who seek to find and share the truth, trusting in the rigor of reason and the light of faith to unite our diverse community. Visit [Diversity at ODU](#) to find out more.

Student Problem Resolution

If you have a problem, you are required to pursue the following informal procedures as outlined in the [Student Handbook](#). Complaints of an academic nature, including but not limited to grade disputes, should first be discussed and resolution sought with the course instructor. If resolution is not reached at the instructor level, you should bring the matter in writing to the Chair of the Academic Division in which the course is offered. The Chair will verify that all department or division policies have been followed and that you have been treated fairly. The Chair will render a written judgment in the matter. Complaints of a nonacademic nature, including interaction with another student or staff member, should be directed to the Dean of Students to express and document your concerns. The Dean will work with you to resolve the problem.

Student Resources

The entire ODU community is behind you, ready to help you succeed in this course and beyond!

Early Alert System

Ohio Dominican University utilizes Retention Alert, an early alert system, in an effort to help you receive the resources and support you need to be successful. Should I become concerned about your academic performance and/or overall wellbeing, it is likely that I will refer you to a member of Ohio Dominican University's Student Success Team. The early alert system can provide you with additional services and support. Please know that both Ohio Dominican University and all its faculty members, including myself, are committed to doing everything we can to help you be successful in your academic studies.

ODU Helpdesk

Your success depends on having a computer or other device capable of satisfying the Technology Skills and Equipment Requirements for this course. If you experience any technological difficulties with your devices, Wi-Fi on campus, PantherLearn, Email, or any other ODU technology system, the [ODU Helpdesk](#) is available to assist

you. The Helpdesk is located on the second floor of Spangler Learning Center and can be reached at (614) 253-3633 or helpdesk@ohiodominican.edu.

Student PantherLearn Training

Take a moment to self-enroll in the [Student PantherLearn Training](#) course from the main PantherLearn homepage. Click *Discover* from the navbar, then select Student PantherLearn Training from the list. If you do not see the course listed through Discover, please email the Helpdesk at helpdesk@ohiodominican.edu.

ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act)

If you have a documented disability and wish to request reasonable accommodations, please contact the Accessibility Services Office. Accommodation arrangements should be made during the first two weeks of the semester. You may request accommodations at any time during the semester, but please note that accommodations are not retroactive. You must contact the Accessibility Services Office prior to every semester that accommodations are needed. Email accessibilityservices@ohiodominican.edu to make an appointment, and visit the [Accessibility Services website](#) for important forms, details about accommodations, and additional contact information.

Library Services

The ODU Library is located in the Spangler Learning Center. If you need (e)books, articles, or other materials, you may need to access library resources on campus or through [off-campus login](#). You may also visit the library's online collection of scholarly journals, accessed through [databases](#), organized alphabetically or by subject. If you need to do any research, start as soon as possible, as you may need time to obtain a full-text resource. Library services are available to help you manage your library account, help find and access the items you need, and assist you with learning how to navigate through the resources. If you have a question for a librarian or would like assistance, please [contact us online](#) or give us a call at (614) 251-4752.

Academic Resource Center (Tutoring)

Located in the Spangler Learning Center, the [Academic Resource Center \(ARC\)](#) helps you achieve academic success by becoming an independent, self-directed, life-long learner. We provide online and in person services including subject-specific tutoring, writing assistance, and academic coaching. Email the ARC at tutoring@ohiodominican.edu with any questions.

Subject-Specific Tutoring

We provide subject-specific content tutoring on-campus and online. Each tutor has a content specialty, an academic subject area in which he/she can provide in depth tutorial assistance. Visit [Tutoring](#) to find a tutor, view hours of operation, and schedule an appointment.

Write Place

The Write Place is the ARC's writing lab, located in Spangler 206B. Writing tutors are available on-campus and online to assist students in all aspects of the writing process, including thesis formation, paragraph development, organization, citation, and punctuation questions. Visit the [Write Place](#) for hours, guidance on how submit a paper to writeplace@ohiodominican.edu, and additional writing resources.

Academic Coaching

Academic Coaches provide general learning strategy assistance to help students approach challenging courses, including tips for reading large amounts of text, taking better notes, organizing material and deepening critical thinking. [Schedule an Appointment](#) to get started today!

Counseling Services

[Counseling Services](#) takes a holistic wellness approach to assist you with any problems you may be encountering. The aim is to help you better understand yourself, cope more effectively, and reach your goals. Counseling at ODU is free and confidential. Review the Counseling Services [FAQ](#) and to set up an appointment, complete this [intake form](#) or contact the Counseling Services Office at (614) 251-4570 or through email at counselingservices@ohiodominican.edu.

Health Services

[Health Services](#) is located in Peace Hall through COPC's Care Forward Center. Health Services is open to all students requiring primary care, assessment, evaluation, and treatment options. [Watch this video](#) detailing how to access Health Services and click here to [Schedule an Appointment](#).

Career Development Center

The [Career Development Center \(CDC\)](#) is a critical resource on campus to support your success at ODU and after graduation. The CDC assists with every phase in the career development process: self-exploration, major and career exploration, internship and job searching, resume and cover letter writing, and interviewing. Contact our office in Erskine 108 via phone at (614) 251-4733 or email careercenter@ohiodominican.edu to make an [appointment](#). Activate your account in our online career community [Handshake](#) to access amazing job and internship opportunities.

Course Schedule

The following schedule of topics, readings, and assignments is subject to revision based on our pace, interest, and unforeseen circumstances. I will notify you in advance of any changes to the schedule, and I will post a revised version of the syllabus in our PantherLearn course shell.

Note on reading assignments: Reading assignments listed below [in brackets] are to be read in preparation for the classes on which they are listed. All readings are eligible for reading summaries, though some may work better for this assignment than others. Feel free to ask me for suggestions. Readings not included in our textbooks but made available through PantherLearn or otherwise distributed are marked below with an *.

Mon., Jan. 13: **Class Introductions and Syllabus Overview; What is Philosophy? A Brief History of Philosophy**

Wed., Jan. 15: **The Medieval Worldview** [MacDonald and Kretzmann, "Medieval Philosophy"]*

Fri., Jan. 17: *Same topic continued*

Mon., Jan. 20: **NO CLASS (MLK Jr. Day)**

Wed., Jan. 22: **The Scientific Revolution** [Camilleri, "Modern Philosophy and the Scientific Revolution"]*

Fri., Jan. 24: **Descartes: External World Skepticism** [Descartes, *Meditations*, Meditation 1 (pp. 40-43)]

Mon., Jan. 27: *Same topic continued*

Wed., Jan. 29: **NO CLASS (Instructor Ill)**

Fri., Jan. 31: **NO CLASS (Instructor Ill)**

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Mon., Feb. 3: **Descartes: The Cogito** [Descartes, *Meditations*, Meditation 2; Hobbes, *Against Meditation 2*; Descartes, *Reply* (pp. 43-47; 76-79)]

Wed., Feb. 5: **Descartes: The Existence of God and the Saving of Appearances** [Descartes, *Meditations*, Meditations 3, 4, and 5; Hobbes, *Against Meditation 3*; Arnauld, *Concerning God*; Descartes, *Reply* (pp. 47-61; 79-92)]

Fri., Feb. 7: **Descartes: Mind-Body Dualism** [Descartes, *Meditations*, Meditation 6; Princess Elizabeth of Bohemia, *Correspondence* (pp. 61-68; 93-99)]

Mon., Feb. 10: *Same topic continued*

Wed., Feb. 12: **Spinoza: The God of Spinoza: Monism, Pantheism, and Necessitarianism** [Spinoza, *Ethics*, Part I (pp. 172-177)]

Fri., Feb. 14: *Same topic continued* [Spinoza, *Ethics*, Part I (pp. 177-183)]

Mon., Feb. 17: *Same topic continued* [Spinoza, *Ethics*, Part I (pp. 183-188)]

Wed., Feb. 19: *Same topic continued*

Fri., Feb. 21: **Leibniz on Providence: Optimalism, Superessentialism, and the Mirror Thesis** [Leibniz, *Discourse on Metaphysics* (pp. 252-275)]

Mon., Feb. 24: *Same topic continued*

Wed., Feb. 26: **Leibniz on Monads, the Principle of Sufficient Reason, and God** [Leibniz, *Principles of Philosophy* (pp. 303-311)]

Fri., Feb. 28: *Same topic continued*

Mon., Mar. 3: **Review for Midterm Exam**

Wed., Mar. 5: **MIDTERM EXAM**

Fri., Mar. 7: **NO CLASS (Instructor Away)**

Mon., Mar. 10: **NO CLASS (Spring Break)**

Wed., Mar. 12: **NO CLASS (Spring Break)**

Fri., Mar. 14: **NO CLASS (Spring Break)**

Mon., Mar. 17: **Locke: Empiricism, Sensation, and Primary and Secondary Qualities** [Locke, *Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, Book I, Chapters I-II, Book II, Chapters I-VIII (pp. 346-367)]

Wed., Mar. 19: **Locke: Substance** [Locke, *Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, Book II, Chapter XII and Book II, Chapter XXIII (pp. 370-372, 389-397)]

Fri., Mar. 21: **Locke: Personal Identity** [Locke, *Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, Book I, Chapter XXVII (pp. 397-407); Butler, "Of Personal Identity"*; Reid, "Of Identity"* and "Of Mr. Lock's Account of Our Personal Identity"*]

Mon., Mar. 24: *Same topic continued*

Wed., Mar. 26: **Berkeley: Esse est percipi** [Berkeley, *Three Dialogues*, First Dialogue (pp. 495-514)]

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Fri., Mar. 28: *Same topic continued* [Berkeley, *Three Dialogues*, Second Dialogue (pp. 515-524)]

Mon., Mar. 31: *Same topic continued* [Berkeley, *Three Dialogues*, Third Dialogue (pp. 524-543)]

Wed., Apr. 2: **Hume: Impressions, Ideas, and the Nature of Causation** [Hume, *Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding*, Sections II, III, IV, and V; Shepherd, *An Essay Upon the Relation of Cause and Effect* (selection) (pp. 584-597, 687-689)]

Fri., Apr. 4: **Hume: Personal Identity** [Hume, *Treatise of Human Nature*, Book I, Part 4, Section 6 (pp. 571-578)]

Mon., Apr. 7: **Hume: Miracles** [Hume, *Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding*, Section X (pp. 623-632)]

Wed., Apr. 9: **Hume: The Teleological Argument** [Paley, *Natural Theology* (selection)*; Hume, *Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion*, Parts II, III, IV, and V (pp. 647-667)]

Fri., Apr. 11: *Same topic continued*

Mon., Apr. 14: **Hume: The Cosmological Argument** [Clarke, *Demonstration of the Being and Attributes of God* (selection)*; Hume, *Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion*, Part IX (pp. 667-669)]

Wed., Apr. 16: **Hume: The Problem of Evil** [Hume, *Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion*, Parts X and XI (pp. 669-679)]

Fri., Apr. 18: **NO CLASS (Good Friday)**

Mon., Apr. 21: **NO CLASS (Easter Monday)**

Wed., Apr. 23: *Same topic continued*

Fri., Apr. 25: **Kant: Transcendental Idealism** [Kant, *Prolegomena to Any Future Metaphysics*, Preface and Preamble (pp. 719-730)]

Mon., Apr. 28: *Same topic continued* [Kant, *Prolegomena to Any Future Metaphysics*, The Main Transcendental Problem, Part One and Part Two (pp. 731-753)]

Wed., Apr. 30: *Same topic continued* [Kant, *Prolegomena to Any Future Metaphysics*, The Main Transcendental Question, Part Three, Conclusion, and Scholium (pp. 753-774)]

Fri., May 2: **Review for Final Exam; FINAL PAPER DUE**

Wed., May 7 (8:00am-9:50am): **FINAL EXAM**