





5.00 credits

45.0 h

Q1

Teacher(s)	Maeschalck Marc ;Schmutz Jacob ;
Language :	French > English-friendly
Place of the course	Louvain-la-Neuve
Prerequisites	/
Main themes	The course is intended as an introduction to the study of texts and doctrines of modern philosophy. It identifies the main aspects of the history of modern philosophy, its key trends and prominent thinkers, and will develop students' critical reading of the great works of modern philosophy. Authors studied will include Bacon, Descartes, Spinoza, Leibniz, Locke, Hume, Kant and Hegel.
Learning outcomes	At the end of this learning unit, the student is able to : By the end of the course, students will be familiar with the major movements and significant writers of modern philosophy, and will be able to identify its key underlying issues and describe the important ongoing debates. They will be able to comment on, analyse and critique one or more major modern philosophy texts and situate them in the overall context of modern philosophy, from Bacon and Descartes to Hegel.
Teaching methods	The sessions will be divided into a section dedicated to the explanation of tradition and concepts of early-modern philosophy and the reading and analysis of relevant passages.
Content	Transformations of knowledge in modern philosophy Course taught this year by Prof. Marc Maeschalck, Q1 2023–2024 Between the sums of philosophico-theological knowledge and artificial intelligence, the ideal of knowledge focused on encyclopaedism during the modern period. This concept, which was particularly representative of Franco-German thinking in the 18th and 19th centuries, was rooted in the resurgence of the methods of knowledge that had emerged since the Renaissance, and then consolidated by a trend that ran through the classical period and led to transcendentalism and idealist romanticism, namely Baroqueism. The momentum of Western thought, mobilised as much by its scientific revolution as by the conquest of new territories fought over by European nations to ensure their hegemony, obscures both the internal crises that punctuate political developments in Europe (famines, wars of religion, revolutions) and the little-known fate of dominated populations, sometimes ethnocided, sometimes enslaved. This constant calls for a certain caution in the historical manipulation of an ethnocentric history of ideas, which would quickly boil down to a meta-celebration of the progress of reason or the Spirit in the microcosm located between London, Paris and Berlin. This is why it is also necessary to take into account an “epistemology of holes” in order to find, as if on the fringes of this microcosm, the counter-narrative of a majority history that might erroneously appear to be subaltern. The symptoms of this counter-narrative are not lacking, for a certain fascination sometimes for primitive temperaments (as in Linnaeus), sometimes for exoticism or barbaric violence, or even, as in the Egyptomania of the Enlightenment, for vanished imperial powers (mirroring the present desire for power), attests to an interest in otherness and, at the same time, an unconscious relationship to a lack. But these symptoms are still no more than a relationship to mental reconstructions that avoid the hole that points to the epistemic bias that makes it impossible to take into account alternative forms of rationality for conceiving how the world should be governed, how resources should be exploited and how society should live well. What remains to be done, then, is to identify other forms of contact with otherness that attempt to dramatize the hole in a dominant episteme and its inability to unlearn its approach so as to allow itself to be challenged by different ways of thinking and doing. There are also such markers in the history of modern European ideas that resist the pursuit of the metanarrative and call for a counter-narrative to be taken into account. One example that will capture our attention is that of the physiocratic school and certain texts devoted to the agro-economy of the Incas and the Chinese. We will then look at a second example through Schelling's critique of modern Orientalism and his attention to the aversion aroused by any attempt to interpret Egyptian shamanism and, in particular, animal metamorphoses. Thus we will attempt to lay the foundations for an “epistemology of holes” that will disengage the history of modern European philosophy from the exclusivities of a self-glorifying metanarrative, while showing the extent to which this epistemic requirement remains suspended from the encyclopaedic gesture that artificial intelligence seems to surpass.

Faculty or entity in charge	EFIL
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Programmes containing this learning unit (UE)				
Program title	Acronym	Credits	Prerequisite	Learning outcomes
Certificat universitaire en philosophie (fondements)	FILO9CE	5		
Bachelor in Philosophy, Politics and Economics	PPE1BA	5		
Minor in Philosophy	MINFILO	5		
Bachelor in Philosophy	FILO1BA	5		
Certificat universitaire en philosophie (approfondissement)	FILA9CE	5		