

DESCARTES, LOCKE AND THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY

730:307

SYLLABUS

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Office: 1 Seminary Place, Room 201, CAC Phone: 732-932-9861

Office hours: M and W 4:30-5:30pm; by arrangement Thursday afternoon

TEXTS: Rene Descartes, *Philosophical Writings of Descartes*, v. 2, trans. Cottingham, Stoothoff, and Murdoch
John Locke, *Essay concerning Human Understanding*, ed. P. H. Nidditch
G. W. Leibniz, all assignments on electronic reserve

REQUIREMENTS: Students are expected to complete reading assignments thoroughly and promptly. Each assignment should be read at least once for the class meeting on the date by which it is listed. You are strongly encouraged to ask questions, make comments, and join in class discussion. *There will be two take-home midterm exams and a take-home final exam.* There may be quizzes or other short assignments. Students are expected to attend all classes. If you must miss one or two classes, please use the University absence reporting website <https://sims.rutgers.edu/ssra/> to indicate the date and reason for your absence. An email is automatically sent to me.

SCHEDULE:

Jan. 23 Introduction

Jan. 28 Descartes, 'Synopsis' and *Meditations* I and II (sense and intellect)

Jan. 30 *Meditation* III

Feb. 4 Caterus, 'First Objections' and Descartes, 'Replies', *Phil Writings*, 66-9, 74-82
Hobbes, 'Third Objections' and accompanying replies, *Phil Writings*, 125-37
(theory of ideas, representation)

Feb. 4 *Meditation* IV (error and free will)

Feb. 6 *Meditation* V

Caterus, "First Objections" and Descartes, 'Replies', *Phil Writings*, 69-73, 74-82
(ontological argument)

Feb. 11 Mersenne, 'Second Objections' and 'Replies', *Phil Writings*, 89, 100-04;
Arnauld, 'Fourth Objections' and 'Replies', *Phil Writings*, 150, 171 (circle?)

Feb. 13 *Meditation* VI

Arnauld, 'Fourth Objections' and 'Replies', *Phil Writings*, 139-44, 154-62
(mind-body dualism)

First take-home midterm exam distributed

Feb. 18 Letters from Descartes to Princess Elizabeth of Bohemia—electronic reserve
(mind-body union)

Feb. 20 same

- Feb. 25 *First midterm exam due*
Locke, *Essay concerning Human Understanding*, Preface to Reader, Bk 1,
chs. 1-4 (against innate knowledge)
- Feb. 27 *Essay*, Bk II, chs. 1-7, 12 (origin of ideas, Cartesian essences)
- Mar. 4 *Essay*, Bk II, ch. 8 (mechanism)
- Mar. 6 *Essay*, Bk II, chs. 22, 23, and 30-2 (ideas of mixed modes, substances)
- Mar. 11 *Essay*, Bk II, ch. 27 (trans-temporal identity, personal identity)
- Mar. 13 same
- Mar. 16-24 *Spring break*
- Mar. 25 Bk IV, chs. 1-3 (knowledge, its limits; thinking matter)
Second midterm exam distributed
- Mar. 27 *Essay*, Bk 4, ch. 11 (sensitive knowledge of the external world)
- Apr. 1 same
- Apr. 3 *Second midterm exam due*
Leibniz, *Discourse on Metaphysics*, secs. 1-17--electronic reserve (theory of
creation, complete concept theory of substance)
- Apr. 8 same
- Apr. 10 Leibniz, 'On the Correction of Metaphysics', 'New Theory of Substance, etc.'
(force theory of substance)
- Apr. 15 Leibniz, 'Clarification of the Difficulties which Mr. Bayle has found . . .'
- (mind-body unity as preestablished harmony)
- Apr. 17 Leibniz, *New Essays concerning Human Understanding*, Preface, Bk. I, and Bk.
4, ch. 9 (end) = pp. 44-52, 69-101, and 447 (defense of innate knowledge)
- Apr. 22 *New Essays*, 'Preface' and Bk. 2, chs. 1-2, 8, 20 = pp. 52-9, 129-33, 130-33,
164-6 (non-conscious perception and appetite)
- Apr. 24 *New Essays*, Bk. 2, ch. 27 = pp. 229-247 (trans-temporal identity, personal
identity)
- Apr. 29 same
Final exam distributed
- May 1 *New Essays*, pp. 173, 118, 161 (theory of consciousness)
- May 6 same

Final exam due in Philosophy Department Office on date of regularly scheduled exam