

DESCARTES, LOCKE AND THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY
SPRING SEMESTER, 2016
01:730:307

SYLLABUS

Martha Bolton—Office: 106 Somerset Street, Rm 538; Phone: 848-732-0430
Email: mbolton@rci.rutgers.edu
Office hours: M 4:30-5:30, Th afternoon by appointment
Course meetings: FH B 1, MW 2:50-4:10 PM

REQUIRED TEXTS:

Rene Descartes, *Philosophical Writings of Descartes*, v. 2, trans. Cottingham, Stoothoff, and Murdoch (CSM)

John Locke, *Essay concerning Human Understanding*, ed. P. H. Nidditch (*Essay*)

G. W. Leibniz, assignments on course Sakai site

REQUIREMENTS: Students are expected to come to all meetings of the class. If you expect to miss one or two classes, you may use the electronic absence reporting form:

<https://sims.rutgers.edu/ssra/>. An email will automatically be sent to me.

You are expected to complete all 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. I will often send notes on the assignment before class. Look at them in conjunction with the assignment. Come to class prepared to discuss them. Questions, comments, and participation in class discussion are encouraged. *There will be two take-home midterm exams and a take-home final exam.*

LEARNING GOALS: The course is intended to provide basic understanding of main philosophers of the early modern period, their philosophical systems, topical issues, positions, and arguments in historical context. It is also meant to develop skill in analyzing and evaluating arguments.

SCHEDULE

Jan. 20 Introduction

25 Descartes, 'Synopsis' and *Meditations* I and II (sense and intellect)

27 *Meditation* III

Feb. 1 Caterus, 'First Objections' and Descartes, 'Replies', CSM, 66-69, 74-82 (theory of ideas)

3 *Meditation* IV (error and free will)

8 *Meditation* V; Caterus, "First Objections' and Descartes, 'Replies', CSM, 69-73, 82-86 (ontological argument)

Feb. 10 Mersenne, 'Second Objections' and 'Replies', CSM, 98, 100-104; Arnauld, 'Fourth Objections' and 'Replies', CSM, 150-171 (circular reasoning?)

15 *Meditation* VI; Arnauld, 'Fourth Objections' and 'Replies', CSM, 139-44, 154-62 (mind-body dualism) **First take-home midterm distributed.**

17 Letters exchanged between Descartes and Princess Elisabeth of Bohemia—course Sakai site. (mind-body union)

22 same

24 **First mid-term exam due;** Locke, *Essay*, Preface to Reader, Bk 1, chs. 1-4 (against innate knowledge)

29 *Essay*, Bk II, chs. 1-7, 12 (origin of ideas, against Cartesian essences)

Mar. 2 *Essay*, Bk II, ch. 8; suggested, A. D. Smith, 'On Primary and Secondary Qualities', *Philosophical Review* (1990), 221-54 (link to journal in University Library on-line catalog)

7 *Essay*, Bk II, chs. 13, 16, 22, 23, and 30-32 (ideas of simple modes, mixed modes, and substances); **second mid-term exam distributed**

9 no class

Mar. 12-20 Spring recess

21 *Essay*, Bk II, ch. 27 (trans-temporal identity, personal identity)

23 same

28 **Second mid-term exam due;** *Essay*, Bk IV, chs. 1-3 (knowledge, its limits, thinking matter)

30 *Essay*, Bk IV, ch. 11 (sensitive knowledge of the external world)

Apr. 4 Leibniz, *Discourse on Metaphysics*, secs. 1-17 (course Sakai site) (rational creation theory, complete concept definition of substance and its implications)

6 same

11 Leibniz, 'New Theory of Substance, etc.' (pre-established harmony)

13 Leibniz, 'Clarification of Difficulties which Mr. Bayle has found . . . ' (defense of pre-established harmony)

18 Leibniz, *New Essays concerning Human Understanding*, Preface (points of disagreement with Locke)

20 *New Essays*, Bk 1, chs. 1 and 2 (defense of innate knowledge (knowledge?))

25 *New Essays*, Bk 2, chs. 1-2, 8, 20 (pp. 52-9, 129-33, 164-6) (arguments to show there are non-conscious perceptions and appetites); **take-home final exam distributed**

27 same

May 1 questions and review

May 5 **Take-home final exam due** in the Philosophy Department at 3:00PM, 106 Somerset Street, Rm 518

ACADEMIC POLICY:

Academic integrity is taken very seriously in this course. Violations include: cheating, plagiarism, fabrication, denying others access to facilities or information, and facilitating violations of academic integrity. For the current University academic integrity policy, go to <http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/academic-integrity-policy/>. Ask the instructor if you have questions about how this policy affects your work for this course.

Students with disabilities requesting accommodations must follow the procedures outlined at <https://ods.rutgers.edu/students/registration-form>.

STUDENT SERVICES YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT:

Just In Case Web App <http://codu.co/cee05e>

Access helpful mental health information and resources for yourself or a friend in a mental health crisis on your smartphone or tablet and easily contact CAPS or RUPD.

Counseling, ADAP & Psychiatric Services (CAPS)

(848) 932-7884 / 17 Senior Street, New Brunswick, NJ 08901 / www.rhscaps.rutgers.edu/

CAPS is a University mental health support service that includes counseling, alcohol and other drug assistance, and psychiatric services staffed by a team of professionals within Rutgers Health services to support students' efforts to succeed at Rutgers University. CAPS offers a variety of services that include: individual therapy, group therapy and workshops, crisis intervention, referral to specialists in the community and consultation and collaboration with campus partners.

Violence Prevention & Victim Assistance (VPVA)

(848) 932-1181 / 3 Bartlett Street, New Brunswick, NJ 08901 / www.vpva.rutgers.edu/

The Office for Violence Prevention and Victim Assistance provides confidential crisis intervention, counseling and advocacy for victims of sexual and relationship violence and stalking to students, staff and faculty. To reach staff during office hours when the university is open or to reach an advocate after hours, call 848-932-1181.

Disability Services

(848) 445-6800 / Lucy Stone Hall, Suite A145, Livingston Campus, 54 Joyce Kilmer Avenue, Piscataway, NJ 08854 / <https://ods.rutgers.edu/>

Rutgers University welcomes students with disabilities into all of the University's educational programs. In order to receive consideration for reasonable accommodations, a student with a disability must contact the appropriate disability services office at the campus where you are officially enrolled, participate in an intake interview, and provide documentation:

<https://ods.rutgers.edu/students/documentation-guidelines>. If the documentation supports your request for reasonable accommodations, your campus's disability services office will provide you with a Letter of Accommodations. Please share this letter with your instructors and discuss the accommodations with them as early in your courses as possible. To begin this process, please complete the Registration form on the ODS web site at: <https://ods.rutgers.edu/students/registration-form>.

Scarlet Listeners

(732) 247-5555 / <http://www.scarletlisteners.com/>

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