Humanities 116: Philosophical Perspectives on the Humanities

Section no. 4. Mon. and Wed., 1:30–2:50pm, Cobb 207.

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Office hours: Tue., 1:30–3:30.

Course Requirements


Texts

(Note: there is a more recent Penguin Classics edition with a different translator, but I prefer this one.)

Descartes, Selected Philosophical Writings, tr. J. Cottingham, R. Stoothoff and Dugald Murdoch (Cambridge).


Leibniz, Philosophical Essays, ed. R. Ariew and D. Garber (Hackett).

(As was the case last quarter, you can use a different translation/edition at your own risk. We're reading Hume in the original, of course.)

Readings


Mon., Jan. 21: Descartes, *Discourse on the Method*, parts 1 and 2 (pp. 20–31); *First Meditation* (pp. 76–9).


Mon., Jan. 28: selections from later writers (Plotinus, Porphyry, John Philoponus, Avicenna, and Thomas Aquinas) on substance and accident.


Mon., Feb. 4: no class (break).

Wed., Feb. 6: Leibniz, “Monadology” (pp. 213–25), and selections from Thomas Aquinas (on angels) (recommended).

Mon., Feb. 11: Leibniz, “A New System of Nature,” first three paragraphs (pp. 138–9); “A Specimen of Dynamics,” first two paragraphs (pp. 118–19); from letters to Clarke: 2.12 (p. 324), 3.17 (p. 327), 4.42 (p. 331), 5.107–8 (p. 343), along with Clarke’s replies to each (in handout); “Discourse on Metaphysics,” (pp. 35–68), §§8–16, 19–20, 24, 26–8.


Thurs., Feb. 14 (evening): screening of *Monty Python and the Holy Grail* [this was rescheduled].


Wed., Feb. 20: Descartes, *Third Meditation* (pp. 86–98); Hume, *Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion*, “Pamphilus to Hermippus” and part 1 (pp. 1–12) (and second paper due).

Wed., Feb. 27: Descartes, *Fifth Meditation* (pp. 105–110); brief selections from other authors (required: St. Anselm, Leibniz, Kant; recommended: St. Thomas, Spinoza, Hegel) (on the Ontological Proof).


## Timeline

Timeline of various stuff more or less relevant to this course:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>347 B.C.</td>
<td>Death of Socrates</td>
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<tr>
<td>399 B.C.</td>
<td>Death of Plato</td>
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<td>322 B.C.</td>
<td>Death of Aristotle</td>
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<td>197 B.C.</td>
<td>Roman conquest of Greece</td>
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<td>1 B.C.</td>
<td>Birth of Jesus (approx.)</td>
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<td>305</td>
<td>Death of Porphyry (approx.)</td>
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<td>410</td>
<td>Sack of Rome by the Visigoths</td>
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<td>529</td>
<td>Emp. Justinian closes phil. schools of Athens</td>
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<tr>
<td>622</td>
<td>Muhammad flees from Mecca to Medina</td>
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<tr>
<td>711</td>
<td>Muslim conquest of Spain</td>
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<tr>
<td>8th–9th c.</td>
<td>Aristotle translated into Arabic</td>
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<tr>
<td>11th–13th c.</td>
<td>Aristotle translated into Latin</td>
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<tr>
<td>1204–1261</td>
<td>Crusader rule in Constantinople</td>
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<tr>
<td>1347–1351</td>
<td>The Black Death</td>
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<td>1453</td>
<td>Fall of Constantinople to Turks</td>
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<td>1517</td>
<td>Martin Luther posts “95 Theses”</td>
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<td>1641</td>
<td>Publ. of Meditations</td>
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<td>1714</td>
<td>Leibniz composes “Monadology”</td>
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<tr>
<td>1781</td>
<td>Publ. of Critique of Pure Reason (1st ed.)</td>
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<td>2002</td>
<td>Now</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- 270   Death of Plotinus
- 312   Conversion of Constantine to Christianity
- 5th c. John Philoponus
- 6th c. John Philoponus
- 1037  Death of Avicenna
- 1109  Death of St. Anselm of Canterbury
- 1204  Death of Maimonides
- 1274  Death of St. Thomas Aquinas
- 1492  End of Christian Reconquest of Spain
- 1604  Publ. of Don Quixote, part 1
- 1670  Publ. of Theologico-Political Treatise
- 1779  Publ. of Dialogues Concerning Nat. Relig.
- 1789  French Revolution