

Phil 93: The Rationalists

Tue. and Thurs., 12 noon–1:45pm.

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Office hours: Mon. 2–3pm, Thurs. 11am–noon, or by appointment.

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Course Requirements

Participation in discussion sections (approximately 10% of grade).

“Metaphysics exercises” (kind of a short take-home multiple choice quiz), due most class days (all exercises together, approximately 30%; graded heavily on a curve). (Exercises due Thurs., Jan. 15; Tues., Jan. 20; Tues., Jan. 27; Thurs., Jan. 29; Thurs., Feb. 5; Tues., Feb. 10; Thurs., Feb. 12; Tues., Feb. 17; Thurs., Feb. 19; Thurs., Feb. 26; Tues., Mar. 3; Tues., Mar. 10.)

Two short papers (2–3 pages each), due Tues., Feb. 3 and Tues., Feb. 24 (approximately 15% each).

One longer paper (6–8 pages), due Wed., Mar. 18 (approximately 30%).

The ME’s are due in class, but if you can’t make it class you may e-mail your answers to your TA. Papers are due by e-mail: please send to your TA and also cc me. Please send in MSWord or in a format easily convertible to MSWord (e.g., plain text, HTML, RTF).

All assignments will be available on-line before they are due (hopefully well before).

Texts

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

¹Please feel free to contact the instructor and/or your TA with questions about the substance of the course (philosophical issues, questions about the meaning of the texts, questions about paper topics, etc.). On administrative issues (grades, lateness/extensions, due dates, section times, etc.) please try your TA first.

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

Spinoza, *The Ethics, Treatise on the Emendation of the Intellect, and Selected Letters*, tr. S. Shirley, ed. S. Feldman (Hackett).

The above texts should be available at the Literary Guillotine. Readings not from texts on the above list are available on e-reserve.

Readings

Tues., Jan. 6: (no reading, first class).²

I. Background: Aristotelian Metaphysics

Thurs., Jan. 8: selections from Aristotle (on substance and accident).

Tues., Jan. 13: selections from Aristotle and Porphyry (on the predicables and the categories).

Thurs., Jan. 15: selections from Plotinus, Porphyry, Avicenna, and Thomas Aquinas (on substance and accident). ME #1/2 due.

II. Descartes

Tues., Jan. 20: Descartes, *Discourse on the Method*, parts 1–3 (pp. 20–35), part 6, first paragraph (p. 46); *Principles of Philosophy* I.1–3 (p. 160), IV.207 (p. 212). ME #3 due.

Thurs., Jan. 22: *First Meditation* (pp. 76–9). No ME due.

Tues., Jan. 27: beginning of *Second Meditation* (pp. 80–83, through the paragraph ending “in this restricted sense of the term it is simply thinking”); *Principles of Philosophy* I.9–10 (p. 162–3), .20 (pp. 166–7); *Objections and Replies*, selection entitled “[Appendix: Arguments Arranged in Geometrical Fashion],” pp. 150–52. ME #4 due.

Thurs., Jan. 29: remainder of *Second Meditation* (pp. 83–6); *Principles of Philosophy* I.8 (p. 162), .11 (p. 163), .45–8 (pp. 175–6), .51–4 (pp. 177–8), .63 (p. 182), .66 (p. 183), II.4 (pp. 190–91). ME #5 due.

²Note: there may be some readjustments to this schedule because my wife and I are expecting a baby around the end of January or beginning of February (the official due date is Jan. 31, but there’s no predicting these things precisely). Be ready for last-minute announcements.

Tues., Feb. 3: *Third and Fifth Meditations* (pp. 86–98; 105–110) and **first paper due**. No ME due.

Thurs., Feb. 5: *Fourth Meditation* (pp. 98–105); *Principles of Philosophy* I.6 (p. 161); *Objections and Replies*, selection entitled “[The indifference of the will]” (pp. 134–5). ME #6 due. (Note: ME #6 is slightly longer and includes questions covering the previous two readings.)

Tues., Feb. 10: *Sixth Meditation* (pp. 110–22); *Passions of the Soul* I.17–18 (p. 225), .25 (pp. 227–8); .30–35 (pp. 229–32); .39–41 (p. 233); .49–50 (pp. 237–8). ME #7 due.

III. Spinoza

Thurs, Feb. 12: Spinoza, *Ethics*, I, beginning through Scholium to Prop. 15 (pp. 31–43). *Theologico-Political Treatise*, ch. 7, tr. Elwes, pp. 98–top of 101 (ending “which occur in the Bible”). (Readings from this text will be available on e-reserve) ME #8 due.

Tues., Feb. 17: *Ethics*, I, Prop. 16 through end (pp. 43–62). *Theologico-Political Treatise*, pp. 101–4 (ending “its meaning concerning them”). ME #9 due.

Thurs., Feb. 19: *Ethics*, II, beginning through Scholium to Prop. 18 (pp. 63–79). *Theologico-Political Treatise*, paragraph beginning at the bottom of p. 106 (“We have thus shown ...”) and ending on p. 107 (“...about the former”); top of p. 114 (beginning “There only remains”)–top of p. 117 (ending “the learned fare alike”). ME #10 due.

Tues., Feb. 24: Spinoza, *Ethics*, II, Prop. 19 to end (pp. 80–101). *Theologico-Political Treatise*, pp. 117–119 and **second paper due**. No ME due..

Thurs., Feb. 26: Spinoza *Ethics*, III, beginning through Scholium to Prop. 11 (pp. 102–111) and Prop. 53 (p. 136); IV, Definitions (pp. 155–6) and Prop. 28 (p. 168); V, Preface (pp. 201–3), Prop. 4 (p. 206) and Prop. 14 to end (pp. 210–23). ME #11 due.

IV. Leibniz

Tues., Mar. 3: Leibniz, “A New System of Nature,” first three paragraphs (pp. 138–9); from letters to Clarke: (1.4?), 2.12 (p. 324), 3.17 (p. 327), 4.42 (p. 331), 5.107–11

(pp. 343–4), along with Clarke’s replies to each;³ “A Specimen of Dynamics,” first two paragraphs (pp. 118–19); “Discourse on Metaphysics,” §§⁴ 8–12, 24, 26–8, 33 (pp. 40–44, 56–7, 58–60, 64–5). ME #12 due.

Thurs., Mar. 5: “A New System of Nature,” remaining part (pp. 139–45); “Monadology,” §§1–61 (pp. 213–21). No ME due.

Tues., Mar. 10: selections from Thomas Aquinas (on angels); Leibniz, from letters to de Volder, last two paragraphs of B, first paragraph of C, and first paragraph of D (pp. 178–9, 181–2); “Monadology,” §§62–81 (pp. 221–3). ME #13 due.

Thurs., Mar. 12: “Dialogue on Human Freedom,” pp. 111–17; letter to Coste (pp. 193–6); “Discourse on Metaphysics,” §§13–16, 19–20, 30–32, 35–7 (pp. 44–9, 52–3, 60–64, 66–8); “Monadology,” §§82–end (pp. 223–5). No ME due.

Wed., Mar. 18: **third (final) paper due.**

³Clarke’s replies are not in your book; they are available on e-reserve.

⁴The symbol § stands for “section.”

Timeline

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

399 B.C. Death of Socrates	–	
322 B.C. Death of Aristotle	•	347 B.C. Death of Plato
197 B.C. <i>Roman conquest of Greece</i>	–	
1 <i>Birth of Jesus (approx.)</i>	–	
305 Death of Porphyry (approx.)	•	270 Death of Plotinus
410 <i>Sack of Rome by the Visigoths</i>	–	312 <i>Conversion of Constantine to Christianity</i>
529 <i>Emp. Justinian closes phil. schools of Athens</i>	–	6th c. John Philoponus
622 <i>Muhammad flees from Mecca to Medina</i>	–	
8th–9th c. <i>Aristotle translated into Arabic</i>		
11th–13th c. <i>Aristotle translated into Latin</i>		
1204–1261 <i>Latin (Crusader) rule in Constantinople</i>	•	1037 Death of Avicenna
1347–1351 <i>The Black Death</i>		
1453 <i>Fall of Constantinople to Turks</i>	–	1274 Death of St. Thomas Aquinas
1517 <i>Martin Luther posts “95 Theses”</i>	–	
1632 <i>Publ. of Galileo’s Two World Systems</i>	–	• 1641 <i>Publ. of D.’s Meditations</i>
1677 <i>Publ. of Spinoza’s Ethics</i>	•	• 1714 Leibniz composes “Monadology”
1781 <i>Publ. of Critique of Pure Reason (1st ed.)</i>	–	– 1789 <i>French Revolution</i>
2009 <i>Now</i>	–	