Phil 93: The Rationalists

Winter 2009
Tue. and Thurs., 12 noon–1:45pm.

Professor: Abe Stone (abestone@ucsc.edu)
Office: Cowell Annex A-106
Phone (office): 459-5723
AIM: abestone3
Website: http://people.ucsc.edu/~abestone/courses
Office hours: Mon. 2–3pm, Thurs. 11am–noon, or by appointment.

Teaching Assistants:
Andrew Delunas (adelunas@ucsc.edu)
Christoph Durt (christoph@durt.info)
Kayla Lane (kayla.lane@gmail.com)

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).

Please 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.
Texts

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

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


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

\(^2\)Note: 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.
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.


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.


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.


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.


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
197 B.C.  Roman conquest of Greece
1  Birth of Jesus (approx.)

305  Death of Porphyry (approx.)
410  Sack of Rome by the Visigoths

529  Emp. Justinian closes phil. schools of Athens
622  Muhammad flees from Mecca to Medina

8th–9th c.  Aristotle translated into Arabic

11th–13th c.  Aristotle translated into Latin
1204–1261  Latin (Crusader) rule in Constantinople
1347–1351  The Black Death
1453  Fall of Constantinople to Turks
1517  Martin Luther posts “95 Theses”

1632  Publ. of Galileo’s Two World Systems
1677  Publ. of Spinoza’s Ethics
1781  Publ. of Critique of Pure Reason (1st ed.)

2009  Now

• 270  Death of Plotinus
• 312  Conversion of Constantine to Christianity

• 347 B.C.  Death of Plato

6th c.  John Philoponus

• 1037  Death of Avicenna

• 1274  Death of St. Thomas Aquinas

• 1641  Publ. of D.’s Meditations
• 1714  Leibniz composes “Monadology”

1789  French Revolution