

**Philosophy 306: The Rationalists (Winter Session 2019, First Term [Fall])  
Section: A01 (CRN: 12487)**

**General Course Information, Recommended Supplementary Reading, Schedule**

**I. General Course Information**

<u>Location &amp; Time:</u>	COR B129; 11:30 a.m. – 12:50 p.m.
<u>Instructor:</u>	Dr. David Scott
<u>Instructor's Office:</u>	CLE B320
<u>Office Hours (by appointment):</u>	Mon. & Thurs. 1:00 p.m. – 2:00 p.m.
<u>Telephone &amp; Email:</u>	250-721-7517; djfscott@uvic.ca

**ABOUT THIS COURSE:**

Rationalism is one of the most historically important streams of philosophy, and it informs and motivates much philosophical activity. It is the name given to a broadly defined set of positions and doctrines, all of which tend to involve the ideas that in some sense reason is real and that the universe exhibits reason or is rational. It is expressed in the views that everything has a reason, and that humans possess the ability, in the form of a faculty of reason, to apprehend the rational character of the universe. In this course we shall examine some of rationalism's most famous and influential proponents, all of whom were active in the enlightenment period of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. We shall be focusing on works by René Descartes (*Rules for the Direction of the Mind*, *Discourse on Method*, *Meditations*, and *Principles of Philosophy*), and Gottfried W. Leibniz (*Discourse on Metaphysics*, *Monadology*). We may also be supplementing these studies with brief excursions into the philosophies of Malebranche and Spinoza.

**TEXTS AND COURSE MATERIAL:**

1. René Descartes. *Philosophical Essays and Correspondence*, ed. Roger Ariew, Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company 2000. Paper ISBN-13: 978-0872205024
2. G.W. Leibniz, *G.W. Leibniz: Philosophical Essays*, trans. Roger Ariew and Daniel Garber, Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 1989 (ISBN: 9780872200623)

**MARKING SCHEME & CRITERIA FOR EVALUATION:**

(a) In-class mid-term (25%); take-home essay (35%); final exam (40%). Letter grades correspond to the following marks: A+ = 90 - 100, A = 85 - 89, A- = 80 - 84, B+ = 77 - 79, B = 73 - 76, B- = 70 - 72, C+ = 65 - 69, C = 60 - 64, D = 50 - 59, F = 0 - 49.

(b) In this course you can assume that all essay or exam topics are intended to test you on *the material covered in class*. You are of course permitted and encouraged to supplement class discussion of the subject with outside material, but the minimum expectation is that you deal with the material covered in class, and that you address the points raised there about that material. This does not mean that for tests and essays you are expected merely to repeat the in-class proceedings. Rather, it means that you are expected to take account of or do justice to in-class discussion. The reason for this requirement is that the tests and essays for this course constitute part of a continuous whole with the lectures and in-class discussions. They do not float free of the work done in the classroom, though of course the tests and especially the essays also provide you with room to explore topics outside of the classroom confines. Roughly speaking, "B+" and "A-" papers take account of and rise to the level of the class discussion; "A" and "A+" papers take that discussion to a higher/deeper level.

(c) Criteria for evaluation: The criteria I use to evaluate essays are, I believe, criteria which common sense would suggest in the assessment of a philosophy essay. Primarily my concern is with content or substance. Of course, this does not mean that form or style count for nothing (and indeed it may not ultimately be possible to divorce form from content). In indicating these evaluation criteria I emphasize that philosophy is an *arts* or *humanities* subject, which means that assessing the merits of a philosophy paper ultimately requires qualitative evaluation or judgment on my part. Therefore, I do not assign precise numerical values to the following assessment criteria; nor is there a mathematical formula I can employ to judge the quality of philosophical writing. However, as a rough guide I employ a list of relative priorities, presented here in ascending order of importance:

- spelling/grammar
- organization & clarity of expression
- accuracy of exposition
- use of examples reflecting understanding of the subject
- breadth of analysis, i.e. number of points covered

- depth of analysis, i.e. how far into the issue analysis is pushed
- resourcefulness, originality and imagination
- tightness, rigor or logical coherence of analysis
- overall quality of philosophical insight and expression

I stress that the order of these criteria is not absolute. Thus, sometimes less important criteria will be given more weight than more important ones. For instance, a student's use and analysis of examples might be so good that I am led to conclude that that student has an excellent understanding of the subject. In such a case the value I attach to the use of examples might increase significantly, and I might overlook the fact that, for instance, the student has failed to cover as many points as other students.

d) Academic Honesty: Cheating of *any* kind, including collusion (working with others too closely) and plagiarism from (i) books and/or articles, (ii) other students' papers, and (iii) papers or other material on the internet, is a serious academic offence. University regulations also prohibit students from submitting the same work for two different courses; in other words, plagiarizing or "recycling" one's own work is not permitted. If detected, cheating can result in dismissal from this course (with an "F"), and dismissal from the university. Here is a link to the University's Academic Integrity policy:

<https://web.uvic.ca/calendar2018-09/undergrad/info/regulations/academic-integrity.html#>

#### SUBMITTING AND RETURNING GRADED WORK:

(a) All essays must be *typed (12-font, Times), double-spaced, paginated, and contain the word-count on the front cover*. Essays should be stapled, *not* paper-clipped. I will not accept essays submitted as email attachments; nor will I accept essays that exceed the maximum word limit. In cases where I think the word limit has been exceeded, I will require an electronic copy to check. I'm afraid I will not be available to discuss test or essay questions on the day before or on the day they are due to be submitted, as I need to avoid being swamped by last-minute enquiries.

(b) In general, I will return your graded work during class time, within two weeks of its having been submitted. If you are not there to receive your work when I return it in class, you can pick it up either from me in my office or, if you are willing to sign a waiver form, from the "Returned Work" box outside the departmental office. The Protection of Privacy Act prevents me from placing your work in that box unless you have signed the waiver form.

(c) When graded work is returned to you it will frequently be annotated with comments. If you wish to discuss your work with me, please read those comments first. To give you a chance to do this, as a matter of policy I do not discuss work on the same day as it is returned.

#### LATE ASSIGNMENTS / MISSED TESTS:

Late assignments will not be accepted without penalty, unless justified by a medical or other academically legitimate reason, for which documentation of some kind (e.g., a medical certificate) will generally be required. Late assignments will be accepted with a penalty of 5% per day (or part-day, including weekend days or part-days), for a maximum of 4 days (20%). After four days, no late assignments will be accepted.

#### OFFICE HOURS:

Because of demand (especially near test days or essay due-dates), if you wish to see me during my office hours you need to make an appointment. To get the most out of your appointments, it's best to come prepared with specific questions.

#### MISCELLANEOUS NOTES AND CLASS POLICIES:

(a) Class discussion & participation: In general, my classes tend to involve lots of discussion. I encourage and greatly value your in-class contributions, and I can assure you that other students do too. It is a frequently unacknowledged fact of the classroom that if you have a question or comment, it's likely that others have the same one too. So, go ahead and ask your question, or make your comment: it helps me, you, and your classmates. And the more you talk, the less I talk, and surely that is a good thing! If, however, you are more shy or reserved but still have comments or questions, please come see me during office hours.

(b) Emailing me: Because of problems with SPAM and viruses transmitted by email, I request that whenever you email me you make sure to put something in the subject line of your email to identify you as a student in this course. If you don't do this, and I don't recognize your name, I will delete your email without opening it. In addition to this, I would greatly appreciate it if you observed the

(still) standard courtesy of beginning your emails with a salutation, e.g., “Dear Dr. Scott”, “Hello Dr. Scott”, etc. (as opposed to, e.g., “hey Dave”, which for my taste is too informal). Use of this kind of salutation is a piece of social etiquette rooted in the recognition that people are not simply inanimate objects (like ATM machines), but should be addressed before being spoken to. Simply put, unlike ATM machines, humans have the *option* to respond, so it’s wise to ask them nicely.

(c) Coming late to class: The classroom is a work environment, and when students arrive late this can be a distraction. So please try to be on time.

(d) Visits to the classroom by non-registered students: As the instructor for this class I am *duty*-bound to ensure that a work environment is preserved in the class. Both students and I can find it a distraction for strangers to walk into the classroom. It takes some students a good deal of time before they gain confidence to participate in the class proceedings, and the presence of a stranger can be disruptive in that regard. If, as sometimes happens, you wish to invite a friend to attend my class to check it out, you need to ask permission ahead of time.

(e) Use of computers & hand-held media/communication devices, etc., in the class: For the purpose of taking notes, you are permitted to use laptops with quiet keyboards in the classroom. Attending to computers or hand held-devices for obviously or apparently non-academic purposes, e.g., watching films, surfing the web, texting, etc., is prohibited.

## II. Recommended Supplementary Reading

### A. General Accounts of Rationalism & the Early Modern Period:

- Aune, B. *Rationalism, Empiricism, and Pragmatism*. New York: Random House, 1970.
- Buchdahl, Gerd. *Metaphysics and the Philosophy of Science: The Classical Origins: Descartes to Kant*, Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1969.
- Collins, J. *God in Modern Philosophy*, London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1960.
- Cottingham, J.G. *Rationalism*, London: Paladin Books, 1984. [B833 C67]
- Cottingham, J.G. *The Rationalists*, Oxford & New York: Oxford U.P., 1988. [B791 H5 v.4]
- Hamlyn, D.W. *Sensation and Perception* (ch. 5), London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1961.
- Jarrett, C.E., King-Farlow, J. & Pelletier, F.J. (eds.) *New Essays on Rationalism and Empiricism*, Guelph, Ontario: Canadian Journal of Philosophy, sup. vol. 4, 1978.
- Jolley, N. *The Light of the Soul*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989. [B822 J65]
- Kenny, A. (ed.) *Rationalism, Empiricism and Idealism*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1986. [B791 R33]
- Koyré, Alexandre. *From the Closed World to the Infinite Universe*.
- Laporte, J. *Études d'histoire de la philosophie française au xvii siècle*, Paris: J. Vrin, 1951.
- Lennon, T.M. *The Battle of Gods and Giants: The Legacies of Descartes and Gassendi, 1655-1715*, Princeton, NJ: Princeton U. P., 1993.
- Loeb, L.E. *From Descartes to Hume*, Ithica, NY: Cornell U.P., 1981.
- Parkinson, G.H.R. (ed.) *Routledge History of Philosophy* (vol. 4): *The Renaissance and Seventeenth-Century Rationalism*, London: Routledge, 1993. [B 770 R38]
- Phemister, Pauline. *The Rationalists: Descartes, Spinoza and Leibniz*. Cambridge: Polity 2006.
- von Leyden, W.M. *Seventeenth Century Metaphysics*, London: Gerald Duckworth & Co., Ltd., 1968. [B801 L44]
- Woolhouse, R. S. *Descartes, Spinoza, Leibniz: The Concept of Substance in Seventeenth Century Metaphysics*, London & New York: Routledge 1993.
- Yolton, J. *Perceptual Acquaintance from Descartes to Reid*, Minneapolis: U. of Minnesota Press, 1984.

### B. Books on Descartes:

- Alanen, L. *Descartes's Concept of Mind*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2003.
- Broadie, F. *An Approach to Descartes' "Meditations"*. [B1854 B7]
- Chappell, V. (ed.) *Rene Descartes (Essays on Early Modern Philosophers, vol. 1)*, New York & London: Garland 1992.
- Cottingham, J.G. *Descartes*, Oxford: Basil Blackwell 1986. [B1873 C67]
- Cottingham, J.G. *The Cambridge Companion to Descartes*, Cambridge: Cambridge U. Press 1992. [B1873 C34]
- Gibson, A. Boyce. *The Philosophy of Descartes*, London: Methuen 1932.
- Hatfield, Gary. *Routledge Philosophy Guidebook to Desartes and the Meditations*, London & New York: Routledge 2003.
- Keeling, S.V. *Descartes*, London: Ernest Benn 1934. [B1875 K37 1968]

Kemp Smith, Norman. *New Studies in the Philosophy of Descartes*, London: Macmillan 1952. [B1875 S58]  
 Kenny, A. *Descartes: A Study of his Philosophy*, New York: Random House 1968. [B1875 K4]  
 Laporte, J. *Le rationalisme de Descartes*, Paris: Presses Universitaires de France 1950.  
 Rorty, A. O. (ed.) *Essays on Descartes' Meditations*, Berkeley: U. of California Press 1986.  
 Rozemond, M. *Descartes's Dualism*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press 1998. [B1875 M55 R68]  
 Schouls, P. *Descartes and the Enlightenment*, Edinburgh: Edinburgh U. P., 1989. [B1875 S365]  
 Wilson, M.D. *Descartes*, London: Routledge & Kegan Paul 1978. [B1875 W58]

### C. Books on Leibniz:

Adams, Robert. *Leibniz: Determinist, Theist, Idealist*, Oxford University Press, 1994.  
 Broad, C. D. and C. Lewy. *Leibniz: An Introduction*, Cambridge University Press, 1975.  
 Brown, Stuart C. *Leibniz*, Brighton: Harvester, 1984. [B2598 B75]  
 Carr, H. W. *Leibniz*. Dover, 1960.  
 Frankfurt, Harry G. *Leibniz. A Collection of Critical Essays*. [B2598 F67]  
 Hacking, Ian. *Leibniz and Descartes: Proof and Eternal Truths*. Longwood Publishing Group, 1973.  
 Hooker, Michael. *Leibniz: Critical and Interpretive Essays*, 1982. [B2598 L435]  
 Jolley, Nicholas, ed. *The Cambridge Companion to Leibniz*, Cambridge University Press, 1995. [B2598 C335]  
 Joseph, H. W. B. *Lectures on the Philosophy of Leibniz*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1949.  
 Kulstad, Mark. *Leibniz On Apperception, Consciousness, and Reflection*, Philosophia, 1991.  
 MacDonald, R. G. *Leibniz*, Oxford University Press, 1984.  
 McRae, Robert. *Leibniz: Perception, Apperception and Thought*, Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1976. [B2599 K7M3]  
 Martin, Gottfried. *Leibniz: Logic and Metaphysics*, Manchester University Press, 1963.  
 Mungello, David E. *Leibniz and Confucianism: The Search for Accord*. University of Hawaii Press, 1977.  
 Parkinson, G.H.R. *Logic and Reality in Leibniz's Metaphysics*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1965. [B2599 M7P3]  
 Rescher, Nicholas. *Leibniz, An Introduction to his Philosophy*, 1979. [B2598 R48]  
 Rescher, Nicholas. *The Philosophy of Leibniz*, Prentice-Hall, 1967.  
 Ross, G. MacDonald. *Leibniz*, 1984. [B2598 M24]  
 Russell, Bertrand. *A Critical Exposition of the Philosophy of Leibniz*, 2nd. ed. Cambridge University Press, 1937. [B2598 R8 1937]  
 Rutherford, Donald. *Leibniz and the Rational Order of Nature*, 1995. [B2598 R83]  
 Saw, Ruth Lydia. *Leibniz*, 1954. [B2598 S24]  
 Van Peursen, C. A. *Leibniz*. Dutton, 1970.  
 Wilson, Catherine. *Leibniz's Metaphysics: A Historical and Comparative Study*, 1989. [B2599 M7W54]  
 Woolhouse, R. S. *Leibniz: Metaphysics and Philosophy of Science*, Oxford University Press, 1981.

### III. Class Schedule\*

#### WEEK 1: (Sept. 5)

Thurs. Sept. 5 - Introduction: History of Philosophy & Rationalism.

#### WEEK 2 (Sept. 9 & 12)

Mon. Sept. 9 - The Enlightenment and Aristotle.

Thurs. Sept. 12 - Descartes, *Rules for the Direction of the Mind / Discourse on the Method*.

#### WEEK 3 (Sept. 16 & 19)

Mon. Sept. 16 - Descartes, *Discourse on the Method*.

Thurs. Sept. 19 - Descartes' *Discourse on the Method*.

#### WEEK 4 (Sept. 23 & 26)

Mon. Sept. 23 - Descartes' *Meditations*. **Essay topic assigned.**

Thurs. Sept. 26 - Descartes' *Meditations*.

Fri. Sept. 28 - **Draft in-class test questions distributed.**

#### WEEK 5 (Sept. 30 & Oct. 3)

Mon. Sept. 30 - Descartes' *Meditations*.

Thurs. Oct. 3 - Descartes' *Meditations*. **In-class test.**

#### WEEK 6 (Oct. 7 & 10)

Mon. Oct. 7 - Descartes' *Meditations*.  
Thurs. Oct. 10 - Descartes' *Meditations*.

**WEEK 7 (Oct. 14 & 17)**

Mon. Oct. 14 - **Thanksgiving Day Holiday**: no classes.  
Thurs. Oct. 17 - Descartes' *Meditations*.

**WEEK 8 (Oct. 21 & 24)**

Mon. Oct. 21 - Variants of rationalism (Malebranche and/or Spinoza).  
Thurs. Oct. 24 - Variants of rationalism (Malebranche and/or Spinoza).

**WEEK 9 (Oct. 28 & 31)**

Mon. Oct. 28 - Leibniz's philosophy.  
Thurs. Oct. 31 - Leibniz's philosophy.  
Fri. Nov. 1 - **Due-date for Essay**.

**WEEK 10 (Nov. 4 & 7)**

Mon. Nov. 4 - Leibniz's philosophy.  
Thurs. Nov. 7 - Leibniz's philosophy.

**WEEK 11 (Nov. 11 & 14)**

Mon. Nov. 11 - **Reading Break: no classes**.  
Thurs. Nov. 14 - Leibniz's philosophy.

**WEEK 12 (Nov. 18 & 21)**

Mon. Nov. 18 - Leibniz's philosophy.  
Thurs. Nov. 21 - Leibniz's philosophy.

**WEEK 13 (Nov. 25 & 28)**

Mon. Nov. 25 - Leibniz's philosophy.  
Thurs. Nov. 28 - Leibniz's philosophy.  
Fri. Nov. 29 - **Draft final exam questions distributed**.

**WEEK 14 (Dec. 3)**

Mon. Dec. 3 - Last class of term for this course. Review.

Exams for this term begin on Dec. 7, and end on Dec. 21.

**\* This schedule is subject to revision, as occasionally the discussion and flow of ideas in class require us to spend more time on certain subjects, less time on others, than originally anticipated.**