

**Phil. 306 F01**  
***The Rationalists***  
**Spring Semester, 2023**

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The purpose of this course is to acquaint the student with the works of intellectually important and representative philosophers of the 17<sup>th</sup> century. Their works will be set in historical perspective, and lines of influence will be explored. An attempt will be made to relate their speculations to contemporary philosophical issues.

**Texts:**

- **Descartes**, *Meditations* : Veitch transl. (available at <http://www.wright.edu/cola/cartes/mede.html> )
  - optional, transl. Cottingham, available at <https://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/cartes/1639/meditations.htm>
  - Ariew R. *Rene Descartes: Philosophical Essays and Correspondence* (Hackett: Indianapolis, 2000) ISBN 0-87022-502-9
- **Malebranche**, *Dialogues on Metaphysics and Religion* available on-line at <http://www.earlymoderntexts.com/assets/pdfs/malebranche1688.pdf>
- **Spinoza**, *Ethics*: - Elwes translation, available at <http://capone.mtsu.edu/rbombard/RB/Spinoza/ethica-front.html>
  - optional: Edwin M. Curley. *A Spinoza Reader: The Ethics and Other Works* (Princeton University Press) ISBN 0-691-00067-0
- Leibniz**: *Monadology* Latta translation, available at <https://www.plato-philosophy.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/The-Monadology-1714-by-Gottfried-Wilhelm-LEIBNIZ-1646-1716.pdf>
  - optional: Woolhouse and Ranks ed. *G.W. Leibniz, Philosophical Texts* (Oxford U Press) ISBN 0-19-875153-2

**Formal Course Requirements and Grading Procedures**

There will be two examinations—a mid-term examination and a final examination—and a term paper (not to exceed 10 pages with references). The mid-term and the final examinations will be cumulative in that each will cover everything that has been studied in the course to the date of the examination. The mid-term will count for 30%, the term paper for 20% and the final examination 50% of the course grade. Students who have taken the mid-term examination may ask the mid-term examination grade to be disregarded and make the final examination the final examination count for 80% of their course grade. Exceptions from course requirements, adjustments for taking examinations at set examination dates, etc. will only be made in accordance with UVic regulations as published in the Calendar. It is the responsibility of the

students to acquaint themselves and significant others with this fact so that vacations, family reunions, weddings etc. can be planned accordingly. The mid-term examination will be returned as soon as it is graded. Final examinations are the property of the University and will not be returned. They are available for viewing at the Records Office at a time designated by the University. Term papers will be available from the instructor one week after they have been handed in.

### **Inappropriate behaviour and contraventions of academic integrity**

Inappropriate behaviour and violations of standards of academic integrity as defined in the University Calendar will be dealt with in accordance with University Regulations. Please note the following link which give detailed information about university policies in this regard: <https://www.uvic.ca/registrar/students/policies/index.php>

#### ***Important dates***

- mid-term examination: t.b.a.
- term paper: t.b.a.
- final examination: scheduled by the University

#### **Grading:**

Marks will be assigned on a letter basis and may be converted to a percentile grade as follows: F=0-49; D=50-59; C=60-64; C+=65-69; B-=70-72; B=73-76; B+=77-79; A-=80-84; A=85-89; A+=90-100. The criteria for assigning grades may be found in the University Calendar. Students are encouraged to discuss their examinations with the instructor.

#### ***Study aids***

Study questions will be made available as the course progresses. The instructor's class notes may be made available on CourseSpaces.

## **TENTATIVE OUTLINE OF LECTURES**

### **I. Introduction and historical background**

- A. Previous theories of perception
- B. Skepticism both secular and religious
- C. Astronomical and cosmological theories
- D. The fate of Aristotelianism

### **II. Descartes**

- A. *Rules for the Direction of the Mind*
- B. *Meditations on First Philosophy*

### **III. Malebranche**

- A. *Dialogues on Metaphysics and Religion*  
available on-line at

<http://www.earlymoderntexts.com/assets/pdfs/malebranche1688.pdf>

**Midterm Examination: app. Feb.**

**III. . Leibniz**

- A. *Monadology*
- B. *Leibniz-Clarke Correspondence*

**IV. Spinoza**

- A. *On the Improvement of the Understanding*
- B. *Ethics*

Since class participation is encouraged, and every effort will be made to relate the philosophical problems that were addressed by the various philosophers to be studied in this course to issues dealt with by contemporary thinkers, it is impossible at this time to give a precise time-table for lectures in the course.