

Leibniz's Philosophy

730:416

SYLLABUS

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OH: W 4:30-5:30pm; Th afternoon by appointment

TEXTS: Assigned and recommended readings will be papers, letters, and published articles of Leibniz, as well as some secondary sources. Readings will be on electronic reserve although there will also be class handouts. Suggested general secondary sources are listed below. A more complete bibliography is in reserve.

REQUIREMENTS: You are expected to attend all meetings of the class and to do all reading assignments thoroughly and promptly. Assignments should be read at least once for the class meeting in which they are to be discussed. You are strongly encouraged to participate in class discussion. This helps you and everyone in the class to learn by exploring them yourself. There will be one short paper (roughly 5 pages) assigned during the semester and a long paper (roughly 12-15 pages) due at the end of course. There may be additional out-of-class written assignments, quizzes, or in-class exercises.

LEARNING GOALS: The course is intended to provide a good understanding of the philosophical doctrines of Leibniz, the issues he addresses, the reasoning by which he supports them, their strengths and weakness, historical context and significance. It is also meant to develop skill in analyzing and evaluating arguments, as well as developing, supporting, and expressing views of one's own.

SCHEDULE OF TOPICS

(Reading assignments subject to change; unless otherwise indicated, all works listed below are written by Leibniz)

Jan. 20 Introduction

25 Early views of Leibniz on the reorganization of knowledge

"A Most Perfect Being Exists"—unless otherwise indicated, all works mentioned here are by Leibniz

"Of an Organum or Ars Magna of Thinking"; "An Introduction to a Secret Encyclopaedia"; "The Nature of Truth"

Suggested: "Samples of the Numerical Characteristic"

27 same

Feb. 1 Blind thought and the need for symbols: "On Mind, the Universe, and God"; *Meditations on Knowledge, Truth, and Ideas*

3 Two basic principles: "Two First Principles of All Reasoning"; *New Essays*, "Of the Degrees of our Knowledge", p. 362

- Feb. 8 Leibniz's first metaphysical system—complete concept theory of substance
Discourse on Metaphysics—all, but especially secs. 1-16 same
 Suggested: Stuart Brown, "The proto-monadology of the *De Summa Rerum*

10 same

- 15 Expression, perception, and harmony: *Discourse on Metaphysics*, secs. 8-16
 Excerpts from letters to Arnauld, 28 November/8 December, 1686; 30 April, 1687—attention to passages on relation between the soul and the body
 Suggested: Chris Swoyer, *Leibnizian Expression*

- 17 Against fatal necessity: *Discourse on Metaphysics*, sec. 13; Letter to Arnauld 14 July, 1686

- 22 The infinite analysis solution: "Necessary and Contingent Truths"

- 24 Trans-temporal and trans-world identity: "Remarks on Arnauld's Letter About My Proposition, etc."

- Mar. 1 Individuation: "On the Principle of Indiscernibles"
Short paper assignment

- 3 Against the Cartesian theory of extended substance: *Discourse on Metaphysics*, secs. 10-12; Excerpts from letters to Arnauld 28 November/8 December, 1686; 30 April, 1687, and 9 October, 1687—attention to passages on extension and substantial forms

8 same

- 10 Leibniz's Second System: the force theory of substance
 "On the Correction of Metaphysics"; *Specimen Dynamicum*, Part I; *New System of Nature*
Short paper due in class

Mar. 12-10 Spring Vacation

- 22 Force essential to substance; against occasionalism:
 "On Nature Itself"
 Suggested: Malebranche, *Search After Truth*, Book 6, Part 2, Chapter 3
- 24 Nothing exists but simple substances: *New Essays*, "Of power and freedom", pp. 169-72; Excerpts from Letters to De Volder 20 June, 1703, 21 January 1704, and 30 June, 1704; *Monadology*

Mar. 29 same

31 Leibniz's psychology

Non-conscious perceptions and theory of consciousness: *New Essays*, Preface, 44-58; "Of ideas", pp. 109-119; "Of universal propositions", pp. 403-4

Apr. 5 Pre-established harmony: "Clarification of difficulties which Mr. Bayle, etc."; *New Essays*, "Of power and freedom", esp. pp. 188-96; Excerpt from Letter to Hartsoeker

7 same

12 same

14 Innate knowledge and ideas: *New Essays*, Preface, pp. 44-54; Book 1 with additional material, pp. 446-7

19 Perception, thought, images, ideas: *New Essays*, "Of simple ideas", "Of simple ideas of diverse senses", "Of perception"; handout with other readings

26 The metaphysics of moral subjects—Locke's challenge to the doctrine of the immaterial soul and Leibniz's response: Locke, *Essay concerning Human Understanding*, Book 2; *New Essays*, "What Identity and Diversity is", esp. pp. 230-34, 238-40, 24-46

28 same

May 2 same

11 Final paper due in Philosophy Department Office at 3:00pm

SUGGESTED GENERAL SECONDARY SOURCES (in order of increasing depth):

Stuart Brown, *Leibniz*

Catherine Wilson, *Leibniz's Metaphysics*

Donald Rutherford, *Leibniz and the Rational Order of Nature*

Robert Sleigh, *Leibniz and Arnauld*

Robert M. Adams, *Leibniz: Theist, Determinist, Idealist*

GENERAL COLLECTIONS OF LEIBNIZ'S WORKS in English translation:

Leibniz: Philosophical Essays, eds. and trans. Ariew and Garber

Philosophical Papers and Letters of Leibniz, ed. and tran. Leroy Loemker

Leibniz: Philosophical Writings, eds. and trans. Morris and Parkinson

Leibniz Selections, ed. and tran. Wiener

BOOKS BY LEIBNIZ in English translation:

New Essays, tr. Remnant and Bennett

Theodicy, tr. Hubbard