PHIL 7763 – EARLY MODERN METAPHYSICS

Spring 2015

DAY / TIME:  TH  3:00 – 5:30 P.M.
INSTRUCTOR:  J.-L. SOLÈRE
OFFICE:     DEP. OF PHILOSOPHY, STOKES HALL N 219
OFFICE HOURS:  TH 5:30 – 7:00 P.M. or by appointment

Course Description:

This course will explore the main themes of 17th century-early 18th century metaphysics (God, substance and modes, mind and body, causality) in the works of Descartes, Spinoza and Leibniz. The course is especially designed for giving graduate students a strong and in-depth presentation of an essential part of classical rationalist philosophy.

Requirements:

Class participation; research paper.

Readings:


Classes Schedule

Class 1 (01/15): Descartes on thinking substances
*Meditations* 1 and 2; *Third Set of Objections and Reply* (p. 167-171); *Sixth Set of Objections and Reply*, 1-3 (p. 190-191, 194-198); *Principles of Philosophy*, Part I, art. 1-13; *Notes Against a Certain Program*, p. 281-292.

Class 2 (01/22): Descartes on material substances

Class 3 (01/29): Descartes on causality
*Meditation 3; First Set of Objections and Reply* (142-159); *Fourth Set of Objections and Reply* (p. 197-214, 219-247)

Class 4 (02/05): Descartes on God
*Meditation 5; Reply to the Second Set of Objections* (p. 159-167, and photocopies [AT VII 133-146, 149-152])

Class 5 (02/12): Spinoza on substance in general, 1
*Ethics*, Part I, definitions, axioms

Class 6 (02/19): Spinoza on substance in general, 2
*Ethics*, Part I, prop. 1-10

Class 7 (02/26): Spinoza on God
*Ethics*, Part I, prop. 11-20

– 03/12: No class (conference)

Class 8 (03/19): Spinoza on finite things
*Ethics*, Part I, prop. 21-25

Class 9 (03/26): Spinoza on determinism and on final causes
– 04/02: No class (Easter Thursday)

**Class 10 (04/09): Spinoza on minds**
*Ethics*, Part II, definitions, axioms, prop. 1-13

**Class 11 (04/16): Leibniz on bodies**
*A Specimen of Dynamics* (p. 117-130); *On Body and Force, Against the Cartesians* (p. 250-256); *Letters to Johann Bernoulli* (p. 167-171); *Letters to De Volder* (p. 171-178); *Letters to Des Bosses* (p. 197-206); *Principles of Nature and Grace*, 1-6 (p. 207-209); *Letter to Thomas Burnett, on Substance* (p. 285-290).

**Class 12 (04/23): Leibniz on minds**

**Class 13 (04/30): Leibniz on causality**
*Discourse on Metaphysics*, 14-23, 28 (p. 46-56, 59-60); *On Nature Itself* (p. 155-167); *Monadology*, 49-90 (p. 219-225)

**Class 14 (TBD): Leibniz on God**
*Discourse on Metaphysics*, 1-7 (p. 35-40); *On the Ultimate Origination of Things* (p. 149-155); *Principles of Nature and Grace*, 7-18 (p. 209-213)