

Syllabus for PHIL 682.602: Seminar on Descartes

Fall 2012; Dr. Stephen H. Daniel

The Descartes Seminar will focus on Descartes' epistemology and metaphysics, and will examine primary texts and current interpretations about his views on God, nature, knowledge, mind, and freedom. It aims to develop in students the research skills necessary to produce publishable work in early modern philosophy.

Texts: *Philosophical Writings of Descartes*, trans. Cottingham, Stoothoff, Murdoch, Kenny (CSMK), 3 vols.

Readings from journal articles and essays in collections, especially:

A Companion to Descartes, ed. Janet Broughton and John Carriero (Blackwell, 2008) [B&C]

Blackwell Guide to Descartes' Meditations, ed. Stephen Gaukroger (Blackwell, 2006) [Gauk] (online)

The Cambridge Companion to Descartes, ed. John Cottingham (Cambridge UP, 1992) [Cott]

For more of a general background, consult Frederick Copleston's *History of Philosophy*, vol. 4.

- Aug. 27 **Descartes research strategies, seminar presentations** [Dr. Daniel]
- Sept. 3 **Meditations understood as a totality** [Dr. Daniel]
Meditations, CSM 2: 1-62. Supplement: Steven Nadler, "[The Doctrine of Ideas](#)" [Gauk 86-103]
- 10 **Doubt** [Steve Dezort]
Janet Broughton, "[The Method of Doubt](#)," *The Rationalists: Critical Essays on Descartes, Spinoza and Leibniz*, ed. Derk Pereboom (1999), 1-18. (available online)
David Owens, "[Descartes's Use of Doubt](#)" [B&C 164-78]
- Skepticism** [Dr. Daniel]
Charles Larmore, "[Descartes and Skepticism](#)" [Gauk 17-29]
Janet Broughton, "[Self-Knowledge](#)" [B&C 179-95]
- 17 (Class cancelled)
- 24 **Innate ideas** [Matthew Wester]
Alan Nelson, "[Cartesian Innateness](#)" [B&C 319-33]
Lex Newman, "[Descartes' Rationalist Epistemology](#)," *A Companion to Rationalism*, ed. Alan Nelson (2009), 179-205.
[Option: Geoffrey Gorham, "[Descartes on the Innateness of All Ideas](#)," *CJP* 32 (2002): 355-88]
- God** [John Forcey]
Jean-Marie Beyssade, "[The Idea of God and Proofs of His Existence](#)" [Cott 174-99]
John Cottingham, "[The Role of God in Descartes's Philosophy](#)" [B&C 288-301]
{Option: Lawrence Nolan & Alan Nelson, "[Proofs for the Existence of God](#)" [Gauk 104-21]}
- Oct. 1 **The Cartesian Circle** [Paul Berghaus]
John Carriero, "[Cartesian Circle and the Foundations of Knowledge](#)" [B&C 302-18]
Gary Hatfield, "[The Cartesian Circle](#)" [Gauk 122-41]
{Option: Louis Loeb, "[The Cartesian Circle](#)" [Cott 200-235]}
- Ontology of Ideas, Intentionality** [Harris Bechtol]
Lionel Shapiro, "[Objective Being and 'Of-ness' in Descartes](#)," *PPR* 84 (2012): 378-418.
Deborah Brown, "[Descartes on True and False Ideas](#)" [B&C 196-215]
[Option: Raffaella De Rosa, "[Descartes on Sensory Misrepresentation](#)," *HPQ* 21 (2004): 261-80]
- 8 **Eternal Truths** [Matt Wurst]
Dan Kaufman, "[God's Immutability and the Necessity of Descartes' Eternal Truths](#)," *JHP* 43 (2005): 1-19.
Marleen Rozemond, "[Descartes' Ontology of the Eternal Truths](#)," *Contemporary Perspectives on Early Modern Philosophy*, ed. Paul Hoffman (2008), 41-63.
- Perception, Sensation, Representation, Consciousness** [John Bibeau]
Sarah Patterson, "[Clear and Distinct Perception](#)" [B&C 216-34]
Alison Simmons, "[Descartes on the Cognitive Structure of Sensory Experience](#)," *PPR* 67 (2003): 549-79
[Option: Andrew Chignell, "[Descartes on Sensation](#)," *Philosophers' Imprint* 9 (2009): 1-22.]
- 15 **The Linguistic Character of Rationality** [Dr. Daniel]
Desmond Clarke, "[Human Language](#)," ch. 6 of his *Descartes's Theory of Mind*, 158-80.
Gerald Massey/Deborah Boyle, "[Descartes's Tests for \(Animal\) Mind](#)," *Philosophical Topics* 27 (1999): 87-146.
- Animals** [Tobias Flatterly]
Gary Hatfield, "[Animals](#)" [B&C 404-25]
Cecelia Wee, "[Animal Sentience and Descartes's Dualism](#)," *BJHP* 13 (2005): 611-26.

- Oct. 19 **First paper due Friday**
- 22 **Substance, Attributes, Modes** [Dr. Daniel]
 Vere Chappell, "[Descartes on Substance](#)" [B&C 251-70]
 Jorge Secada, "[The Doctrine of Substance](#)" [Gauk 67-85]
 Peter Markie, "[Descartes's Concepts of Substance](#)," *Reason, Will, and Sensation: Studies in Descartes' Metaphysics*, ed. John Cottingham (1994), 63-87.
 Desmond Clarke, "[Descartes's Use of the Concept of Substance](#)," ch. 8 of his *Descartes's Theory of Mind*, 207-34.
- 29 **Real Distinction** [Steve Dezort]
 Paul Hoffman, "[Descartes's Theory of Distinction](#)," *PPR* 64 (2002): 57-78.
 Marleen Rozemond, "[Real Distinction, Separability, and Corporeal Substance in Descartes](#)," *Midwest Studies in Philosophy* 35 (2011): 240-58.
- Material substance** [John Forcey]
 Desmond Clarke, "[Descartes' Proof of the Existence of Matter](#)" [Gauk 160-78]
 Alice Sowell, "[Cartesian Bodies](#)," *CJP* 34 (2004): 217-40.
 [Option: C. G. Normore, "[Descartes and the Metaphysics of Extension](#)" [B&C 271-87]
- Nov. 5 **Spiritual substance** [Matthew Wester]
 Marleen Rozemond, "[The Nature of the Mind](#)" [Gauk 48-66]
 Sarah Patterson, "[How Cartesian Was Descartes?](#)" *History of the Mind-Body Problem*, ed. Tim Crane and Sarah Patterson (2000), 70-110. (Perhaps add [Susan James' following article](#) 111-130.)
 [Lilli Alanen, "[Reconsidering Descartes's Notion of the Mind-Body Union](#)," *Synthese* 106 (1996): 3-20.]
- Dualism: the mind-body relation** [John Bibeau]
 John Cottingham, "[The Mind-Body Relation](#)" [Gauk 179-192]
 Marleen Rozemond, "[Descartes's Dualism](#)" [B&C 372-89]
 {Option: Paul Hoffman, "[The Union and Interaction of Mind and Body](#)" [B&C 390-403]}
- 12 **Will** [Paul Berghaus]
 Michael Della Rocca, "[Judgment and Will](#)" [Gauk 142-59]
 Lex Newman, "[Descartes on the Will in Judgment](#)" [B&C 334-52]
 [Option: Desmond Clarke, "[The Will as a Power of Self-Determination](#)," ch. 5 of his *Descartes's Theory of Mind*, 135-57]
- Freedom** [Tobias Flattery]
 C. P. Ragland, "[Descartes on Divine Providence and Human Freedom](#)," *AGP* 87 (2005): 159-88.
 Andrea Christofidou, "[Descartes on Freedom, Truth, and Goodness](#)," *Noûs* 43 (2009): 633-55.
- 19 **Occasionalism** [Matt Wurst]
 Michael Della Rocca, "[Causation Without Intelligibility and Causation Without God in Descartes](#)" [B&C 235-50]
 Geoffrey Gorham, "[Cartesian Causation: Continuous, Instantaneous, Overdetermined](#)," *JHP* 42 (2004): 389-423.
 [Option: Steven Nadler, "[Descartes and Occasional Causation](#)," *BJHP* 2 (1994): 35-54]
- Passions** [Harris Bechtol]
 Amy Schmitter, "[How to Engineer a Human Being: Passions and Functional Explanation in Descartes](#)" [B&C 426-44]
 Desmond Clarke, "[The Passions of the Soul](#)," ch. 4 of his *Descartes's Theory of Mind*, 106-34.
 [Option: Shoshana Brassfield, "[Never Let the Passions Be Your Guide: Descartes and the Role of the Passions](#)," *BJHP* 20 (2012): 459-77.]
- 26 **Descartes' Legacy** [Dr. Daniel]
 Thomas Lennon, "[Descartes's Legacy in the Seventeenth Century](#)" [B&C 467-81]
 Tad Schmaltz, "[Seventeenth Century Responses to the Meditations](#)" [Gauk 193-203]
- Dec. 3 **Hot Topics: 2011-2012 Publications** [Dr. Daniel]
 Kenneth Winkler, "[Continuous Creation](#)," *Midwest Studies in Philosophy* 35 (2011): 287-309.
 Richard Hassing, "[Descartes on God, Creation, and Conservation](#)," *Rev Meta* 64 (2011): 603-620.
 Andreea Mihali, "['Sum Res Volans': The Centrality of Willing for Descartes](#)," *IPQ* 51 (2011): 149-79.
 Gianluca Mori, "[Hobbes, Descartes, and Ideas](#)," *JHP* 50 (2012): 197-212.
- 13 **Second paper due Thursday**

Presentations/Papers/Grades: seminar members will prepare a six-page outline of primary texts and secondary sources twice during the semester. They will then lead the seminar in a discussion of their outline. Together, these outline presentations count for 30% of the semester grade. A 10-page paper (30%) and a 20-page paper (40%) are due on the indicated dates.

Think of your presentation as having two aspects: the first is something that you do in our seminar meeting, namely, summarize the basic argument and ideas developed in the readings. Presumably everyone in the seminar will have read that material and might have comments or questions. The second is your written presentation, the outline that is distributed no later than the night before by email. You want your outline to look like an outline of a paper you are writing, the theme of which is Descartes' treatment of the topic that you have selected. The outline is your chance to show how you would write a paper that says "here is Descartes' doctrine of X."

Both the 10-page research paper and the 20-page term paper should have the following structure:

- a) after the title (which will be something like "Descartes on X" or "Descartes' Doctrine of X"), one or two paragraphs should indicate the issues that have arisen in the scholarly literature about how to interpret his discussion of X, followed by an indication of the specific problems you plan to address and the order of your main points. Use a note to identify the main advocates of positions you will engage.
- b) each section of the paper should have a title and should be at least 3-4 pages long. For the short paper, that means there will be no more than three sections.
- c) a final brief (less than a page) section, entitled "Concluding Remarks," indicating how the points you made address the issues you raised.
- d) footnote citations should adopt the following format:

(author, book)	Jorge Secada, <i>Cartesian Metaphysics</i> (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 35.
(essay in book)	Gary Hatfield, "The Cartesian Circle," in <i>Blackwell Guide to Descartes' Meditations</i> , ed. Stephen Gaukroger (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2006), 122-41.
(journal article)	Steven Nadler, "Descartes and Occasional Causation," <i>British Journal for the History of Philosophy</i> 2 (1994): 101-104.
(translation)	Rene Descartes, <i>Conversation with Burman</i> , trans. John Cottingham (New York: Oxford University Press, 1976), 17.

You should cite all references to Descartes quotes parenthetically in the text itself at the end of the sentence, not in a footnote. Use internal references when the location is small enough for someone to find the passage easily. For example, PP I.60 tells the reader that the cited passage is from the *Principles of Philosophy* Part I, article 60; and Med III indicates *Meditation* III. Always add the CSM or CSMK location when the section is longer than a page. So if you are referring to or quoting a passage about Descartes' distinction between a real, modal, and conceptual distinction, inserting (PP I.60) is sufficient; but quote from Med III this way: "the distinction between preservation and creation is only a conceptual one" (Med III, CSM 2: 33). (The period goes after the parenthesis.)

Insert the following as a note (with the appropriate additions or deletions) the first time you refer to a quote: "Abbreviations used: *Meditations* (Med), *Objections* (Obj), *Replies* (Rep), *Principles of Philosophy* (PP), and *Passions of the Soul* (PS). CSM refers to *The Philosophical Writings of Descartes*, vols. 1 and 2, trans. John Cottingham, Robert Stoothoff, and Dugald Murdoch (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1984-85); CSMK refers to *The Philosophical Writings of Descartes*, vol. 3, trans. John Cottingham, Robert Stoothoff, Dugald Murdoch, and Anthony Kenny (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991). AT refers to the *Oeuvres de Descartes*, rev. ed. C. Adam and P. Tannery (12 vols.; Paris: J. Vrin/CNRS, 1964-76)." A citation of a work referred to in a previous note should list simply the author's last name and an abbreviated title (e.g., Nadler, "Occasional Causation," 38). If you cite a secondary source repeatedly, abbreviate it (e.g., Nadler) and insert it parenthetically in the text. Use only standard sources, never other translations unless you have a reason to do so.

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