

Syllabus for PHIL 661.600: Seminar on 17th Century Treatments of Substance: Descartes to Locke

Fall 2010; Dr. Stephen H. Daniel

“The consideration of substance,” Leibniz remarks, “is of the greatest importance and fruitfulness for philosophy”; and he claims that failure to understand the nature of substance is the cause of Descartes’ errors and Spinoza’s paradoxes. Admittedly, Descartes’ distinction between thinking and extended substance, Spinoza’s identification of substance with God, Malebranche’s and Bayle’s occasionalist account of finite substances, Leibniz’s doctrine of the trans-temporal identity of substances, and Locke’s notion of substance as the “we know not what” support of qualities, all are central puzzles in early modern philosophy. The purpose of the seminar is explore these puzzles and their effect on discussions of God, individuation, freedom, and causation. It also will consider the background for issues of concern to contemporary metaphysicians (e.g., identity, essentialism, and tropes).

Texts: *Philosophical Writings of Descartes*, trans. Cottingham, Stoothoff, Murdoch (CSM), 3 vols.
The Collected Works of Spinoza, vol. 1, ed. E.M. Curley
Philosophical Texts by G. W. Leibniz (ed. Francks and Woolhouse) [PT]
Malebranche: Philosophical Selections, ed. Steven Nadler
An Essay concerning Human Understanding by John Locke, ed. Peter H. Nidditch

For more of a general background in the issues of the period, consult Frederick Copleston’s *History of Philosophy*, vols. 4 and 5. (You might order vol. 6 on the French Enlightenment and Kant as well.)

- Aug. 31 Background: Aristotle’s *Categories* and *Metaphysics*: primary substances, inherence, independence.
Pasnau, “Form, Substance, and Mechanism”
- Sept. 2 Seventeenth Century Scholastic Treatments: Suárez DM 21.2.2: “On Creation,” Eustachius; Rozemond,
Descartes’s Dualism, ch. 4; *Descartes’ Meditations: Background Source Materials*, ed. Ariew.
7 Descartes: *Principles* I.48-65, II.1-35, IV.189; Markie, “Descartes’s Concepts of Substance”; Rodriguez-
Pereyra, “Descartes’ Substance Dualism”
- (Cody) 9 Descartes: *Meditations* Synopsis, Med. II, III; Rozemond, *Descartes’ Dualism*, ch. 1 & 4
14 Descartes: *Objections and Replies* II, IV (Arnauld); Hoffman, “Descartes’ Theory of Distinctions”
- (T. J.) 16 Descartes: Med. VI: M. Stuart, “Descartes’ Extended Substance”; Sowaal, “Cartesian Bodies”
- (Amber) 21 Descartes: *Broadsheet*, letters: CSMK 154-55, 188-204, 226-29, 241-46, 254-55, 279-81, 285-88, 356-
59; Hoffman, “Cartesian Composites”
- 23 Gassendi: the function of substance; LoLordo, *Gassendi and Early Modern Philosophy*, 210-221
28 Hobbes: *De Corpore*, ch. 8, and *Answer to Bishop Bramhall*
- (Murat) 30 Spinoza: *Ethics* I.1-8; Method/Substance; Lin, “Substance, Attribute, and Mode in Spinoza”
- Oct. 5 Spinoza: *Ethics* I.9-25: Attributes; Della Rocca, “Spinoza’s Substance Monism”
- (Jen) 7 Spinoza: *Ethics* I.26-Appendix; Curley, *Behind the Geometrical Method*, ch. 1
12 Spinoza: *Ethics* II.1-12: Lennon, “The Rationalist Conception of Substance”
- (Anton) 14 Spinoza: *Ethics* II:13-31; Carriero, “Relationship between Mode & Substance in Spinoza’s Metaphysics”
19 Leibniz: *De Summa Rerum, Discourse on Metaphysics*; Woolhouse, Introduction to *Leibniz:*
Philosophical Texts, 5-49; Flemming, “On Leibniz on Subject and Substance”
- 21 Leibniz: PT 139-42, 180-208; Adams, *Leibniz: Determinist, Theist, Idealist*, 217-307
[Paper due on Friday, Oct. 22]
- (Anton) 26 Leibniz: “A New System of Nature”; Garber, “Leibniz and the Foundations of Physics”
28 Leibniz: Leibniz-Arnauld Correspondence; Sleight, *Leibniz and Arnauld*, ch. 5
- (Murat) Nov. 2 Leibniz: “Principles of Nature and Grace”; Rutherford, “Leibniz’s Analysis of Multitude & Phenomena”
- (T. J.) 4 Malebranche: *Search After Truth* III.2.6-9, IV.11; *Elucidations* 10, 12, 15; Lee, “Passive Natures”;
Bardout, “Metaphysics and Philosophy”
- (Jen) 9 Malebranche: *Dialogues on Metaphysics* I-V, VII-VIII, X.9; Pessin, “Malebranche on Ideas”
11 Bayle: *Dictionary* “Spinoza” entry; Ryan, *Bayle’s Cartesian Metaphysics* 63-85; Ryan, “Bayle’s Critique
of Lockean Superaddition”
- (Cody) 16 Locke: *Essay* I.4.18; II.13.19; II.23.1-37; Ayers, “The Ideas of Power and Substance”
18 Locke: *First Letter to Stillingfleet* (*Works* IV: 3-40, 70-96); Yaffe, “Locke on Ideas of Substance”
23 Locke: *Third Letter to Stillingfleet* (*Works* IV: 293-307); Jordan, “Locke on ‘Substance in General’”
- [25] [No class: Thanksgiving]

- 30 Locke: *Third Letter to Stillingfleet* (*Works* IV.442-78); McCann, "Locke on Substance"
Dec. 2 Locke: Essay II.21 (power/freedom); Bolton, "Locke and Leibniz on the Structure of Substance"
(Amber) 7 Leibniz on Locke: *New Essays* II.23.2; Jolley, *Leibniz and Locke* ch. 5 & 8
15 (Wednesday) **Term paper due**

Presentations/Papers/Grades: seminar members will prepare a 5- to 6-page outline of primary texts and secondary sources twice during the semester. Together, these outline presentations count for 30% of the semester grade. A 10-page paper is due at mid-semester (30%) and a 20-page paper (on another figure) at the end of the semester (40%).

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