General description

This course is the first half of a year-long survey of modern philosophy for graduate students. Here ‘modern’ refers roughly to the period from Descartes to Kant. This semester we’ll focus on the first half of that period, and on the work of Descartes, Hobbes, and Leibniz. Next semester (in Modern II) we’ll look at the second half of the period, in particular at Locke, Berkeley, and Hume.

Texts

I’ve ordered the following editions at the university bookstore.


Assessment

Your overall grade for the class will be determined by your grades for two short papers and a final exam.

Paper 1. Due 9/29. Worth 20% of your grade for the class.
Paper 2. Due 11/3. Worth 30% of your grade for the class.

I will be happy to suggest topics for these papers. However, you may write about any topic that’s reasonably connected to the material we’ve been discussing. I just ask that you clear the topic with me before you start writing.

Final exam. This will be a take-home exam, worth 50% of your grade for the class. The exam will be handed out in the last class on 1 December, and due one week later.
Schedule

(Note that, because of various holidays, there will be no class meetings on 10/6, 11/10, and 11/24.)

1. 8/25. Introduction
2. 9/1. Descartes (1): Prefatory material, Meditations 1 and 2.
8. 10/20. Leibniz on Descartes and Hobbes. We’ll use the selections at AW 235-84.
11. 11/17. Leibniz (3). The ‘Monadology’.

Other policies and information

Academic integrity. You should read the University’s Guide to academic honesty, which is available online at http://www.dso.ufl.edu/judicial/procedures/academicguide.php. Plagiarism and other violations of academic honesty are unacceptable. If you are found to have cheated, you will be penalized by a failing grade for the course, and may be subject to further penalties.

Accommodations for students with disabilities. Students requesting classroom accommodation must first register with the Dean of Students Office. The Dean of Students Office will provide documentation to the student who must then provide this documentation to the Instructor when requesting accommodation.