Description:

During the 17th century, philosophers were very concerned about scientific method, sorting beliefs that are certain from beliefs that are questionable, and explaining error. These issues were of particular importance during this period in Europe because skepticism was widely considered to be a rejection of Christianity. In the Senior Seminar this term we will examine some of the thoughts of Descartes, Malebranche and Leibniz on the issues of belief, knowledge and certainty. In addition, each student working on a Senior Individualized Project in philosophy will be expected to deliver a 20-minute research presentation at least once during the quarter. A special meeting will be scheduled for presentations of papers accepted to the Michigan Academy conference. We will also spend some time discussing material that will be on the Comprehensive Examinations.

The seminar will meet once each week for the ten-week term.

Assessment:

Your grade for the Senior Seminar will be based on your performance in the Seminar over the entire year. For this quarter, your attendance, degree of preparation, and contributions to the sessions will be primary. We will also have brief oral examinations at the end of the quarter.

Texts:

*Reading will be assigned from the following texts. The Craig and Leibniz readings will be available on reserve.*


Secondary Sources on Reserve at Upjohn Library:
Students interested in supplementary secondary reading are offered the following three books on reserve:


Yolton, John W. *Perceptual Acquaintance from Descartes to Reid*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1983.

## Preliminary Schedule (Subject to change)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>For Week</th>
<th>Read:</th>
<th>Also prepare:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>One</td>
<td></td>
<td>Organizational meeting, intro. to the 17th C. (slide show of early modern portraits, etc.), divvying up of comp.s terms for group study.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Two</td>
<td>Descartes: <em>Discourse on Method</em>, Parts 1 – 3.</td>
<td>Write one paragraph on each of your terms—bring copies for everyone.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Three</td>
<td>Descartes: <em>Discourse on Method</em>, Parts 4 – 6.</td>
<td>Untimed portion of comprehensive exam due on Friday.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Four</td>
<td>Descartes: <em>Rules for the Direction of the Mind</em>, Rules 1 – 10.</td>
<td>Comp.s prep. TBA.</td>
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<td>Six</td>
<td>Malebranche: Selections from <em>The Search after Truth</em>: from the Preface, from Bk. I, ch. 1, from Bk. I, ch. 2.</td>
<td>Comp.s prep. TBA.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Eight</td>
<td>Leibniz: &quot;Meditations on Knowledge, Truth, and Ideas,&quot; and &quot;Primary Truths&quot; (on reserve).</td>
<td>Comp.s prep. TBA.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nine</td>
<td>Leibniz: selections from his correspondence (on reserve.)</td>
<td>Student presentation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ten</td>
<td>TBA</td>
<td>Student presentation.</td>
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