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PHI 516
SEMINAR: LEIBNIZ
FALL 2015

This seminar will be focused on understanding the thought of G.W. Leibniz in historical context.

Leibniz is a very difficult thinker. There are many Leibnizs: Leibniz was a metaphysician, a physicist, a mathematician, a moral and political philosopher, a geologist, a diplomat, a jurist, a linguist, an historian, among many other things. His philosophy is made more difficult still by the fact that he never wrote a single major work that can be said to represent his philosophical thought. His thought has been compared with a web of positions, insofar as there is no single, linear argument, as one finds in Descartes or Spinoza, for example. Instead, there are a variety of interconnected perspectives that reflect one another. In that way there is thus no natural starting place for studying his thought.

There are any number of themes that we could focus on. I would like to begin by concentrating on the metaphysics of body and soul. Ultimately, we will deal with Leibniz's monadological metaphysics. But to understand it, it will be helpful to understand how it emerged and developed. I will begin by concentrating on Leibniz's development of his position in the 1680s and 1690s, focusing on classic texts such as the *Discourse on Metaphysics* and the *Correspondence with Arnauld*, as well as with other classic texts. I will argue that these texts are *not* monadological or idealistic. I will then try to trace Leibniz's position to the later years, and try to figure out when and why Leibniz came to introduce monads and the apparently idealistic metaphysics that seems to go with them. We will end by discussing some other questions in Leibniz's thought, including his relations with Newton, particularly with respect to space and time and action at a distance, his relations to the life sciences, his project for producing a formal logic, and his theodicy project.

The course will consist of one three hour seminar meeting per week. The students will be broken up into "teams" at the beginning of the term, which will be responsible for a presentation at the beginning of each seminar to start discussion. Students will be expected to participate in at least one group and no more than two teams during the course of the term.

Books: The following books have been ordered for the course, and are available at Labyrinth Books:

Leibniz, Gottfried Wilhelm, *Leibniz: Philosophical Essays*, ed. and trans. R. Ariew and D. Garber. Hackett. (Required) [This book is available online through the library website under “Continental Rationalists” in the “Past Masters” collection.] (Abbreviated ‘AG’)

Leibniz, Gottfried Wilhelm, *Leibniz-Clarke Correspondence*, ed. R. Ariew. Hackett. (Required)

Leibniz, Gottfried Wilhelm, *New Essays in Human Understanding*, ed. and trans. P. Remnant and J. Bennett. Cambridge. (Recommended) [A searchable version of this book is available on line through the library website under “Continental Rationalists” in the “Past Masters” website.]

Adams, Robert M., *Leibniz: Determinist, Theist, Idealist*. Oxford. (Recommended) [This book is available online through the Princeton University Library website.]

Garber, Daniel, *Leibniz: Body, Substance, Monad*. Oxford. (Recommended) [This book is available online through the Princeton University Library website.]

Smith, Justin E.H., *Divine Machines: Leibniz and the Sciences of Life* (Princeton) (Recommended) [This book is available online through the Princeton University Library website.]

See also the bibliography appended to this syllabus. Other required and optional materials will be made available on the Blackboard web site. Students are encouraged to read the material in the original languages (French and Latin, mostly), if they can. See me for suggestions about the best original-language texts.

Requirements: Graduate students in the Philosophy Department can earn a unit and other students can earn a grade by participating in a presentation of material for one session, plus a written project, either a term paper (6,000-7,000 words) or a take-home final examination.

Office hours: I am available by appointment. Please contact me by email.

TENTATIVE READINGS

Week 1 (9/22) **Introduction.** Optional reading: Garber, *Leibniz*, chapt. 1.

Week 2 (9/29) **Discourse:** *Discourse on Metaphysics* (AG 35-68); “On the Ultimate Origination of Things” (AG 149-155).

Week 3 (10/6). NO CLASS.

- Week 4 (10/13) **Necessity, contingency, and freedom.** *Correspondence with Arnauld*, pp. 3-66 (on Blackboard); “On Freedom and Possibility” (AG 19-23); “On Contingency” (AG 28-30); “On Freedom” (AG 94-98); “The Source of Contingent Truths” (AG 98-101). Optional: Adams, *Leibniz*, part I (chaps. 1-3).
- Week 5 (10/20) **Unity and Pre-Established Harmony.** *Correspondence with Arnauld*, pp. 66-168 (on Blackboard); “New System” and two comments (AG 138-149). Optional: Garber, *Leibniz*, chapt. 2.
- Week 6 (10/27) **The Program for Dynamics.** “On the Correction of Metaphysics and the Concept of Substance” (on Blackboard); “Specimen Dynamicum” (AG 117-138); “Dynamics, Preliminary Specimen” (AG 105-111); “On Nature Itself” (AG 155-167). Optional: Garber, *Leibniz*, chaps. 3-4.
- Week 7 (11/3) BREAK WEEK
- Week 8 (11/10) **Monads I.** Correspondence with Bernoulli (AG167-171), with de Volder (AG 171-186) and with Des Bosses (AG 197-206). Optional: Garber, *Leibniz*, chaps. 9-10.
- Week 9 (11/17) **Monads II.** “Principles of Nature and Grace” (AG 206-213); “Monadology” (AG 213-225).
- Week 10 (11/24) **Leibniz and Newton:** space, gravitation, and the PSR. *Leibniz-Clarke Correspondence*; “Against Barbaric Physics” (AG 312-320)
- Week 11 (12/1) **Leibniz and the Life Sciences.** J.E.H. Smith, *Divine Machines*; other texts to be determined.
- Week 12 (12/8). **Formal Logic and the Encyclopedia Project:** Texts to be determined.
- Week 13 (12/15). **The Theodicy Problem.** *Confessio philosophi* (excerpts); *Theodicy* (excerpts).

SOME SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY ON LEIBNIZ

PRIMARY SOURCES: ENGLISH

- Leibniz, Gottfried Wilhelm (Roger Ariew and Daniel Garber, eds. and trans.)
Philosophical Essays. Indianapolis: Hackett Pub. Co., 1989. [This is a basic collection of central texts, concentrating on the so-called “mature” Leibniz.](Available in a searchable format in the “Continental Rationalist” collection in Past Masters on the Princeton Library website.)
- Leibniz, Gottfried Wilhelm (Richard Francks, and R. S. Woolhouse, eds. and trans.)
Philosophical Texts Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998. [This is a pretty good general collection of texts.]
- Leibniz, Gottfried Wilhelm (Leroy E. Loemker, ed. and trans.) *Philosophical Papers and Letters*. 2d ed, *Synthese Historical Library ; V. 2*. Dordrecht, Holland ; Boston: D. Reidel Pub. Co., 1976. [This is the most extensive collection of texts in English. The translations are in general pretty good, though the text editions and datings are now dated. Also it is out of print.]
- Leibniz, Gottfried Wilhelm (G. H. R. Parkinson and Mary Morris, eds. and trans.)
Philosophical Writings. London: Dent, 1973.
- Leibniz, Gottfried Wilhelm (G. H. R. Parkinson, ed. and trans.) *Logical Papers*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1966. [This collects some of the main writings on logic. It also has an excellent introduction.]
- Leibniz, Gottfried Wilhelm (R. C. Sleight, Brandon Look, and James H. Stam, eds. and trans.). *Confessio Philosophi : Papers Concerning the Problem of Evil, 1671-1678*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005. [An early but very important text. This edition also has the complete Latin text.]
- Leibniz, Gottfried Wilhelm (G. H. R. Parkinson, ed. and trans.) *De Summa Rerum: Metaphysical Papers, 1675-1676*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992. [An important series of texts from the Paris years when Leibniz was rethinking his metaphysics and the foundations of his physics. This edition also has the complete Latin.]
- Leibniz, Gottfried Wilhelm (Richard Arthur, ed. and trans.) *The Labyrinth of the Continuum: Writings on the Continuum Problem, 1672-1686*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001. [A collection of mostly shorter texts from the crucial period in which Leibniz’s mature thought was first emerging. This edition also has the complete Latin.]
- Leibniz, Gottfried Wilhelm (R. S. Woolhouse, and Richard Francks, ed. and trans.)
Leibniz's 'New System' and Associated Contemporary Texts. Oxford: Clarendon

- Press, 1997. [An excellent series of texts centered around Leibniz's first extended philosophical publication.]
- Leibniz, Gottfried Wilhelm (Peter Remnant, and Jonathan Bennett, trans.) *New Essays on Human Understanding*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996. (Available in a searchable format in the “Continental Rationalist” collection in Past Masters on the Princeton Library website.)
- Leibniz, Gottfried Wilhelm, and Antoine Arnauld (H.T. Mason, tr.) *The Leibniz-Arnauld Correspondence*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1967. [The best current translation of one of Leibniz's central texts.]
- Leibniz, Gottfried Wilhelm and Bartholomaeus Des Bosses (Brandon Look and Donald Rutherford, ed. and trans.) *The Leibniz-Des Bosses Correspondence*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007. [A central set of documents for understanding Leibniz's last philosophy published for the first time in English. This edition also has the complete Latin text newly edited.] [Electronic edition on line]
- Leibniz, Gottfried Wilhelm and Burchard de Volder (Paul Lodge, ed. and trans.). New Haven: Yale University Press, 2013. [Another central set of documents for understanding Leibniz's last philosophy published for the first time in English. This edition also has the complete Latin text newly edited.]
- PRIMARY SOURCES: ORIGINAL LANGUAGE**
- Leibniz, Gottfried Wilhelm (C.I. Gerhardt, ed.) *Die Philosophischen Schriften*. Berlin: Weidmann, 1875-1890 [This is the big nineteenth-century edition. For philosophical writings after 1690 this is still the most extensive source we have. Since it is out of copyright, it is easily available on the web.](This is available in searchable form in the “Leibniz” database in “Past Masters.”
- Leibniz, Gottfried Wilhelm (C.I. Gerhardt, ed.) *Leibnizens Mathematische Schriften*. Berlin: A. Asher, 1849-1855. [There is lots of philosophical interest here, particularly in vol. 6. Since it is out of copyright, it is easily available on the web.]
- Leibniz, Gottfried Wilhelm (Deutsche Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Berlin, eds.). *Sämtliche Schriften und Briefe*. Berlin: Akademie-Verlag 1923- (This is to be the new complete critical edition of Leibniz's writings in the original languages, edited to the highest standards. It is divided thematically into eight series (‘Reihen’) and each series is divided chronologically into volumes (‘Bände’). The philosophical papers are in series 6 and the philosophical correspondence is in series 2, though material of philosophical interest can be found scattered through other volumes. Currently still very incomplete, it must be supplemented by earlier editions. Recent volumes and preliminary versions of material currently being edited are available for free download at: <http://www.leibnizedition.de/startseite.html>.)

Leibniz, Gottfried Wilhelm, and Antoine Arnauld (Georges Le Roy, ed.) *Discours de Métaphysique et Correspondance avec Arnauld* Paris: J. Vrin, 1993. [A pretty good, though not scholarly edition of two central texts.]

Leibniz, Gottfried Wilhelm (Michel Fichant, ed. and trans.) *Discours de Métaphysique suivi de Monadologie et Autres Textes*. Paris: Gallimard, 2004. [This is just a student edition of a variety of useful texts, very cheap, but it has a magnificent introduction by one of the top scholars in the business, excellent supplementary texts, and excellent notes.]

SECONDARY SOURCES

Adams, Robert Merrihew. *Leibniz : Determinist, Theist, Idealist*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1994. [An excellent book, learned and philosophically sophisticated, though the author's account of Leibniz's idealism (part III of the book) is rather different from the line that I develop my book.] (This is available in electronic form on the Princeton Library website.)

Antognazza, Maria Rosa, *Leibniz: An Intellectual Biography*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009. [This is a masterful biography of Leibniz, which places his philosophical thoughts and writings in the context of his broader interests and active life.] (This is available in electronic form on the Princeton Library website.)

Arthur, Richard. *Leibniz*, Malden MA: Polity Press, 2014. [A good introductory book that orients the student to some of the recent discussions in the literature.]

Cover, J. A., and John O'Leary-Hawthorne. *Substance and Individuation in Leibniz*. Cambridge, U.K. ; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999. [A “philosophical” account of Leibniz's metaphysics that plays somewhat fast and loose with what Leibniz actually thought.] (This is available in electronic form on the Princeton Library website.)

De Risi, Vincenzo. *Geometry and ‘Monadology’*, Basel: Birkhäuser, 2007. [A study of Leibniz’s project for geometry, which aims to show how the world of monads is related to extended bodies. Difficult but rewarding.]

Duchesneau, François. *La Dynamique de Leibniz*. Paris: J. Vrin, 1994.

———. *Leibniz et la methode de la science*. Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 1993.

———. *Les Modèles du vivant de Descartes à Leibniz*. Paris: J. Vrin, 1998.

- Fichant, Michel. *Science et metaphysique dans Descartes et Leibniz*. Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 1998. [An excellent collection of essays from one of the best Leibniz scholars working today.]
- Garber, Daniel. *Leibniz: Body, Substance, Monad*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009. (This is available in electronic form on the Princeton Library website.)
- Griffin, Michael. *Leibniz, God and Necessity*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013. [Argues that Leibniz didn't reject necessitarianism.]
- Jolley, Nicholas. *The Cambridge Companion to Leibniz*. Cambridge ; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1995. [Lots of good essays. It includes my own essay on Leibniz and physics.] (This is available in electronic form on the Princeton Library website.)
- . *Leibniz*. London and New York: Routledge, 2005.
- Laerke, Mogens. *Leibniz lecteur de Spinoza: la genèse d'une opposition complexe*. Paris : Champion, 2008. (The definitive treatment of Leibniz's reaction to Spinoza.)
- Look, Brandon (ed.) *The Bloomsbury Companion to Leibniz*, London: Bloomsbury, 2014. (A new collection of articles that cover all aspects of Leibniz's philosophical thought.)
- Mercer, Christia. *Leibniz's Metaphysics : Its Origins and Development*. Cambridge ; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001. [This focuses on Leibniz's thought in his very early period. Mercer argues that monads were there practically from the beginning.] (This is available in electronic form on the Princeton Library website.)
- Jorgensen, Larry M. and Samuel Newlands. *New essays on Leibniz's Theodicy*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014. (This is available in electronic form on the Princeton Library website.)
- Nachtomy, Ohad and J.E.H. Smith (eds.) *The Life Sciences in Early Modern Philosophy*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014. (This is available in electronic form on the Princeton Library website.)
- Phemister, Pauline. *Leibniz and the Natural World: Activity, Passivity, and Corporeal Substances in Leibniz's Philosophy*. Dordrecht, The Netherlands: Springer, 2005.
- Rescher, Nicholas. *The Philosophy of Leibniz*. Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1967. [Old fashioned, but still somewhat useful.]

- Rutherford, Donald. *Leibniz and the Rational Order of Nature*. Cambridge ; New York, NY, USA: Cambridge University Press, 1995. [Now something of a classic. A very subtle and sensible reading of Leibniz's metaphysics.]
- Sleigh, R. C. *Leibniz & Arnauld : A Commentary on Their Correspondence*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990. [Also a classic, focusing on the *Discourse on Metaphysics* and the Correspondence with Arnauld. Both philosophically and historically sensitive.]
- Smith, J.E.H. (2011), *Divine Machines: Leibniz and the Sciences of Life*, Princeton: Princeton University Press. [An excellent study of Leibniz and the life sciences, an area of inquiry that is getting increasing attention by scholars.] (This is available in electronic form on the Princeton Library website.)
- Wilson, Catherine. *Leibniz's Metaphysics : A Historical and Comparative Study*. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1989.