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, *New Essays in Human Understanding*, ed. and trans. P. Remnant and J. Bennett. Cambridge. (Recommended) [A searchable version of this book is available online 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 website. 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 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, 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. Sleigh, 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.]

Press, 1997. [An excellent series of texts centered around Leibniz's first extended philosophical publication.]


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 (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**


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.)


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.]


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.)


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.)


