

## Workshop: Leibniz On The Metaphysics Of Substance

In this workshop, we will study G.W. Leibniz's view on the metaphysics of substance in a historical context.

Leibniz is a very difficult thinker. He was considered a leading figure of his time in an unbelievably large domain of inquiries: in metaphysics, mathematics, physics, moral and political philosophy, geology, linguistics, and historiography, among other areas. Understanding his philosophy is made even more difficult because of the fact that he did not write any philosophical work that can be taken as representative of his overall system, despite writing probably more than anyone else in the history of philosophy. He constantly changed his views while maintaining a certain philosophical spirit or character, the result of which process is one of the most comprehensive and cohesive philosophical systems ever proposed. In that way there is thus no natural starting place for studying his thought.

Our focus will be on Leibniz's metaphysics, and, to a lesser extent, on his logic and physics, insofar as they pertain to his thoughts on metaphysics of substance. In the first day of the workshop, we will try to follow a somewhat chronological order so as better to see how his views emerged and developed. We will begin by concentrating on his views in the 1680s and 1690s, focusing on classic texts such as the *Discourse on Metaphysics* and the *Correspondence with Arnauld*. We will then try to trace Leibniz's position to the later years and will try to figure out when and why Leibniz came to introduce monads and the (apparently) idealistic metaphysics that seems to go with them. The second day of the workshop will be shaped around the so-called "middle period controversy" between Daniel Garber on one hand and many other Leibniz scholars – most notably Robert Adams and Robert Sleigh – on the other. The main questions for us will be the following. Did Leibniz already have a monadological view in the 80s and 90s? Should we read the *Discourse* through the *Monadology*? Was Leibniz ever serious about corporeal substances? How about monads? What is the business with "substantial bonds"?

The workshop is pre-read. Participants must have read the material beforehand and attend with *some* understanding of the text. We take turns in presenting various parts of the debate. Further details will be announced subsequently.

Important note: the material for the workshop is quite a lot! So expect a good deal of reading well ahead of the actual dates of the workshop.

### Required Books

Leibniz, Gottfried Wilhelm, *Leibniz: Philosophical Essays*, ed. and trans. R. Ariew and D. Garber. Hackett 1989. (Abbreviated 'AG')

Adams, Robert M., *Leibniz: Determinist, Theist, Idealist*. Oxford 1998.

Garber, Daniel, *Leibniz: Body, Substance, Monad*. Oxford 2009.

Rutherford, Donald, *Leibniz and the Rational Order of Nature*. Cambridge 1995.

## Workshop Schedule

### Day 1

First session, **Leibniz on Substances in the 1680s: Complete Individual Concepts (CIC)**, *Discourse on Metaphysics* AG 35-68; “From the letters to Arnauld” AG 69-90. Garber, chapters 2 and 5; Rutherford, 119-148. Optional: Garber, chapter 6.

Second session, **The Middle Period: From CICs to Individual Laws of the Series**, “New System” AG 138-149; “A Specimen of Dynamics” AG 117-138; “On Nature Itself” AG 155-167; Rutherford, 148-159.

Third session, **The Mature Period: Monads**, Correspondence with Bernoulli AG 167-171, with de Volder AG 171-186, and with Des Bosses AG 197-206; “Monadology” AG 213-225; “Principles of Nature and Grace” AG 206-213; Rutherford, 159- 165; Adams, Part I, chapter 3.

### Day 2

First Session, **Garber’s Reading; Leibniz Never Quite Figured It Out!** Garber, Introduction, Chapter 7 to the end of the book. Optional: Garber, chapters 3 and 4.

Second Session, **Adams’s Interpretation; Leibniz Knew It All From (Almost) The Beginning!** Adams, Part III.