

PHIL 301L: Spring 2012: Second Paper Assignment

Requirements:

The essay should be 5-6 pages long, double-spaced, 12 point, though you can go half a page over if that is necessary. Don't go under. **The paper is due by the time of class Thursday, April 26th.** Please review the breakdown of grade, policy on plagiarism, and the policy on late submissions (including the schedule of grade reductions for late papers) posted on the syllabus. Any late papers should be submitted directly to your TA. **Be sure to put your name on the paper, staple it and provide page numbers!**

The assignment:

Answer *one* of the following questions:

1. Explain Leibniz's theory of pre-established harmony. Discuss the problems Leibniz finds with rival theories of causation that motivate his adoption of this view. How plausible do you find his view and why?
2. Explain and critically evaluate Leibniz's views on the immortality of the body.
3. Explain Locke's distinction between real and nominal essences. What is his attitude to the former? How plausible do you find his view about real essences and why?
4. Locke argues that words become general by being made the signs of general ideas. What does this mean? Why does Locke need to appeal to general ideas in giving an account of the meanings of general words? Explain how Berkeley tries in the *Principles* to criticize Locke's conception of general ideas. How fair do you think he is to Locke? How does Berkeley suggest we should understand general ideas?
5. Explain Locke's distinction between primary and secondary qualities. What arguments does he offer that colors and other secondary qualities are not "in" things as real qualities of those things? How successful do you find those arguments, and why? Are there any qualities that Locke counts as primary which would on Locke's own principles be better classified as secondary? Explain your answer.
6. Explain and critically evaluate Berkeley's arguments against material substance (aka. "matter") in the *Dialogues*.