

# Topics in Early Modern Philosophy: Spinoza's Metaphysics

Fall 2010

John Morrison

[jmorrison@barnard.edu](mailto:jmorrison@barnard.edu)

## Topic

This course will be an in-depth study of the first two parts of Spinoza's *Ethics*.

## Required Text

We'll be using Curley's translation of the *Ethics*, which can be found in *The Collected Works of Spinoza, Volume I* (Princeton University Press, 1985, \$100), *A Spinoza Reader: The Ethics and Other Works* (Princeton University Press, 1994, \$35) and *Ethics* (Penguin Classics, 1996, \$14).

By the first week of classes I will make available a packet of readings for you to photocopy. The packet will contain chapters from Nadler's *Spinoza's Ethics*, Della Rocca's *Spinoza*, Wolfson's *Philosophy of Spinoza* and Bennett's *A Study of Spinoza's Ethics* as well as papers by Garrett, Gabbey, Carriero, Lin, Marshall and others.

## Schedule

Before the start of the semester you should re-read the first two parts of Spinoza's *Ethics* several times.

| Date  | Topic                            | Primary Reading                             |
|-------|----------------------------------|---|
| 9/9   | No class due to Rosh Hashanah    |   |
| 9/16  | Overview                         | Parts one and two                           |
| 9/23  | Basic Concepts                   | Axioms and definitions of part one          |
| 9/30  | Derived Properties of Substances | 1P1-1P6                                     |
| 10/7  | Ontological Argument             | 1P7-1P11                                    |
| 10/14 | Substance Monism                 | 1P12-1P20                                   |
| 10/21 | Finite Infinite Modes            | 1P21-1P28                                   |
| 10/28 | Necessitarianism                 | 1P26-Appendix                               |
| 11/4  | Thought                          | Axioms and definitions of part two, 2P1-2P4 |
| 11/11 | Parallelism                      | 2P5-2P9, 3P2                                |
| 11/18 | Mind, Body and Individuals       | 2P10-P15                                    |
| 11/25 | No class due to Thanksgiving     |   |
| 12/2  | Kinds of Cognition               | 2P16-Appendix                               |
| 12/9  | Conatus Doctrine                 | Definitions of part three, 3P1-3P7          |

I will suggest secondary reading from the course packet.

References to the *Ethics* begin with the part number followed by D, A or P (depending on whether it is a definition, axiom or proposition) followed by the number Spinoza assigns it. References to demonstrations, corollaries and scholia include a D, C or S at the end. For example, 1P2 is the second proposition of part one.

## **Requirements**

Regular attendance and a 15-25 page paper due on the first day of finals.