

Descartes Assignment

Due: Monday, April 10th, 2007

Requirements: 3 pages, typed, 12pt font, handed in as a hard copy

Recommended: Quotations

Total Points for assignment - 40

Directions - Choose 1 of the following options:

Option 1: Skepticism → Cogito Ergo Sum → God exists

- A. Give a summary of Descartes' first meditation in ***The Meditations*** (Pages 6-8):
 - a. What is the purpose of Meditation #1?
 - b. What role does doubt and skepticism play?
- B. On Page 10 of ***The Meditations***, Descartes claims: "I am a thing which thinks"
 - a. How does Descartes come to this conclusion?
 - b. What beliefs does he pass up before arriving at this conclusion?
- C. Page 13 of ***Principles of Philosophy***: Sections "XVIII", "XIV", and "XX"
 - a. Descartes says we have thoughts about God in the Meditations
 - b. From Sections "XVIII", "XIV", and "XX" what is the argument Descartes gives for the existence of God?

Option 2: Substance and Existence

- A. On Pages 11-12 of Descartes' second meditation in ***The Meditations***. Descartes describes a piece of wax and how it stays the same over time
 - a. What does Descartes say "remains" of the wax after its other properties are striped away? Hint: He says what remains is a certain type of thing which is flexible and movable.
 - b. What does the wax example tell us about substance and perception?
- B. Page 20 of ***Principles of Philosophy***, Section "LI" and "LII"
 - a. What does Descartes say concerning God and substance?
 - b. Explain and discuss the word "Univocally"
 - i. Give its meaning and how it applies to the discussion of substance
- C. What do the conclusions drawn from B tell us about the findings in A?

Extra Credit (15 additional points):

- A. Apply another section from ***Principles of Philosophy*** to your answer for whichever option you have chosen. Include it at the end and mark it as "Extra Credit".
- B. Length: Around 1 page.