

Reading Guide #2

Thomas Hobbes, from *Leviathan*  
Baruch (Benedict) Spinoza, from *Ethics*

These questions are provided to assist you in your reading. I encourage you first to read the material through, then go back to answer the questions. You are not expected to hand in written answers. You are expected to have responses ready for class discussion. Page numbers refer to the Ariew and Watkins collection.

Hobbes, from *Leviathan* (AW 114-136)

1. How do thoughts originate? Be specific.
2. What is the relationship between inertia and memory?
3. What distinguishes people from other animals?
4. Explain the analogy of the sequence of thought to water on a table.
5. Distinguish regulated from unguided trains of thought.
6. What do we mean by 'infinite'?
7. What are the purposes and uses of language, especially number terms? Distinguish universals from proper names.
8. What are truth and falsity?
9. What are the four kinds of positive names? How are negative names different?
10. Why are terms like 'wisdom', 'fear', 'cruelty' and 'justice' useless, or even dangerous, in philosophy?
11. What is reason?
12. Distinguish error from absurdity. How is talk of immaterial substance and free will absurd?
13. What's wrong with saying that color is in a body (as in 'the apple is red')?
14. Describe other errors made by philosophers by not attending to the meanings of terms.
15. What, specifically, is science?
16. What are bodies? What are accidents of bodies?
17. To what does 'spirit' or 'soul' refer?
18. What is the goal of philosophy?
19. How do we avoid errors in reasoning?
20. What are separated essences? Why does Hobbes call them a false doctrine?
21. How may some kinds of metaphysics and physics be vain philosophy?

---

Spinoza, from *Ethics*, Part I (AW 144-164)

22. Distinguish substances, modes, and attributes.
23. How does Spinoza argue that every substance is infinite?
24. How does Spinoza argue that there can be only one substance of any particular nature?
25. Why does our conceiving of two attributes as distinct not entail that they are different entities or substances?
26. Compare Spinoza's arguments for the necessary existence of God with those of Descartes.
27. Explain Spinoza's claim that corporeal substance is indivisible.
28. Characterize Spinoza's conception of God. How is it different from ordinary conceptions?
29. Describe the two arguments Spinoza considers that corporeal substance does not pertain to God (Proposition 15). How does Spinoza respond?
30. What are the two ways to conceive quantity? How does this distinction help account for the

- temptation to think that corporeal substance is divisible?
31. How must God's will and intellect differ from those of humans?
  32. "Particular things are nothing but affections of the attributes of God, that is, modes wherein the attributes of God find expression in a definite and determinate way" (Proposition 25). Explain.
  33. Why must finite things have finite causes? How does Spinoza rectify this claim with the absolute/infinite nature of God?
  34. How does Spinoza conclude that nothing in nature is contingent? Consider his characterizations of 'contingent', 'necessary', and 'impossible' in Proposition 33.
  35. What does Spinoza take to be the major source of opposition to his views?
  36. How is the will of God the sanctuary of ignorance?
- 

Spinoza, from *Ethics*, Part II (AW 164-187)

37. What is a body? Distinguish bodies from individual things.
  38. How are actions of God different from human actions?
  39. Explain Proposition 7: The order and connection of ideas is the same as the order and connection of things. Does Descartes agree?
  40. Are humans substances? What are we?
  41. What is human perception? Explain.
  42. What are the objects of the human mind (i.e. what are our thoughts about)?
  43. What is memory? How does it work?
  44. How do we know about bodies?
  45. How may human knowledge be inadequate?
  46. How may God's knowledge be inadequate? When is it adequate?
  47. What is falsity?
  48. Why do people think they are free? Are they?
  49. Why do people differ in their beliefs about universal ideas?
  50. What are the three kinds of knowledge? How do they differ?
  51. How does Spinoza account for falsity? Why is such an account both difficult and important, for him?
  52. How are will and intellect the same thing? Distinguish Spinoza's solution to the problem of error from Descartes's solution.
- 

Spinoza, from *Ethics*, Part V (AW 188-195)

53. In what way are we eternal?
54. How is the third kind of knowledge the best?
55. Distinguish passive and active states of the mind. How does this distinction help explain human freedom?
56. How are freedom and intellect related?