

Phil 9XXXB (Topic in Modern Philosophy) (HILL)  
WF 09:30–11:00

### **Leibniz as a Critic of Locke**

This seminar will revolve around Leibniz's *Nouveaux essais sur l'entendement humain* [*New Essays on Human Understanding*] (1765). In 1697 Leibniz had tried to engage Locke in a discussion of *An Essay concerning Human Understanding* (1690) by sending him some critical notes, but Locke was not interested. After the publication of Pierre Coste's French translation of the *Essay*, Leibniz began writing an extended critical discussion of it in the form of a dialogue between a Lockean and a Leibnizian critic, Leibniz's *New Essays*. It is a unique work in Leibniz's corpus because of its critical engagement with the work of another philosopher. It is highly prized by scholars, and because the format pushes Leibniz outside of his own system and forces him to criticize and explain his ideas to an opponent who does not share his presuppositions, it provides an interesting perspective to students of Leibniz's philosophy.

#### Required Text:

[G. W. Leibniz, \*New Essays on Human Understanding\*, translated by Peter Remnant and Jonathan Bennett, 2nd edition \(Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996\)](#)

#### Recommended Texts:

[John Locke, \*An Essay concerning Human Understanding\*, edited by Peter Nidditch \(Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975\)](#)