

# *Reading Descartes' Meditations ... Twice! Syllabus*

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**Instructor**

*Adam Rose*

**Quarter:** Spring 2024

**Start – end date:** March 20 - May 8

**Session day/time:** Wednesday, 6:00 pm – 7:30 pm

**Course Code and Section:** HUAS90944, 24S1

**Email**

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**Course Overview**

Using the strategy laid out in Mortimer Adler's classic *How to Read a Book*, this course is devoted to developing a thorough understanding of Descartes's *Meditations on First Philosophy* by reading it once quickly to get an overview and then again more slowly to figure out the details. Along the way, we'll pay careful attention to both the dramatic and the philosophic features that Descartes interweaves in this philosophical creation story. Whether you've attempted Descartes's *Meditations* before or never cracked the cover, this course is for you.

**Modality**

Remote learning

**Note to students**

Prior or concurrent participation in *How to Read Classic Texts* or equivalent experience is recommended. Students may wish to review Adler and Van Doren's *How to Read a Book* prior to, or concurrent with, this course. Please complete the assigned "inspectional" skim readings for Week 1 before the first class.

**Required texts**

1. Descartes, René. *Meditations on First Philosophy*. Trans. Laurence Lafleur. Library of Liberal Arts / 978-0023671708.

OPTIONAL

2. Adler, Mortimer and Van Doren, Charles, *How to Read a Book: The Classic Guide to Intelligent Reading*. Touchstone / 978-0671212094.

Books can be purchased online through the [University of Chicago Bookstore](#).

## Course readings

Week	Author	Reading Assignment
Week 1	Descartes	INTRODUCTION INSPECTIONAL SKIM: Front Matter, First – Second Meditations
Week 2	Descartes	INSPECTIONAL SKIM: Third – Sixth Meditations
Week 3	Descartes	Front Matter, First Meditation
Week 4	Descartes	Second Meditation
Week 5	Descartes	Third Meditation
Week 6	Descartes	Fourth Meditation
Week 7	Descartes	Fifth Meditation
Week 8	Descartes	Sixth Meditation, Front Matter REVIEW AND SYNTHESIS

### Accessing remote courses

Remote courses are taught through our Canvas platform. Approximately two weeks before your class begins, we will add you to your canvas site using the email address you provided at the time of registration. An invitation will then be sent to that email. Click the “Get Started” button in the email to begin the Canvas login process. For step-by-step instructions, please visit <https://grahamschool.uchicago.edu/academic-programs/online/learning-resources/liberal-arts>. Once you’ve created your Canvas account, you can access any Graham School canvas course for which you are registered at: <https://canvas.uchicago.edu>.

### Accessibility information

Student Disability Services (SDS) works to provide resources, support and accommodations for all students with disabilities and works to remove physical and attitudinal barriers, which may prevent their full participation in the University community. Students that would like to request accommodations should contact SDS in advance of the first class session at 773.702.6000 or [disabilities@uchicago.edu](mailto:disabilities@uchicago.edu).

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For more information, please see [this handout for students](#) as well as the [University's Policy on Harassment, Discrimination and Sexual Misconduct](#) and [Policy on Title IX Sexual Harassment](#). You can also reach out directly for services and support from the [Office for Sexual Misconduct Prevention and Support](#) by emailing [titleix@uchicago.edu](mailto:titleix@uchicago.edu).

If you, or another student you know, wishes to speak to a confidential resource who does not have this reporting responsibility, please contact the Sexual Assault Dean on Call through the UChicago Safe App or at 773.834-HELP.

Questions? Contact Zoë Eisenman at [zme1@uchicago.edu](mailto:zme1@uchicago.edu).