

Osher Lifelong Learning Institute

Spinoza

SYLLABUS

Don Ross, Instructor

This is a course on Baruch Spinoza, a Jewish philosopher who lived in Holland from 1632 to 1677. Expelled from the synagogue because of his rejection of the Mosaic authorship of the Torah, he lived the life of a solitary scholar. He was influenced chiefly by Descartes, but also by the ancient Stoics, Moses Maimonides, and Thomas Hobbes. Most of his writings were published after his death. He was centuries ahead of his time in his scholarly approach to the Bible. He was a passionate defender of a political order which would secure individual freedoms (such as his own heretical views on religion). But by far his most valuable contribution to Western philosophy was his work *Ethics*, in which he saves Cartesian dualism by subsuming it into a monistic, pantheistic metaphysics. In the first half of the course, we will examine his early philosophical explorations and then move on to his more mature theological and political investigations. The second half of the course will focus entirely on the *Ethics*.

CLASS SCHEDULE

Week 1

Spinoza, *God, Man, and His Well-Being* Metaphysics Shirley: 37 - 107

Week 2

Spinoza, *Emendation of the Intellect* Method Shirley: 3 - 30

Week 3

Spinoza, *Theological-Political Treatise* 1-6 Religion Shirley: 388 - 456

Week 4

Spinoza, *Theological-Political Treatise* 7-11 Scripture Shirley: 456 - 503
Spinoza, *Theological-Political Treatise* 12-15 Reason & Revelation Shirley: 503 - 526

Week 5

Spinoza, *Theological-Political Treatise* 16-20 State Shirley: 526 - 572

Week 6

Spinoza, *Political Treatise* Government Shirley: 680 - 754

Week 7

Spinoza, *Ethics* I Perspectives Shirley: 217 - 243
Spinoza, Letter 12 Shirley: 787 - 791
Spinoza, Letter 32 Shirley: 848 - 851
Spinoza, Letter 64 Shirley: 918 - 919

Week 8

Spinoza, *Ethics* II - Prop. 13 Attributes Shirley: 243 - 252
Spinoza, *Ethics* II Ax. 1 - III Prop. 3 Aspects Shirley: 252- 282

Week 9

Spinoza, *Ethics* III Prop. 4 - Gen. Def. Emotions Shirley: 282 - 319

Week 10

Spinoza, *Ethics* IV Bondage Shirley: 320 - 362
Spinoza, *Ethics* V Pref. - V Prop. 20 Freedom Shirley: 363 - 373

Week 11

Spinoza, *Ethics* V Prop. 21 - Prop. 42 Immortality Shirley: 373 - 382

REQUIRED TEXTS

Spinoza, *Complete Works*, trans. Shirley, Hackett, 2002, 9780872206205 (\$80.00).