

教育部人文社會學科學術強化創新計畫

【計畫名稱】

期中報告

年度成果總報告

補助單位：教育部

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經典研讀活動

執行單位：國立陽明大學心智哲學研究所

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目次

計畫總表.....	3
撰寫內容.....	4
一、計畫名稱.....	4
二、計畫目標.....	4
三、導讀.....	4
四、研讀成果.....	5
五、議題探討結論.....	5
六、目標達成情況與自評.....	6
七、執行過程遭遇之困難.....	6
八、經費運用情形.....	6
九、改進建議.....	7
十、統計表.....	7

撰寫內容

一、 計畫名稱

Spinoza and Leibniz

二、 計畫目標

René Descartes was a revolutionary, who, alone and without backing by the academic establishment overturned much of the prevailing medieval philosophy. Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz was arguably the greatest rationalist philosopher of beginning modernity.

René Descartes lived in France of the 17th century, the leading place of Western culture of that time. His thinking marked the beginning of the modern age. Descartes became most famous for his skepticism about the world we perceive and his subsequent espousal of dualism.

The course was designed to get acquainted with Descartes' work, taking time to read key passages carefully in English translation. The understanding of dualism will be central to our efforts, including its beginnings in ancient times, its variants and a critical assessment of what Descartes really meant.

Leibniz, who lived approximately 100 years after Descartes, dismissed an academic career in favor of legal and diplomatic service, yet his contributions to science and philosophy ranged far and wide, from engineering, mathematics and physics to metaphysics, ethics and theology. Leibniz is known for the breadth and inclusiveness of his work, which is scattered among many relatively short writings and letters. He tried to reconcile fresh empirically minded and scientific approaches with the prevailing scholastic thinking, nevertheless he presented a body of highly original philosophy in the fields of metaphysics, theory of knowledge, logic and moral philosophy. While Leibniz found little recognition in his own time, the originality and influence of his work until the present day can hardly be exaggerated. Studying Leibniz' work gave us the chance to read a somewhat more difficult text, appreciating a genius and understanding philosophical thinking at the beginning of modernity.

三、 導讀

For the first semester, the following text was used:

René Descartes, *Meditations on First Philosophy*, translated by Michael Moriarty, Oxford University press (2008).

Philosophical background was provided by the following textbook:

Marleen Rozemond, *Descartes's Dualism*, Harvard University Press (1998).

For the second semester, the following textbook was used:

Nicholas Jolley (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Leibniz*, Cambridge University Press (1995).

Original texts by Leibniz in English translations will be collected from the internet.

In both semesters, students are encouraged to collect information from internet resources, e.g., the Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy.

Reading was partly performed in class and partly in home assignments.

Discussion of what was read was done in class, especially in group work with subsequent discussion in the whole class.

四、 研讀成果

The students, although already on graduate level, were for the first time exposed to original texts which dated back several centuries. In the course of the two semesters, their ability of careful and critical reading was significantly enhanced.

In discussions among the graduate students of our class, we emphasized diligent word-by-word reading of important passages. The students got acquainted with the writing style of beginning modernity and gained confidence to engage in similar texts.

Group work was performed several times per semester together with non-philosophy majors on an undergraduate level. The graduate students of our class were distributed among the groups, so that they had the opportunity to test their knowledge when trying to explain what they had learned to intelligent non-experts. Besides, interesting and valuable input came from the undergraduate students.

Based on secondary literature, for most sessions a topic was selected about which one of the students gave a short talk. Thus students trained their ability to speak clearly and concisely about a hitherto unfamiliar topic.

五、 議題探討結論

As a result, the graduate students of our class acquired capabilities of critical reading of comparatively difficult texts, discussing non-trivial philosophical issues and defending their views in groups and before an audience. It is widely acknowledged that critical reading of classical texts enhances analytic skills as well as a careful methodological approach. Progress to that effect could be seen