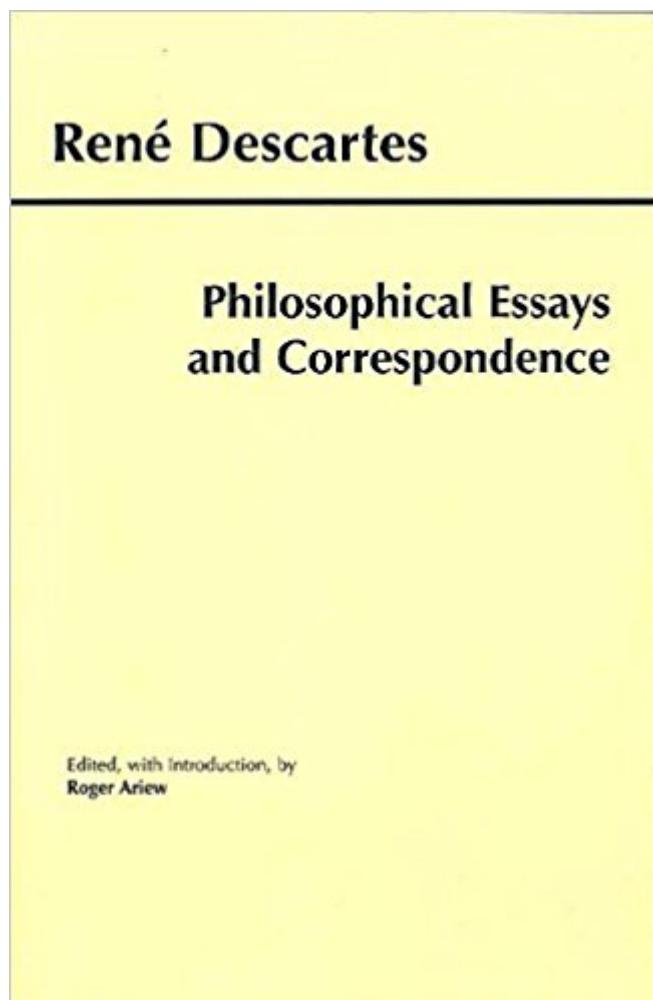


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Philosophical Essays And Correspondence (Descartes) (Hackett Publishing Co.)



Synopsis

A superb text for teaching the philosophy of Descartes, this volume includes all his major works in their entirety, important selections from his lesser known writings, and key selections from his philosophical correspondence. The result is an anthology that enables the reader to understand the development of Descartes' thought over his lifetime. Includes a biographical Introduction, chronology, bibliography, and index.

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Customer Reviews

Roger Ariew is Professor of Philosophy, University of South Florida.

The Hackett Publishing Co. has more editions of Descartes than any other philosopher, and it can be confusing at first which edition is the best to buy. Readers interested in getting a nice taste of Descartes' philosophy (and not merely his *Meditations*) should definitely buy this edition, as should students studying Descartes. This edition includes not only the *Meditations*, but also the invaluable objections and replies to the *Meditations* (esp. Arnauld), along with his *Discourse on Method*, the *Passions of the Soul*, *The World*, *The Search After Truth* and even some of his correspondence. More importantly, the lesser read texts 'Rules for the Direction of the Mind' and 'Principles of Philosophy' are in this edition, which I find to be two of Descartes' most important writings, and cannot be ignored in studying Descartes. More serious readers in Descartes should look into having

his complete three-volume philosophical writings through Cambridge (CSM, be warned that these go for around \$40 each: The Philosophical Writings of Descartes: Volume 1, The Philosophical Writings of Descartes: Volume 2, The Philosophical Writings of Descartes (Volume 3: The Correspondence (Paperback))), but both the scholar and the student benefit from having this fine and accessible collection put together by Roger Ariew. It's well worth the extra money to buy this Hackett edition rather than merely having the *Meditations* and the *Discourse on Method*.

Solid translation. Contains a minimally abridged selection of the *Objections and Replies*, also includes one of Descartes most useful texts, *Principles of Philosophy*. Solid footnotes without being too dense. Introduction is solid, especially for those looking to study Descartes outside of a graduate class setting. Contains a useful bibliography of primary and secondary sources for those who need a place to get started. For undergraduate philosophy majors, I would heartily recommend using this copy over and above selections that contain only the *Meditations* and/or *Discourse on Method*, as *Principles of Philosophy* is an extremely clarifying supplemental text (written as an educational tool) that is seriously underused.

Required for school. Kept my attention while in class.

Roger Ariew and Hackett Publishing have brought out a terrific edition of Descartes' writings, superior to the one published by Cambridge University Press for several reasons. First, the typeface in the Cambridge edition is not very clear--it almost looks like the pages have been photocopied. Second, the Hackett edition not only has Descartes' important philosophical works, but also includes a fine selection from Descartes' minor writings and correspondence (since Cambridge also publishes the complete writings of Descartes, they're not particularly motivated to do something like this). One finds, e.g., Descartes' 1640 letter to Colvius regarding the 'cogito ergo sum' argument found in Augustine's *City of God*, as well as two very important letters to the Marquis of Newcastle and Henry More regarding the question of whether animals have souls and whether space is infinite and vacuums are possible. All selections are arranged chronologically, and Ariew has written a helpful introduction. Numbers in the page margins correlate each selection to the place where it is found in the standard original language edition of Descartes' works (*Oeuvres de Descartes*, eds. Adam and Tannery, 2nd ed., Paris: 1964-74). This is THE introductory edition to get.

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