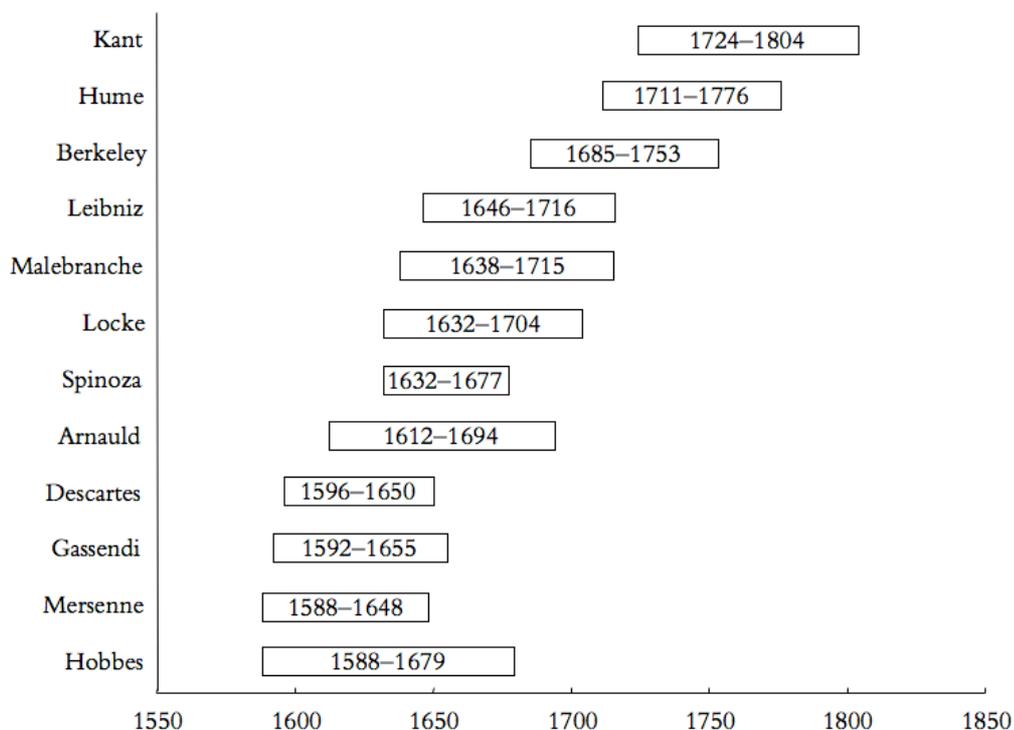


## Biographical Overview



- 1596 Descartes (RD) born in La Haye (near Tours) on 31 March
- 1606–16 visits Jesuit college in La Flèche (where Hume stayed 1734–7), studies law at Poitiers
- 1618 Thirty Years War begins, joins up on both sides successively
- 1620–9 travels around Europe, stays in Paris intermittently (meets Hobbes)
- 1629 moves to the Netherlands, where he stays for the next 20 years
- 1632 Spinoza (BS) born in Amsterdam on 24 November (Locke born 29 August)
- 1633 RD abandons *The World* on hearing of Galileo's condemnation and arrest: 'to live well you must live unseen' (Letter to Mersenne, April 1633)
- 1635 birth of Francine (who dies of a fever in 1640)
- 1637 anonymous publication of *Discourse on Method* with further three essays
- 1641 RD publishes the *Meditations* with objections and replies
- 1641–7 acrimonious debates with Dutch universities, charges of heresy and atheism (e.g., 200 page open *Letter to Voetius*, May 1643)
- 1643 RD begins correspondence with Princess Elizabeth of Bohemia
- 1644 RD publishes the *Principles of Philosophy*
- 1646 Leibniz (GWL) born in Leipzig on 1 July
- 1648 The Thirty Years War ends, *Conversation with Burman* (interview)
- 1649 RD goes to Stockholm, invited by Queen Christina; publishes *The Passions of the Soul*
- 1650 11 February, RD dies of pneumonia: 'I am not in my element here', 'during the winter men's thoughts are frozen like water' (Letter to Brégy, 15 January 1650)
- 1654 BS's father dies, takes over merchant business with his brother
- 1656 BS is issued a *cherem* (excommunication): 'monstrous deeds' and 'abominable heresies'

- 1659 BS studies Descartes at the University of Leiden, works on the *Treatise on the Emendation of the Intellect*, and the *Short Treatise Concerning God, Man, and His Well-Being*; lives in Rijnsburg
- 1661–7 GWL studies law and philosophy, receives a doctorate but declines a professorship
- 1663 Vatican puts Descartes' works on the *Index Librorum Prohibitorum* (where they remain until 1966); BS moves to The Hague, publishes *The Principles of Descartes' Philosophy*, a geometrical exposition of Cartesian philosophy, works as a lens-grinder
- 1665 BS interrupts work on the *Ethics* to write the *Tractatus Theologico-Politicus* (publ. anon. 1669), because he is constantly accused of atheism, and: 'The freedom to philosophize and to say what we think. This I want to vindicate completely, for here it is in every way suppressed by the excessive authority and egotism of preachers' (Letter to Oldenburg, 1665).
- 1668 GWL becomes legal advisor (public servant) to the Elector of Mainz
- 1671 the University of Paris bans teaching Cartesian philosophy
- 1672–6 GWL lives in Paris, where he meets Arnauld and Malebranche; corresponds with BS; travels to London, where he becomes fellow of the Royal Society; discovers the differential calculus (publ. 1684, subsequent charges of plagiarism)
- 1675 BS completes the *Ethics*, but decides not to publish it
- 1676 Leibniz visits Spinoza for a few days in November, on his way to Hanover to take up a post (librarian, historian) at the House of Brunswick (Duke of Hanover): 'I saw him many times and at great length. He has a strange metaphysics, full of paradoxes. [...] But I noticed that some purported demonstrations that he showed me are not exact. It is not as easy as one thinks to provide true demonstrations in metaphysics. Still, there are some, and some are very nice.' (Letter N. 158 to Gallois, Sept. 1677)
- 1677 BS dies of a respiratory illness on 21 February, the *Ethics* is published posthumously
- 1683–9 Locke lives in Holland
- 1686 GWL writes the *Discourse on Metaphysics*, first systematic presentation of his philosophy
- 1686–90 corresponds with Arnauld while traveling to Austria and Italy on Brunswick business
- 1695 publishes anonymously the *New System of the Nature of Substances and their Communication &c.* in the 'Journal des Savants' (27 June and 4 July), with ensuing clarifications and widespread correspondence
- 1698 publishes *On Nature Itself* in the journal 'Acta Eruditorum'
- 1700 elected as external member of the French Academy of Sciences; becomes first president of the Berlin Academy of Sciences
- 1703–5 writes *New Essays on Human Understanding*, but decides not to publish it when Locke dies (28 October 1704)
- 1710 publishes *Essays in Theodicy* (reconcile divine justice or goodness with presence of evil)
- 1714 writes *Principles of Nature and Grace* and the *Monadology*, both published posthumously (the latter in 1721, 'Acta Eruditorum'); the Duke of Hanover become King George I of England; begins correspondence with Clarke (follower of Newton)
- 1716 dies in Hanover on 14 November
- 1901– *Akademie Ausgabe* of Leibniz's collected works, 55 volumes to date

