Descartes

Brief Biography
- Life (1596-1650)
- Physiology, Mathematics, Analytic Geometry, optics, etc.
- “Father of Modern Philosophy”: Cogito ergo sum
- Major Works: World (~1633*), Discourse on Method (1657), Meditations (1641), Principles of Philosophy (1644)

Project and Influence
- Complete, systematic knowledge of the world – single method
- Applies to all bodies of knowledge
- Descartes + Newton = Enlightenment

Method and Knowledge
- Geometric model of knowledge – Tree example (p. 95)
- Four Rules: Discourse on Method (1637) (p. 93)
  - Accept nothing as true which is not clearly recognized as true
  - Divide problems into parts and their order
  - Methodically construct knowledge (geometry)
  - Be systematic/complete/comprehensive
- Principles of Philosophy (1644) – recall Tree metaphor
  - Part 1: Principles of Knowledge (Metaphysics)
  - Part 2: Principles of Material Things
  - Part 3: heavens
  - Part 4: light, heat, etc.

Mechanical Philosophy
- No teleology – laws or mechanism describing motion
  - 1st Law: conservation of motion
  - 2nd Law: linear motion only
  - 3rd Law: inertia
- Corpuscularism (atomism) – matter in motion, nothing but...
- Mind + Body Dualism: thought vs extension

Last Thoughts
- Extremely influential project – Mechanical Philosophy
- Rationalism vs. Empiricism: compare with Bacon, later Locke and Hume
- Mind + Body?