Philosophy 150.205

History of Modern Philosophy

Spring 2017

**First Paper**

The conclusion of Descartes's *Second Meditation* is that there is nothing easier for him to know (or understand) than his own mind. Explain in your own words (1) precisely what Descartes means by this claim, (2) how he reaches it, and (3) its importance in the overall project of the Meditations.

Clearly, Descartes expects his readers to find his view implausible. Why is this, and how does he try to convince us that his view is nevertheless true? (In answering these questions, be sure to pay some attention to the example of the piece of wax, discussed at the end of the *Second Meditation*.)

The structure is built in.

At the beginning of the paper: a short summary of the 1st meditation

Cast in doubt

Demon -> One thing he cannot doubt

2nd -> nature of that

p47 con more easily and more evidently

1. existence of mind is secure

2. essential nature of mind: essence is thought(p44)

**how does he approach**

**1st find that he exists**

**2nd what is certain (using doubt again, deceived but has mind)**

**importance: paves the way of mind body in meditation 6(which is real distinction)**

**mental picturing: pure judgement is important for the rest of the meditation**

**2nd part:**

**we are more inclined to see obvious things**

**mind could not possibly be pictured (no extension)**

**wax: extension, even though we thought (46 2nd column), but true essence pertains**

**what mind does is get rid of senses, color**

**Aristotle is different**

**Length**: around 5 pages.

**Due**: electronic submission by 5pm, Wednesday February 29.

Put direct quotes

Quick read first and summarize

Get through

What he covers in the lecture