René Descartes

Philosophy 22N
Spring, 2009
G. J. Mattey
Vital Statistics

- Born 1596, La Haye, France
- Died 1650, Stockholm, Sweden
- Single
- One daughter, died at age six
- Primary education at La Flèche
Important Events

• 1606. Enters La Flèche
• 1616. Obtains degree in civil and canon law from the University of Poitiers
• 1618. Joins army of Prince Maurice in the Netherlands. Meets Isaac Beeckman
• 1619. Begins mathematical studies. Joins army of Maximilian of Bavaria
• 1620. Begins work on *Rules for the Direction of the Mind*, then abandons it
Important Events (cont.)

- 1628. Resumes work on *Rules*, only to abandon it for good
- 1630. Moves to the Netherlands. Completes draft of *Optics* and *Meteorology*
- 1633. Writes *The World* but does not publish it upon hearing of Galileo's censure and house-imprisonment
Important Events (cont.)

• 1637. Publishes *Optics* and *Meteorology*, along with *Geometry* and *Discourse on Method*

• 1641. Publishes *Meditations on First Philosophy*

• 1644. Publishes *Principles of Philosophy*. Begins correspondence with Princess Elizabeth of Bohemia

• 1647. Approves French translations of *Meditations* and *Principles*
Important Events (cont.)

- 1648. Publicly attacks his former disciple Regius. Interviewed by Dutch student Frans Burman
- 1649. Moves to Sweden as tutor of Queen Christina
- 1650. Publishes *Passions of the Soul*. Dies of pneumonia