Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz

Philosophy 22N
Spring, 2006
G. J. Mattey
Vital Statistics

- Born, 1646, Leipzig
- Died, 1716, Hanover
- Single
- Served at the court of the Brunswick family in Hanover
- Travelled extensively through Europe
Important Events

• 1661, entered University of Leipzig as a pre-law student
• 1663, earned bachelor’s degree at Leipzig
• 1666
  - Earned doctor of law degree from University of Altdorf
  - Declined offer of professorship
  - Joined the court of the elector of Mainz
• 1672, sent to Paris on a diplomatic mission
Important Events (cont.)

- 1673
  - Visited London on court business
  - Made a member of the Royal Society
  - Transferred to service of Duke of Brunswick
- 1675, met with Spinoza
- 1676, settled in Hanover
- 1679, assigned to write family history of the house of Hanover
- 1685-6, correspondence with Arnauld
Important Events (cont.)

- 1687-90, travelled extensively in Germany and Italy seeking materials for the history
- 1690, became librarian of the ducal library at Wolfenbüttel
- 1695, published *A New System of Nature*
- 1700, founded the Prussian Academy of Sciences, of which he was elected president
- 1705, controversy with Newton’s followers over precedence of invention of the calculus
Important Events (cont.)

• 1704, wrote *New Essays Concerning Human Understanding*, published in 1765
• 1710, published *Theodicy*
• 1712-14, visited Vienna, where he was awarded high honors
• 1714, not invited to England when his patron became King George I
• 1715-16, correspondence with Samuel Clarke
Important Events (cont.)

• 1717, died due to complications of open sores on his legs and kidney stones