



COLLOQUIUM SERIES

## **“Descartes and Berkeley on sensations and knowledge”**

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Early modern philosophers sometimes maintained that sensations do not admit of a distinction between an act and an object of perception: that sensations are merely modifications of minds. If this is right, then there is a question about what role sensations can play in knowledge acquisition. After all, if sensations are (subjective) states of mind, then it is hard to see how they could form the basis for (objective) knowledge. In this paper, I suggest that this poses a particular problem for Berkeley, who arguably holds both that sensible quality ideas are all sensations, and also that we have intuitive and demonstrative knowledge of the existence and properties of physical objects by means of such ideas. I suggest that a careful consideration of both Descartes and Berkeley's views on sensations, placed alongside an examination of Berkeley's analysis of the metaphysics of physical objects, will help to resolve this presumed tension.

**Friday, March 6<sup>th</sup>, 2015**

**Room: 3228 River Building**

**Time: 3:00 pm**

***All are welcome!***