Cartesian Sound and Atomic Fury: On Matter and the Minimum

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Part of a larger project interrogating the category of ‘minimal being’ in early modern metaphysics and natural philosophy, this talk focuses on René Descartes’s strange category of the essentially insensible ‘not-nothing’, arguing that confrontations over the status of nothingness frame the fundamental distinction between Cartesianism and early modern materialisms (corpuscularism, neo-Epicureanism, etc.). In other words, this talk attempts to make the most potentially boring and frustrating bits of Descartes interesting again!

November 21st, 2019
4:30pm - 6:00pm
College Hall 207
Duquesne University