Our knowledge is made up of concepts. Here are some examples of some concepts:

CAT  SEVEN  BEAUTY  WAR  UNFAIR  TRIANGLE
FLUX  CAPACITOR  JEALOUSY  ATOM  JUMP  WINTER
BELGIUM  GOD  MONEY  SOLIDITY  HOUR  CAUSE  SUN

Where do we get our concepts? Do they come from inside or outside of us?

Some philosophers in the 17th and 18th centuries had some theories about this. And some disagreements. Here’s Rene Descartes responding politely to a critic:

I’m amazed at the line of argument by which you try to prove that all our ideas are caused from outside us, and that we don’t make any of them... Your remarks about the idea of truth are equally false. And the remarks with which you close the section are about things that I didn’t discuss at all, so in them you are simply beating the air.

Philosophers and works we will read:

- Rene Descartes, Meditations on First Philosophy
- Rene Descartes, Objections to the Meditations with Descartes’ Replies
  - Including objections from Thomas Hobbes and Pierre Gassendi
- John Locke, An Essay Concerning Human Understanding
- Gottfried Leibniz, New Essays on Human Understanding
- George Berkeley, Essay Towards a New Theory of Vision
- David Hume, Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding

All readings will be available free at perusall.com, where you will annotate and discuss them with your peers in the class. (You can also buy them in a coursepack if you wish.)

Assessment: Discussion of the readings with your peers 30%
            Multiple-choice quizzes on the readings 10%
            Portfolio of five short essays (500-1000 words) 60%