

PHILOSOPHY 681/ Spring 2008
Philosophical Figures: Hume
Prof. Ted Kinnaman

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Office hours: Mon., 3:15 - 4:15

Tues., 3:00 - 4:00

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COURSE DESCRIPTION: In this course we will study David Hume's masterwork *A Treatise of Human Nature*. Here Hume attempts to construct a "system" of philosophical thought, meaning a coherent and unified account of the major issues in philosophy. Examination of the *Treatise*, then, lets us look at a wide variety of philosophical topics from a single standpoint, and in connection to one another. In reading Book I of the *Treatise*, we will consider the Hume's views about causation, knowledge, and the existence of the external world, as well as his overall conception of philosophy. In reading Book II, we will discuss his moral psychology, its connections to the philosophy of the emotions, his compatibilism and the debate about free will, and the account of moral responsibility. Finally, Book III will bring us to his account of moral judgment, and his famous claim that "reason is... the slave of the passions."

COURSE GOALS: Our goals in this course are to understand Hume's system, and its place in the history of philosophy in his time and since. We will aim at an evaluation of his philosophy in light of contemporary writings on issues of central concern to Hume.

GRADING: There will be several short essay assignments, given out each week in the class meeting, due in the meeting the following week. You are required to write five of these essay, which together will account for 50% of your grade for the semester. The other 50% will be determined by your research paper.

REQUIRED BOOK: Hume, *A Treatise of Human Nature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977), ed. by Selby-Bigge.

RECOMMENDED BOOK: Baier, Annette, *A Progress of Sentiments* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1991)

Week One (Mon., 1/28): Introduction to Hume's *Treatise*. Reading: *Treatise*, Introduction and Book I, Part I (pp. xii - 25).

Week Two (Mon., 2/4): The "Theory of Ideas" Reading: Reid, Stroud, Fodor.

Week Three (Mon., 2/11): Empiricism. Reading: Sellars, "Empiricism and the Philosophy of Mind"; Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, "On the Principles of a Transcendental Deduction in General.

Week Four (Mon., 2/18): Knowledge and causation (I). Reading: I.III (pp. 69 - 179).

Week Five (Mon., 2/25): Knowledge and causation (II). Reading: Strawson (pp. 7 - 31 and 145 - 73).

Week Six (Mon., 3/3): Knowledge and causation (III). Reading: Baier, "Necessity, Nature, Norms."

[March 9 - 16: Spring Break]

Week Seven (Mon., 3/17): External bodies. Reading: I.IV.II (pp. 187 - 218).

Week Eight (Mon., 3/24): The mind. Reading: I.IV.V-VI (pp. 253 - 63) and Appendix (pp. 633 - 6)

Week Nine (Mon., 3/31): Passions. Reading: II.I.I-VI (pp. 275 - 94); II.II.I-III (pp. 329 - 51); Davidson, "Hume's Theory of Pride."

Week Ten (Mon., 4/7): Character and moral assessment. Reading: II.III.I-II (pp. 399 - 418); Baier, "The Direction of our Conduct."

Week Eleven (Mon., 4/14): Reason as "slave of the passions." Reading: II.III.III (pp. 413 - 8); III.I.I (pp. 455 - 70). **[Rough draft of research paper due]**

Week Twelve (Mon., 4/21): Moral objectivity. Reading: III.III (pp. 574 - 622); Korsgaard, "The General Point of View"; Bricke, "Moral Sentiments."

Week Thirteen (Mon., 4/28): Moral motivation. Reading: Darwall, Korsgaard.

Week Fourteen (Mon., 5/5): An innate morality? Reading: Hauser, Mikhail, Saint-Exupery.

Your research paper is due in my mailbox by 2:00 on Monday, May 12.

A NOTE ON ACADEMIC INTEGRITY: The lack of academic integrity is what is commonly referred to as 'cheating'. I take cheating to consist in presenting work as your own which was actually written by someone else whether another student or a professional philosopher. A general rule of thumb is, if you say something in a paper that you would not have said if you had not read Smith, even if you do not quote Smith word for word, then you need to footnote Smith. Anyone who cites or otherwise refers to the work of someone else *without acknowledging this fact in a footnote* will be referred to the Honor Committee.