

PHILOSOPHY 682: Philosophical Figures: Hume's *Treatise of Human Nature*

Prof. Ted Kinnaman

Fall 2015

Office: Robinson B465A

Office hours: Mon. 3:15 – 4:15

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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 and 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.

GRADES:

1. 50% of your grade for the course will be determined by a research paper, approx. 15 - 20 pp. This should be on a topic of your choosing relating to the interpretation or evaluation of the *Treatise of Human Nature*. Your topic needs to be approved by me. A rough draft of the paper is due in class on Monday, Nov. 30.
2. 25%: Paper on Book One, Part III. The specific assignment for this paper will be distributed in class. Your paper will be 6 - 8 pp. and there will be a component of in-class discussion, to be laid out in more detail later.
3. 25%: three short (2-3 pp.) papers on the week's reading. The topic for each paper will be posted on Blackboard a week before the class meets.

REQUIRED BOOK: Hume, *A Treatise of Human Nature* (Oxford University Press, 1978). It is recommended, but not required, that you purchase Annette Baier's *A Progress of Sentiments* (Harvard University Press, 1991). Additional readings will be placed on electronic reserve on Blackboard.

READING SCHEDULE:

Aug. 31: Introduction to course; Hume's system. Reading: Introduction (pp. xiii - xix); Book I, Part 1 (pp. 1 - 25).

Sept. 7: NO CLASS [LABOR DAY]

Sept. 14: The “Theory of Ideas”; Reading: Reid, “Reflections on the Common Theory of Ideas”; Stroud, “The Theory of Ideas”; Fodor, “Impressions” and “Simple Concepts.”

Sept. 21: NO CLASS

Sept. 28: Knowledge and causation (I). Reading: I.III (pp. 69 - 179).

Oct. 5: Knowledge and causation (II). Reading: Strawson (pp. 7 - 31 and 145 - 73).

Oct. 13 [note that this is Tuesday, not Monday]: Knowledge and causation (III). Reading: Baier, “Necessity, Nature, Norms.”

Oct. 19: External bodies. Reading: I.IV.II (pp. 187 - 218). **PAPER ON BOOK ONE, PART III DUE**

Oct. 26: The mind. I.IV.V-VI (pp. 235 - 63) and Appendix (pp. 633 - 6); Rorty, “Pride Produces the Idea of Self.”

Nov. 2: Passions. Reading: II.I.I-VI (pp. 275 - 94); II.II.I-III (pp. 329 - 51); Davidson, “Hume’s Theory of Pride.” **[By this point you ought to have met with me regarding your research paper.]**

Nov. 9: Character and moral assessment. Reading: II.III.I-II (pp. 399 - 418); Baier, “The Direction of our Conduct.”

Nov. 16: Reason as “slave of the passions.” Reading: II.III.III (pp. 413 - 8); Nagel, *The Possibility of Altruism* [excerpts]; Smith, “The Humean Theory of Motivation.”

Nov. 23: The naturalistic fallacy. Reading: III.I.I (pp. 455 - 70); MacIntyre, “Hume on ‘Is’ and ‘Ought’”; Nielsen, “On Deriving an Ought from an Is.”

Nov. 30: Moral objectivity. Reading: III.III (pp. 574 - 622); Korsgaard, “The General Point of View”; Bricke, “Moral Sentiments.” **[Draft of research paper due]**

Dec. 7: Justice. Reading: III.II.I-II (pp. 477 – 501); Darwall, “Hume: Norms and the Obligation to be Just.”

The final version of your RESEARCH PAPER is due in my mailbox in the Department of Philosophy, Robinson B465, on Monday, Dec. 14, at 4:00 p.m.

LATE SUBMISSIONS: I am usually generous about accepting assignments a bit after the due date *if* the student has cleared this with me before hand. If however you hand in an assignment late without talking to me first, you should count on being penalized in some way. If the paper is only slightly late, I may mark it down a grade; if it is very late, I will not accept it at all.

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.