

PHL 445: THE PHILOSOPHY OF DAVID HUME
WINTER QUARTER 2012
PEG BIRMINGHAM

Office hours: Mondays 5:00-6:00 and by appointment

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“I honestly confess that my recollection of David Hume’s teaching was the very thing which many years ago interrupted my dogmatic slumber, and gave my investigations in the field of speculative philosophy a quite new direction.”—Immanuel Kant, *Prolegomena to Any Future Metaphysics* (1783)

COURSE OBJECTIVES: This course will devote itself to a careful examination of Hume’s *Treatise of Human Nature: Being an Attempt to Introduce the Experimental Method of Reasoning into Moral Subjects*. In our effort to understand the *Treatise*, we will also examine parts of *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding* as well as some of his essays. In addition, we will read closely Deleuze’s 1953 seminal essay on Hume. To my mind, Deleuze gives us one of the best readings of Hume to date, a reading that emphasizes not simply Hume’s rational skepticism, but at the same time, Hume’s “positive thinking” of the moral, political, and historical subject. His account of how the mind becomes a subject illuminates not only Hume’s thought, but also illuminates the roots of Deleuze’s thought. This last can be viewed as a secondary, albeit extremely important, objective of the course.

REQUIRED TEXTS:

Hume, *Treatise of Human Nature*

Hume, *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding*

Hume, *Essays: Moral, Political and Literary*

Deleuze: *Empiricism and Subjectivity: An Essay on Hume’s Theory of Human Nature*

REQUIREMENTS:

Each student will be responsible for a protocol to be read at the beginning of each class meeting. The protocol should summarize and make sense of the previous class discussion as well as raise one or two critical questions or objections for the class as we go forward in our reading. The protocol should be between 2-3 typed single-spaced pages; it **may not** exceed 3 pages. Students are responsible for making copies of the protocol prior to the class meeting.

A final exam is also required. The final exam will be open book and open note. I will hand out a week in advance a “preparatory question” that should help you study for the final exam. A student may instead opt to write a final paper, 10 pages typed double-space. The paper will be due at the beginning of the final exam. No incompletes will be given. In other words, if a student has opted to write a final paper and the paper is not finished at time of final exam, he or she must sit for the exam.

OUTLINE OF COURSE

January 5

Hume, *Treatise*: Introduction, Book One, Part 1

Hume, *Enquiry*, Section 1

January 12

Hume, *Treatise*, Book One, Parts 1 and 2

Hume, *Enquiry*, Sections II-III

Deleuze, *Empiricism and Subjectivity*, Chapter One

January 19

Hume, *Treatise*, Book One, Parts 3-4

Hume, *Enquiry*, Sections IV-VIII

Deleuze, *Empiricism and Subjectivity*, Chapters Four and Five

January 26—continuation of readings for January 19

Hume, *Treatise*, Book One, Parts 3-4

Hume, *Enquiry*, Sections IX-XII

Deleuze, *Empiricism and Subjectivity*, Chapters Four and Five

February 2

Hume, *Treatise*, Book Two, Part One

Hume, *Essays*, “On the Delicacy of Taste and the Passions”

Deleuze, *Empiricism and Subjectivity*, Chapter Two

February 9

Hume, *Treatise*, Book Two, Part 2

Hume, *Enquiry*, Section VIII

Deleuze, *Empiricism and Subjectivity*, Chapter Two

February 16

Hume, *Treatise*, Book Two, Part 3

February 23

Hume, *Treatise*, Book Three, Part 1

Hume, *Essays*, “On the First Principles of Government”, “Of the Origin of Government”

Deleuze, *Empiricism and Subjectivity*, Chapter Three

March 1

Hume, *Treatise*, Book Three, Part 2

Deleuze, *Empiricism and Subjectivity*, Chapter Four

March 8

Hume, *Treatise*, Book Three, Part 3

Deleuze, *Empiricism and Subjectivity*, Conclusion

