

SEMINAR FOR MAJORS: THE CONTENTS OF PERCEPTION

SPRING 2013

TIME AND LOCATION: TR 3:25-4:40 pm, Meliora Hall 219

INSTRUCTOR: Alison Peterman
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OFFICE HOURS: TR 11:00-12:00, Lattimore 521

COURSE DESCRIPTION AND GOALS

In this seminar, we will discuss the nature of perception and its contents, focusing on visual perception. Our approach will stress the continuity and development of this philosophical theme across historical periods and philosophical traditions.

POLICIES

Please let me know right away if you need special accommodations because of a documented condition that interferes with your learning.

Please review the class schedule sometime in the next week and let me know if there are any issues.

Please turn off your cell phones and laptops when you arrive; if you are texting I will ask you to leave.

Student success at the University of Rochester includes more than just academic performance. Please feel comfortable speaking with me about challenges you are experiencing within and outside of the classroom so that I may submit a CARE report on your behalf. A CARE report is submitted when the level of concern for a student necessitates inclusive, multi-layered support from the campus community. The CARE network administrator shares information only with staff who need to know it in order to help you.

ACADEMIC HONESTY

Students and faculty at the University must agree to adhere to high standards of academic honesty in all of the work that we do. As freshmen, students read and sign an academic honesty policy statement to indicate that they understand the general principles upon which our work is based. The College Board on Academic Honesty website gives further information on our policies and procedures: www.rochester.edu/college/honesty.

ASSESSMENT

RESPONSE PAPERS (40%):

There will be five two-page response papers assigned over the course of the semester. Each will be worth 10% of your grade. You must hand in all five, but I will drop the one with the lowest grade.

PRESENTATION AND PARTICIPATION (20%):

Each student will be responsible for co-leading one meeting's discussion with me. We will schedule the presentations during our second meeting. Attending class regularly, asking questions, and contributing to class discussion will also contribute to this part of your grade.

FINAL PAPER (40%):

A ten-page final paper will be worth 40% of your grade. You'll be required to submit a draft by the deadline indicated on the syllabus.

COURSE SCHEDULE

The readings listed for each day are to be read *before* the lecture on that day.

Week 1

January 17: Introduction

Week 2

January 22

* Aristotle:

- *De Anima* Book 2, Part 5-7, Part 11-12 and Book 3, Part 1-2
- *De Sensu* Section 2, Part 6-7

January 24

* Sorabji: "Intentionality and Physiological Processes: Aristotle's Theory of Sense-Perception"

Week 3

January 29

- * Descartes: selections
- Presentation

January 31

- * Descartes: selections

Week 4

February 5

- * Malebranche: *The Search After Truth*
 - Book One, Chapters Ten-Fourteen
 - Book Three, Part Two, Chapters One and Six

February 7

- * Arnauld: *On True and False Ideas* Chapters IV-XI
- * Response paper 1 due

Week 5

February 12

- * Locke: *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding* Book II, Chapters ii-xi (skim i if you can manage it) and Book IV, Chapter xi

February 14

- * Mackie: *Problems from Locke*, Chapter 1
- * Presentation

Week 6

February 19

- * Locke continued

February 21

- * Berkeley: *Three Dialogues*, Dialogue 1
- * Presentation

Week 7

February 26

- * Reid, selections
- * Response paper 2 due

February 28

- * Reid, selections
- * Presentation

Week 8

March 5

- * Leibniz, from *New Essays on Human Understanding*
- * Presentation

March 7

- * Brentano: *Psychology from an Empirical Standpoint*, Book Two, Chapter I (“The Distinction between Mental and Physical Phenomena”)

SPRING BREAK

Week 9

March 19

- * Husserl, selections
- * Presentation

March 22

- * Husserl, selections
- * Presentation

Week 10

March 26

- * Merleau-Ponty: “Sensation as a Unit of Experience”

March 28

- * Russell: *Problems of Philosophy*, Chapter 1
- * Response paper 3 due

Week 11

April 2

- * Anscombe: “The Intentionality of Sensation: A Grammatical Feature”
- * Response paper 4 due

April 4

- * Gibson: “A Theory of Direct Visual Perception”
- * Presentation

Week 12

April 9

- * Strawson: “Perception and its Objects”

- * Presentation

April 11

- * Snowdon: "Perception, Vision and Causation"
- * Presentation

Week 13

April 16

- * Tye: "The Adverbial Approach to Visual Experience"
- * Presentation
- * Final paper proposals due

April 18

- * Harman: "On the Intrinsic Quality of Experience"
- * Presentation

Week 14

April 23

- * Peacocke: "Sensation and the Content of Experience: A Distinction"
- * Presentation

April 25

- * Evans: "Molyneux's Question"
- * Presentation
- * Final paper draft due

Week 15

April 30

- * Chalmers: "The Representational Character of Experience"
- * Response paper 5 due

May 8: Final paper due