

PHL 267/467: BRITISH EMPIRICISM(S)

FALL 2015

TIME AND LOCATION: MW 4:50-6:05, Harkness Hall 210

INSTRUCTOR: Alison Peterman
CONTACT: alison.peterman@rochester.edu
OFFICE HOURS: Wednesdays 12:00-2:00, Lattimore 520

COURSE DESCRIPTION AND GOALS

This course is a survey of some 17th- and 18th-century British philosophers who are particularly concerned to articulate and examine, in their own special ways, the important role that sense experience plays in knowledge-formation and justification. We will emphasize Locke and Hume but read some Boyle, Berkeley, Gassendi and Reid for context, insight and flair. We will focus on the nature, veracity and justificatory role of sense-experience, cognitive architecture, and the relationship between metaphysics, mathematics and science.

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

READING SUMMARIES (14%):

There will be one 1-2 page reading summary/response due each week except the first; you may choose the reading for either Monday or Wednesday whenever we have readings assigned for both days. Each will be worth 1% of your grade. They must be handed in before the class during which we discuss the reading.

PRESENTATION (16%):

Each student will be responsible for co-leading one meeting's discussion with me, beginning with a 15-20 minute presentation by you. After our first meeting, please look at the syllabus and email me your first, second and third choices for days you would like to present.

MIDTERM PAPER (25%):

One 8-10 page midterm paper, responding to one of a list of topics suggested, will be due Friday, March 6.

FINAL PAPER (45%):

One final paper will be due Wednesday, May 6. The paper should be 10-12 pages for undergraduates and 20-25 pages for graduate students.

First and second drafts will be due April 20 and April 27. On April 20, you will exchange papers with a partner for peer-review; those comments are due April 22. You will submit a revised draft for my review on April 27 and you'll get it back on April 29 for a final revision.

PARTICIPATION (0ISH%):

Attending class regularly, asking questions, and contributing to class discussion is expected. There is no official percentage of your grade devoted to participation, however, exceptional participation or non-participation may raise or lower your grade by one-third of a letter grade as calculated at the end of the semester.

TEXTS

Readings for the first two classes (January 14 and 21) will be posted on Blackboard. We will use the Hackett edition of Locke's *Essay* (NB: this is heavily annotated, so it's especially

important that you use this edition of the *Essay*), ed. Kenneth Winkler and the Oxford Philosophical Texts edition of Hume's *Treatise*, ed. David Fate and Mary Norton. Berkeley's *Principles* and Reid's *Essays* can be found online.

COURSE SCHEDULE

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

Week 1: Introduction

January 14: Introduction, or: by way of contrast...

- * Descartes: Meditation 2; *Rules for the Direction of the Mind*, Rules 3 and 5

Week 2: Empiricism in natural philosophy

January 19: MLK Day - NO CLASS

January 21: Gassendi and Boyle

- * Gassendi: Fifth set of objections to the *Meditations*; selections (selections are on Blackboard; you do not need to read the replies that are there)
- * Boyle: "The Excellency and Grounds of the Corpuscular or Mechanical Philosophy"

Week 3: Locke

January 26: Against innate ideas

- * I.i, ii and iv

January 28: Ideas and their origin

- * II.i-vii

Week 4: Locke

February 2: Qualities

- * I.viii

February 4: Mental operations

- * II.ix-xii

Week 5: Locke

February 9: Power

- * II.xxi.1-5, II.xxii

February 11: Substance and substances

* II.xxiii-xxiv

Week 6: Locke

February 16: Cause and effect

* II.xxv-vi

February 18: Cause and effect

* II.xxv-xxvi

Week 7: Locke

February 23: Epistemology

* II.xxix-xxxiii

February 25: Epistemology

* IV.i-iii, IV.xi

Week 8: Berkeley

March 2: No independent existence of perceptible objects

* *The Principles of Human Knowledge* (PHK) Sections 1-24

March 4: Minds and ideas

* PHK 24-33, 88-91, 135-142, 145

March 6 (no class): Midterm paper due by email

SPRING BREAK

Week 9: Berkeley

March 16: Objections and replies

* PHK 34-66

March 18: Objections and replies

* PHK 66-81

Week 10: Hume

March 23: Ideas and their origin

* *Enquiry* (E) Sections 1-2

* Abstract to the *Treatise*

* *Treatise* (T) Book I, Part i, Chapters 1-3 (I.i.1-3)

March 25: Association of ideas

- * T I.i.4-7
- * E 3

Week 11: Hume

March 30: Knowledge and knowledge of causes

- * T I.iii.1-6
- * Suggested: E 4

April 1: Belief

- * T I.iii.7-10

Week 12: Hume

April 6: Probability and chance

- * T I.iii.11-13
- * E 6

April 8: The idea of necessary connection

- * T I.ii.14-16
- * Suggested: E 7

Week 13: Hume

April 13: Skepticism with regard to reason

- * T I.iv.1

April 15: Skepticism with regard to the senses

- * T I.iv.2
- * Georges Dicker's visit

Week 14: Reid

April 20: Groundwork to a critique

- * *Essays on the Intellectual Powers of Man* (EIP) Essay 1, Chapter 1 and Chapter 7

April 22: Critique of empiricist theories of perception

- * EIP Essay 2, Chapter 5, Chapters 9-12, Chapter 14
- * Peer reviews due

Essay 6, Chapter 3 and Essay 7

Week 15: Reid

April 27: Critique of skepticism about the senses and about cause and effect

- * EIP Essay 2, Chapter 20; *An Inquiry into the Human Mind* Chapter 6, Sections 20-24

April 29: Critique of empiricist account of judgment and reasoning

- * EIP Essay 6, Chapter 3 and Essay 7
- * Lewis Powell's visit

May 6: Final paper due