

# Hume's Theoretical Philosophy

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**Office Hours:** 10 am to noon, Thursdays, in Stuart 222, or by appointment on Zoom.

**Summary:** An investigation of David Hume's theoretical philosophy, with a focus on the first part of the *Treatise of Human Nature*.

**Texts:** The following two texts are required, all other readings will be made available on Canvas:

- *A Treatise of Human Nature*, ed. David Fate Norton and Mary J. Norton, Oxford. Preferred is the "Oxford Philosophical Classics" edition, but also good is the "The Clarendon Edition of the Works of David Hume, Volume 1" edition.
- *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding*, ed. Peter Millican, Oxford. Some of you may have the Hackett edition, ed. Eric Steinberg. You can use this, but you need to write in paragraph numbers for every section, since that's what we will refer to (e.g., E 4.23 is the final paragraph of *Enquiry* §4). Don't use the Beauchamp edition (Oxford), it's based on the first edition of the *Enquiry* for some bizarre reason.

**Term Paper:** Students enrolled in the class for credit will be required to complete a 15–20 page term paper, due Friday, December 9. All students taking the course for credit are **required** to meet with me to discuss their paper.

## Policy Statements:

1. **Plagiarism and Academic Integrity:** You must document all of your source material. If you take any text from somebody else, you must make it clear the text is being quoted and where the text comes from. You must also cite any sources from which you obtain numbers, ideas, or other material. If you have any questions about what does or does not constitute plagiarism, ask! Plagiarism is a serious offense and will be treated according to university policy. It is also your responsibility to make sure you have turned in a readable pdf for all paper assignments.
2. **Disabilities:** Any student with a documented disability needing academic adjustments or accommodations is requested to speak with me or email me by the end of the first week of class. I am also open to requests from

students without a documented disability according to the university's definition. All discussions will remain confidential.

3. Auditing: Auditing will be permitted in this class. However, it is my expectation that, with the exception of the term paper, auditors will be full participants in the class.

**Schedule, subject to change:**

1. September 27: The Theory of Ideas
  - John Locke, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, 2.1
  - *Treatise*, Advertisement, Introduction, 1.1
  - *Enquiry*, Advertisement, 1–3
  - Janet Broughton, “Impressions and Ideas”, *The Blackwell Guide to Hume's Treatise*, ed. Saul Traiger, (Malden, 2006), pp. 43–58.
  - Annette Baier, “Why Hume Asked Us Not to Read the *Treatise*”, *Death and Character: Further Reflections on Hume* (Harvard, 2008), pp. 257–264.
2. October 4: Difficult Ideas
  - *Treatise*, 1.2
  - Donald L.M. Baxter, “Hume's Theory of Space and Time in Its Skeptical Context”, *The Cambridge Companion to Hume*, 2nd edn., ed. David Fate Norton and Jacqueline Taylor (Cambridge, 2009), pp. 105–46.
  - Jonathan Cottrell, “Unperceived Existence and Hume's Theory of Ideas”, *Oxford Studies in Early Modern Philosophy*, 9 (2019), pp. 167–213.
3. October 11: Causation, Part 1
  - *Treatise*, 1.3
  - Don Garrett, *Cognition and Commitment in Hume's Philosophy*, (Oxford, 1997), Chapters 4 & 5.
4. October 18: Causation, Part 2
  - *Enquiry*, 4–7
  - Kenneth Winkler, “Causal Realism and Hume's Revisions of the *Enquiry* (unpublished).
  - G.E.M. Anscombe, ““Whatever has a Beginning of Existence must have a Cause”: Hume's Argument Exposed”, *Analysis*, 34 (1974), pp. 145–151.
  - G.E.M. Anscombe, “Times, Beginnings and Causes”, *Proceedings of the British Academy* (1975), pp. 253–275.
5. October 25: Liberty and Necessity
  - *Enquiry*, 8
  - *Treatise*, 2.1.1
  - *Treatise*, 2.3.1–3
  - Paul Russell, ““Hume's Lengthy Digression”: Free Will in the *Treatise*”, *The Cambridge Companion to Hume's Treatise*, ed. Donald Ainslie and Annemarie Butler (Cambridge, 2014), pp. 230–251.
  - Helen Beebe and Alfred Mele, “Humean Compatibilism”, *Mind*,

- 111.442 (2002), pp. 201–223.
6. November 1: The External World
    - *Treatise*, 1.4.2–4
    - *Enquiry*, 12, Part 1
    - Annemarie Butler, “Natural Instinct, Perceptual Relativity, and Belief in the External World in Hume’s *Enquiry*”, *Hume Studies*, 34.1 (2008), pp. 115–158.
    - Tim Black, “The Distinction Between Coherence and Constancy in Hume’s *Treatise* I.IV.2”, *British Journal for the History of Philosophy*, 15.1 (2007), pp. 1–25.
  7. November 8: The Internal World
    - *Treatise* 1.4.5–6
    - *Treatise*, Appendix
    - *Enquiry*, 9
    - “Of the Immortality of the Soul”, from Hume’s Essays
    - Jane L. McIntyre, “Hume and the Problem of Personal Identity”, *The Cambridge Companion to Hume*, 2nd edn., ed. David Fate Norton and Jacqueline Taylor (Cambridge, 2009), pp. 177–208.
    - Alison Gopnik, “Could David Hume Have Known About Buddhism?”, *Hume Studies*, 35 (2009), pp. 5–28.
  8. November 15: Miracles & God
    - *Enquiry*, 10–11
    - *Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion*, excerpts
    - Don Garrett, *Cognition and Commitment in Hume’s Philosophy*, (Oxford, 1997), Chapter 7.
  9. November 29: Skepticism
    - *Treatise*, 1.4.1
    - *Treatise*, 1.4.7
    - *Enquiry*, 12
    - “Abstract of *A Treatise of Human Nature*”
    - “My Own Life”
    - “The Sceptic”, from Hume’s Essays
    - Janet Broughton, “Hume’s Naturalism and His Skepticism”, *A Companion to Hume*, ed. Elizabeth S. Radcliffe (Malden, 2008), pp. 425–440.