

PHILOSOPHY 308 (A01): THE EMPIRICISTS [12529]
FALL 2018

Class times

Monday & Thursday, 1:00-2:20pm, CLE (Clearihue) A203

Professor

Patrick Rysiew

Office Hours: Thursday 11:30-12:20, Friday 1:00-2:20, or by appointment, Clearihue B321

E-mail: rysiew@uvic.ca

Phone: 721-7520 (my office), 721-7512 (Philosophy Dept.)

Texts:

There are three required texts for the course. These are available from the University Bookstore, and copies of have been placed on Library reserve.

L: John Locke, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, edited by Peter Nidditch. Oxford, 1979. ISBN: 9780198245957
<https://global.oup.com/academic/product/an-essay-concerning-human-understanding-9780198245957?q=9780198245957&lang=en&cc=ca>

B: *Principles of Human Knowledge & Three Dialogues*, edited by Howard Robinson. Oxford, 2009. ISBN: 9780199555178
<http://www.oupcanada.com/catalog/9780199555178.html>

H: David Hume, *Treatise of Human Nature*. Oxford Philosophical Texts. Edited by D.F. Norton and M.J. Norton. Oxford, 2000. ISBN: 9780198751724
<http://www.oupcanada.com/catalog/9780198751724.html>

NOTE: Many different editions of each of these texts have appeared. However, it is strongly recommended that students use the editions listed here; these are the editions that I will be referring to and citing in class.

Course Description:

This course is a survey of the major writings of John Locke, George Berkeley, and David Hume, focusing on their metaphysical and epistemological views -- that is, their views about the nature of the world, and about our knowledge of it. The 17th and 18th centuries witnessed great advances in the sciences -- Newton, probably the greatest scientist of the age, and among the greatest of all time, lived from 1642-1727; and the new science had an enormous influence on philosophers. Most centrally, this took the form of a renewed emphasis on the role of experience in shaping the mind and providing the basis of all of our knowledge. This emphasis is very strong in Locke, Berkeley, and Hume: together, they are often referred to as 'the British Empiricists'. Each can be seen as attempting, through the use of careful attention to experience, to help us better understand the mind, the world, and the relation(s) between the two. Here, we will consider the results of their studies, examining what they had to say about such topics as abstract and innate ideas, the nature of substance, how (if at all) we can know that material things

exist, and what makes a person the same person over time.

Expectations

Students are expected to come to class having read the assigned readings, and prepared to talk and ask questions about the material. Students who miss a class are responsible for any material covered therein, as well as for finding out what announcements, if any, were made.

Three quick tips for doing well in the course

1. *Come to class.* When you must miss a class, let the instructor know ahead of time if you can; afterwards, talk to a classmate about what happened and try to get their lecture notes; visit the instructor in office hours.
2. *Do the readings ahead of time, and read 'actively'* – pay attention to what you're reading, ask yourself what point(s) the author(s) is trying to make, why this matters, what questions you'd like to ask the author, and so on.
3. If you're having difficulty with any of the course material (readings or lecture content), speak to the instructor – *take advantage of scheduled office hours.*

Evaluation

Students' grades will be based on:

- Two take-home exams on the readings and lecture materials, calling for short essay-style responses, worth 30% each. The take-home exams will be discussed more in class when the first topics are distributed.
- A number of short in-class quizzes (T/F, multiple-choice, fill-in-the-blank, short answer, etc.), based on the readings and lecture materials. Together, the quizzes will be worth 10% of the course grade. Note that the quizzes will *not*, as a rule, be announced ahead of time.
- A final exam, worth 30% of the course grade. The final exam will be cumulative. It will be a combination of questions like those on the quizzes, short answer questions, and a choice of longer essay-style questions.

Contributions to class discussions may be taken into account in borderline cases – i.e., where a student's final grade is right on the dividing line between grades. Beyond the student's having adequately addressed the topic question(s) on which he/she writes, evaluation of students' written work will be based on: evidence of comprehension of the materials and issues addressed; evidence of original and critical thought with regard to that material; the extent to which the student stakes out a position and provides good reasons and arguments for it; the extent to which the student communicates his/her ideas clearly (using complete and grammatical sentences, correct terms, a clear structure, and so on). For the papers, *the use of outside materials (i.e., any readings not assigned for the course) is prohibited.* All materials used in the papers must be properly cited in the standard way.

Without exception, late assignments unaccompanied by a documented medical excuse will be penalized at the rate of 5% per day or portion thereof, starting as soon as the due date and time have passed. Should such a medical emergency arise, let the instructor – ahead of time, if possible. An unexcused absence without a documented medical excuse on the day of a quiz will result in a score of zero.

The standard University grading scheme will be used. Here is an excerpt from it (the full version is here: <https://web.uvic.ca/calendar2018-05/undergrad/info/regulations/grading.html>):

Passing Grades	Grade Point Value	Percentage	Description
A+	9	90 – 100	An A+, A, or A- is earned by work which is technically superior, shows mastery of the subject matter, and in the case of an A+ offers original insight and/or goes beyond course expectations. Normally achieved by a minority of students.
A	8	85 – 89	
A-	7	80 – 84	
B+	6	77 – 79	A B+, B, or B- is earned by work that indicates a good comprehension of the course material, a good command of the skills needed to work with the course material, and the student's full engagement with the course requirements and activities. A B+ represents a more complex understanding and/or application of the course material. Normally achieved by the largest number of students.
B	5	73 – 76	
B-	4	70 – 72	
C+	3	65 – 69	A C+ or C is earned by work that indicates an adequate comprehension of the course material and the skills needed to work with the course material and that indicates the student has met the basic requirements for completing assigned work and/or participating in class activities.
C	2	60 – 64	
D	1	50 – 59	A D is earned by work that indicates minimal command of the course materials and/or minimal participation in class activities that is worthy of course credit toward the degree.

Plagiarism and other forms of cheating will not be tolerated. It is each student's responsibility to know the University's regulations in this regard. The Policy on Academic Integrity is published in the University Calendar.¹ Other resources concerning cheating and plagiarism include the Libraries' plagiarism guide,² and the Learning and Teaching Centre's information for students.³

Schedule of Topics and Readings

Note that what follows is subject to revision, at the instructor's discretion. Any changes to the schedule will be announced in class. (If a student misses a class, he/she is responsible for finding out whether any such announcements were made, as well for other class content.)

Readings for a given subject/week are listed in the order in which you should read them.

Week 1 (Sept. 6): Introduction to the course and to the subject

Week 2 (Sept. 10, 13): Locke's aim, and his critique of innate ideas

¹ <https://web.uvic.ca/calendar2018-05/undergrad/info/regulations/academic-integrity.html>.

² <https://www.uvic.ca/library/research/citation/plagiarism/index.php>.

³ <https://www.uvic.ca/learningandteaching/students/resources/expectations/index.php>.

Readings: *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding* (1690), Epistle to the Reader; Book I, Chapters I, II, and IV (= L, pp. 6-14, 43-65, 84-103)

Week 3 (Sept. 17, 20): on the mind, ideas, primary and secondary qualities, space and time

Readings: *Essay*, Book II, Chapters I-VIII, XII-XIV, XXXIII (= L, pp. 104-143, 163-196, 394-401)

Week 4 (Sept. 23, 27): on power, freedom, substance and substances, personal identity

Readings: *Essay* Book II, Chapters XXI §§1-50, XXIII, XXVII (= L, pp. 233-266, 295-317, 328-348)

**topics for first take-home distributed Thursday Sept. 27th*

Week 5 (Oct. 1, 4): on language, abstraction, knowledge and related notions

Readings: *Essay* Book II, Chapter XI §§8-11; Book III, Chapters I-III; Book IV, Chapters I-V, IX-XI, XIV-XV, XVII (= L, pp. 158-160, 402-420, 618-639, 652-657) [optional: Book IV, Chapter XVII (= L, pp. 668-688)]

Week 6 (~~Oct. 8, 11~~) [no class Oct. 8th – Thanksgiving]: Berkeley, some main claims and arguments

Readings: *Principles of Human Knowledge* (1710), Preface, Introduction, and Principles: Part I §§1-24 (= B, pp. 6-34)

**first take-home due at the start of class, Thursday Oct. 11th*

Week 7 (Oct. 15, 18): against ‘materialism’

Readings: *Three Dialogues Between Hylas and Philonous* (1713), Preface and First Dialogue (= B, pp. 101-147)

Week 8 (Oct. 22, 25): articulation and defense of immaterialism

Readings: *Three Dialogues*, Second and Third Dialogues (= B, pp. 148-208)

**topics for second take-home distributed Thursday Oct. 25th*

Week 9 (Oct. 29, Nov. 1): Hume, some starting points

Readings: *A Treatise of Human Nature* (1739-40), Introduction, Book 1 Part 1, Part 2 §§ 1-2 (= H, pp. 1-27)

Week 10 (Nov. 5, 8): on external existence, knowledge, cause and effect, belief, etc.

Readings: Book 1, Part 2 § 6, Part 3 §§ 1-10 (= H, pp. 48-85)

** second take-home due at the start of class, Thursday Nov. 8th*

Week 11 (~~Nov. 12, 15~~) [no classes, Nov. 12-14, Reading Break]: probability, and more on causality

Readings: Book 1, Part 3 §§ 11-15 (= H, pp. 86-118)

Week 12 (Nov. 19, 22): Scepticism, and Hume’s ‘scepticism’ concerning the senses and reason

Readings: Book 1, Part 3 § 16, Part 4 §§ 1-4 (= H, pp. 118-152)

Week 13 (Nov. 26, 29): Hume, on the soul, personal identity, liberty and necessity; conclusion

Readings: Book 1, Part 4 §§ 5-7, Book 2, Part 3 §§ 1-2, Appendix (= pp. 152-178, 257-265, 396-401)

Week 14 (Dec. 3) [last day of classes = Dec. 5]: Final meeting - Review

***Final exam:** The Term 1 exam period runs December 8-22. The date, time and location of the final exam will be announced once that has been decided.

Some important administrative dates (<https://web.uvic.ca/calendar2018-05/general/dates.html>)

- Tues., Sept. 18: last day for 100% reduction of fees
- Fri., Sept. 21: last day to for adding first-term courses
- Tues., Oct. 9: last day for 50% reduction of tuition fees. 100% of tuition fees will be assessed for courses dropped after this date.
- Wed., Oct. 31: last day for withdrawing from second-term courses without penalty of failure