

PHH 5406: Modern Philosophy II – The Empiricists (v1.0)

Reason, Passion, and Politics in Hobbes, Locke, and Hume

Spring 2025 / Mondays 3–6pm / FLO 200

Instructor: Chuck Goldhaber

Contact: cgoldhaber@ufl.edu, (352) 392-2084

Office Hours: Wednesdays 1:00–3:00pm, or by appointment, in FLO 320.

Course Description

This seminar introduces students to the British Empiricist tradition through three key figures: Thomas Hobbes (1588–1679), John Locke (1632–1704), and David Hume (1711–1776). Our study will pay special attention to the distinctive way these empiricist philosophers seek clarity in their discussions and how this aim colors their accounts of our mental dynamics. We will then consider how each philosopher’s conceptions of reason and passion shape his views about the origin and character of political authority. Some further themes include the nature of association, primary and secondary qualities, skepticism, property, contracts, and the conditions for rebellion.

Course Goals

By the end of the term, you will be able to...

- read early modern English prose with an eye to its historical context.
- succinctly reconstruct and critically evaluate abstract philosophical argument.
- share, explain, and defend your ideas in group discussion.
- conduct the various stages of a research project in the history of philosophy.
- understand and articulate Hobbes, Locke, and Hume’s relevance to the historical development of theoretical and practical philosophy, and our contemporary context.

Course Requirements

% of course grade

- | | |
|---|---------|
| – Up to 70 pages per week of dense philosophical reading | |
| – Regular participation in class discussion | |
| – Three reading responses (450–600 words) | each 5% |
| – A paper proposal (500–750 words) with an annotated bibliography | 10% |
| – A medium length paper (2,500–3,000 words) | 20% |
| – 10-min presentation of this paper with 1-page handout + 15-min Q&A | 10% |
| – Revision of this paper (2,500–5,000 words) + synopsis (500–750-words) | 20% |
| – Take-home final exam (five short essays, each 300–900 words) | 25% |

Required Texts

- Thomas Hobbes. *Leviathan*. 1651/2020. Ed. David Johnston. Second Norton Critical Edition (Norton, ISBN: 9780393623710). [audio]
- John Locke. *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*. 1689/1996. Abridged by Kenneth Winkler (Hackett, ISBN: 9781603844550). [bad AI audio]
- John Locke. *Political Writings*. 1689/2003. (Hackett, ISBN: 9781603846868). [audio]
- David Hume. *A Treatise of Human Nature*. 1740/1978. Selby-Bigge Nidditch Edition (OUP, ISBN: 9780198245889). [audio]
- David Hume. *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding* and *An Enquiry Concerning the Principles of Morals*. 1748 & 1751/1975. Selby-Bigge Nidditch Edition (OUP, ISBN: 019824536X). [audio]
- All other required texts are available on Canvas.
- N.B.: All of Hume’s writings are available and searchable at <https://davidhume.org/>

Recommended Commentaries and Further Reading

- A.P. Martinich. *Hobbes*. 2005 (Routledge, ISBN: 0415283280).
- A.P. Martinich (ed.). *The Oxford Handbook of Hobbes*. 2016 (OUP, ISBN: 978-0199791941).
- Georges Dicker. *Locke on Knowledge and Reality: A Commentary on An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*. 2019 (OUP, ISBN: 0190662204).
- Matthew Stuart (ed.). *A Companion to Locke*. 2015 (Blackwell, ISBN: 9781405178150).
- Barry Stroud. *Hume*. 1981 (Routledge, ISBN: 0415036879).
- Don Garrett. *Cognition and Commitment in Hume’s Philosophy*. 1997 (OUP, ISBN: 9780195097214).

Readings

In the schedule below, readings are listed underneath the dates by which they must be read. All readings are dense and tough, especially given their early modern style. Make sure you budget enough time to read them carefully, and several times.

Always bring the week’s required reading to class. It is ideal to acquire the exact editions of the books listed above. Try searching by ISBN, if buying online. Reserve copies of each book should be available at the West Library circulation desk.

Some *optional* readings from the secondary literature appear on the reading schedule, a bit indented from the primary literature. All of these are available on Canvas or through the library (online or physical). You should aim to read at least one piece of secondary literature every week, but it’s up to you which one(s). Some knowledge of the secondary literature will be crucial for writing effective papers, and may aid in the class discussion.

Participation

It is expected that all students will contribute actively to class discussion. This can take the form of asking a question, answering a question, sharing what you find interesting or strange about a text or topic, responding to a classmate, or reading a passage out loud. Over time, you will need to put forward, explain, and defend your own viewpoints on philosophical issues and your own readings of course texts. Doing so is crucial for improving your philosophical reasoning skills, which are very closely related to conversational and debate skills. If you are feeling shy in class, come to office hours, and let's start talking there. Now is the time to confront any shyness and get comfortable taking part in the enjoyable, collaborative process of thinking together as a group.

Reading Responses

You will write three reading responses (450–600 words) over the term—one on each of the three figures we will be focusing on. They are due via email by 10am sharp on Mondays, and must concern material we have not yet discussed in class. You are welcome to submit these whenever in the term you like, as long as you submit one while we are discussing Hobbes, one while we are discussing Locke, and one while we are discussing Hume. *Absolutely no late reading responses will be accepted.*

Reading responses are completely open-ended and largely exploratory in nature. Write about whatever you find particularly interesting or strange or puzzling or outrageous or powerful about the readings. You are welcome to pose questions you would like to see addressed in class discussion. Accordingly, reading responses need not defend a thesis or reading. But they should critically engage with the primary texts in clear, well-written prose, integrating quotes and citations. They may also consider secondary literature.

Paper Proposal

The keystone project for this course is a medium-length paper suitable for presentation at academic philosophy conferences. No paper topics will be assigned, so it's up to you to come up with one. The only restriction is that the paper must focus on one (or more) figure(s) from the course. You should start thinking about what you would like to write immediately—as in *today*. If a topic late on the reading schedule interests you, you may wish to read ahead so as to get started writing about it early. I *very* strongly encourage you to discuss your ideas with me in office hours as early as possible. You are welcome to expand on ideas explored in your reading responses.

The first step in writing this paper is a proposal (500–750 words, due 4/2 by 9pm) with a bibliography (not included in word count). The proposal should accomplish three things. First, it should introduce the topic, figure(s), and primary text(s) you are going to discuss. This might involve a very brief discussion of the historical context and/or views or debates from the secondary literature on your topic. Second, the proposal should state your thesis and outline your intended argument. A thesis is your paper's

main point; it should be an interesting, unobvious, yet simple, defensible claim. It can be interpretive (a reading of your primary text) or philosophical (a claim about how things are). Your proposal should outline how you want to argue for your thesis.

Third, you should include a partial, annotated bibliography of the texts you will use to write your paper. This must include at least one primary source and at least *three* secondary sources. Each bibliography entry must be followed by 1–3 sentences about the content of the entry and/or how it is relevant to your topic or thesis. These bibliography entries can be drawn from the course materials and/or independent research. Reading bibliographies from the optional secondary literature selections on this syllabus can help you get your research going, as can [PhilPapers' 17th–18th century philosophy index](#). You should have at least skimmed all secondary sources which appear in your bibliography.

Medium Length Paper

Next, you will write a medium length paper (2,500–3,000 words, due by 9pm on 4/17). Word counts are for the body text (exclusive of notes and bibliography).

The rationale for the papers' length is that 3,000 words is a very common word count for 20-min presentations at major philosophy conferences, such as meetings of the American Philosophical Association (APA). 3,000-word papers are also useful jumping off points for journal article length papers (about 8,000 words). They require concision, forcing you to distill your thesis, argument, and contribution to the literature to their essentials. But the relatively short length also makes such papers more manageable to write in fairly short spans of time, helping you to get started on your original research.

Papers will be evaluated with regard to their accuracy, accessibility, clarity, concision, rigor, persuasiveness, and novelty. All technical terms must be explained in everyday language. Papers must use quotes and citations when presenting views or arguments from historical texts. Defend your thesis by replying to the strongest objections to it.

Additionally, papers must make a genuinely novel contribution to the current philosophical secondary literature on our focal figures. That means that you must be knowledgeable about some area within the secondary literature and display this knowledge in the paper. You may wish to frame your paper as making an intervention in an ongoing debate, though this is not strictly necessary. Discursive footnotes may also demonstrate this knowledge.

Paper Presentation

Paper presentations will take place during a writing workshop the last week of classes (4/21). All students will pre-read their peers' papers. In class, each student will give a 10-minute presentation of their paper, using a single-sided handout as a visual aid. This will be followed up by a 15-minute Q&A. Don't feel like you'll be defending your paper from dangerous assaults. Instead, you can view this as a chance for collaboration. Other people's curiosity and criticism can be a real boon for the writing process! Feel free to raise questions about your own work during the Q&A.

You will be assessed on the clarity and informativeness of your presentation and handout, as well as your contribution to your own and others' Q&As.

Paper Revision

After the presentations, you will have about two weeks to revise your paper (2,500–5,000 words, due 5/4 by 9pm) in response to feedback from the presentation Q&A and my comments on your medium-length draft. This should be accompanied by a synopsis (500–750 words) of the paper, which summarizes its central argument. Given that this assignment is due so close to the final grades submission deadline (5/7), *no late final papers will be accepted*.

Revising in response to comments is one of the hardest and most important parts of the writing process, and becoming accustomed to it is crucial for professionalizing and publishing. Revision should be taken seriously. Sometimes that will mean a complete overhaul of the paper. The final product will be assessed partially on its own merits and partially with regard to how effectively you have responded to and integrated feedback.

You need not expand the paper in length during the revising process. Often the best revisions bolster the argument and clarity without adding to the paper's bulk. But you may expand the paper, if you think doing so will improve it.

Note that the Locke and Hume Society Conferences often feature 4,000-word presentations. Meetings of the APA accept 5,000-word symposium submissions, but these are highly competitive. Some conferences require 600- or 750-word abstracts or synopses, with or without the full paper. It's good practice learning to write your ideas at multiple lengths. Doing so often forces you to clarify them as you pare them down to essentials.

Final Exam

The take-home final exam (due 5/1 by 9pm) will consist in a selection of short essay questions meant to test your retention and understanding of key passages, theses, and arguments from the course's primary texts. You will answer five questions (each in 300–900 words), one from a pool of questions on Hobbes, one from a pool on Locke, two from a pool on Hume, and one from a pool of more difficult questions on any of these figures. At least one answer must address political philosophy. Here, accuracy and clarity are more crucial than novelty. This written examination aims to prepare you for the MA and PhD programs' oral examinations.

Grading Scale

Papers will receive letter grades, while the final exam will receive a numerical grade, according to the following equivalences:

		87–89%	B+	77–79%	C+	67–69%	D+	<60	E
93–100%	A	83–86%	B	73–76%	C	63–66%	D		
90–92%	A–	80–82%	B–	70–72%	C–	60–62%	D–		

For more information, including GPA equivalents, see UF's Grades and Grading Policies: <https://catalog.ufl.edu/UGRD/academic-regulations/grades-grading-policies/>

Attendance and Late Policies

Course requirements for class attendance and make-up work are consistent with UF's policies: <https://catalog.ufl.edu/UGRD/academic-regulations/attendance-policies/>

Late work will drop a third of a letter grade per each 24 hours late (e.g., A- to B+). I understand that extenuating circumstances may arise. If you need an extension for a valid (e.g., medical) reason, please reach out at least 48 hours before the deadline.

Accommodations

UF is committed to creating a learning environment that meets the needs of its diverse student body and provides equitable access to students with disabilities. If you have (or think you may have) a disability related to mental health, chronic health, neurological state, and/or physical condition—please contact the Disability Resource Center (in person in Reid Hall or online at <https://disability.ufl.edu/get-started/>). It is never too late to request accommodations—our bodies and circumstances are continuously changing. All inquiries are handled in a sensitive and confidential manner.

Students who have already been approved to receive academic accommodations and want to use these accommodations in this course should share their accommodation letter with me *as soon as possible*. Please note that accommodations are not retroactive and require advance notice in order to successfully implement.

Academic Integrity

You may not use ChatGPT or any other AI tools for this course. Any form of cheating, including plagiarism or use of AI tools, will result in a failing grade for the course. You are responsible for knowing what counts as plagiarism or cheating. Please consult UF's Student Honor Code: <https://policy.ufl.edu/regulation/4-040/>

To ensure a safe and constructive learning environment for all, please join me in the commitment to respect everyone's identities and rights, regardless of difference.

Prohibitions

I discourage (but do not prohibit) the use of laptop and tablets in class. Please disconnect from the internet and other potential distractions, if you do opt to use them.

Cell phones must be silenced for the duration of class. *Please do not use cell phones in the classroom.* Let's make the classroom a space to 'disconnect' from external pressures, distractions, and noise—a rare privilege these days!

No eating or chewing gum is allowed in the classroom.

Course Evaluations

Students are expected to provide professional and respectful feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing course evaluations online via GatorEvals. Guidance on how to give feedback in a professional and respectful manner is available at <https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/students/>.

Students will be notified when the evaluation period opens, and can complete evaluations through the email they receive from GatorEvals, in their Canvas course menu under GatorEvals, or via <https://ufl.bluera.com/ufl/>. Summaries of course evaluation results are available to students at <https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/public-results/>.

Course Schedule

— HOBBS —

Week 1 (1/13) – Introduction; empiricism and clarity; minds as motions

- *Leviathan*, Frontispiece, Epistle Dedicatory, Introduction, Chs. 1–5
 - Martinich, *Hobbes*, Chs. 1–2
 - Duncan, “Hobbes on Language” (in *Handbook*)
 - Duncan, *Materialism from Hobbes to Locke*, Ch. 2

Week 2 (1/20) – MLK Day: No class

- No reading

Week 3 (1/27) – The psychological conditions for rational government

- *Leviathan*, Chs. 6, 11, 13–15
 - Martinich, *Hobbes*, Ch. 3
 - Evrigenis, “The State of Nature” (in *Handbook*)
 - Skinner, “Hobbes and the Social Control of Unsociability” (in *Handbook*)

Week 4 (2/3) – The sovereign and the commonwealth

- *Leviathan*, Chs. 16–21, 29
 - Martinich, *Hobbes*, Ch. 4
 - Runciman, “The Sovereign” (in *Handbook*)
 - Deigh, “Political Obligation” (in *Handbook*)

Week 5 (2/10) – All ideas derive from experience

- *Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, Epistle to the Reader, 1.1–3
 - Dicker, *Locke on Knowledge and Reality*, Ch. 2
 - Rickless, “Locke’s Polemic against Nativism.”
 - De Rosa, “Locke’s Critique of Innatism” (in *Companion*)

Week 6 (2/17) – Classification of ideas, primary and secondary qualities

- *Essay*, 2.1–12
 - Dicker, *Locke on Knowledge and Reality*, Chs. 3–4
 - Soles, “The Theory of Ideas” (in *Companion*)
 - Stuart, *Locke’s Metaphysics*, Ch. 3, “Secondary Qualities”

Week 7 (2/24) – The natural origin of governments

- *Second Treatise on Government*, Chs. 1–5, 7–9, 19
 - Seagrave, “Locke on the Law of Nature and Natural Rights” (in *Companion*)
 - Burns, “Hobbes and God in Locke’s Law of Nature”
 - Thomas, *Routledge Philosophy Guidebook to Locke on Gov’t*, “Rebellion”

Week 8 (3/3) – The origin of our ideas

- *A Treatise of Human Nature*, Introduction, 1.1.1–4, 1.1.7
- *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding*, 1–3
 - Stroud, *Hume*, Ch. 1–2
 - Stewart, “Two Species of Philosophy: The Historical Significance. . .”
 - Broughton, “Explaining General Ideas”

Week 9 (3/10) – Causal reasoning and belief

- *Treatise*, 1.3.1–7
- *Enquiry*, 4–5
 - Stroud, *Hume*, Ch. 3–4
 - Garrett, *Cognition and Commitment*, Chs. 4
 - Winkler, “The New Hume”

*****3/15–22 – Spring Break*****

Week 10 (3/24) – The idea of necessary connexion, belief as sensation

- *Treatise*, 1.3.14–16, 1.4.1
- *Enquiry*, 7, 9
 - Marušić, “Hume on the Projection of Causal Necessity”
 - Boyle, “Hume on Animal Reason”
 - LoLordo, “Probability and Skepticism about Reason in Hume’s *Treatise*”

Week 11 (3/31) – Skepticism and its effect on the passions

- *Treatise* 1.4.4, 1.4.7, 2.1.1–6
- *Enquiry* 12
 - Butler, “Hume’s Causal Reconstruction of the Perceptual Relativity Arg. . .”
 - Garrett, *Commitment and Cognition*, Ch. 10
 - Goldhaber, “Hume’s Skeptical Philosophy and the Moderation of Pride”

*****4/2 – Paper proposal due at 9pm*****

Week 12 (4/7) – Reason and passion in action and moral judgment

- *Treatise* 2.3.3, 3.1.1–2, 3.3.1, 3.3.3
 - Radcliffe, “Hume on the Generation of Motives: Why Beliefs Alone. . .”
 - Chamberlain, “Hume’s Emotivist Theory of Moral Judgements”
 - Sayre-McCord, “On Why Hume’s ‘General Point of View’ Isn’t Ideal. . .”

Week 13 (4/14) – Justice, allegiance, and rebellion

– *Treatise* 3.2.1–2, 2.3.7, 3.2.7–9

- Garrett, “The First Motive to Justice: Hume’s Circle Argument Squared”
- Kopajtic, “Cultivating Strength of Mind: Hume on the Government. . .”
- Merrill, “The Rhetoric of Rebellion in Hume’s Constitutional Thought”

*****4/17 – Medium-length paper due at 9pm*****

Week 14 (4/21) – Writing workshop

– Read your peers’ papers in preparation for the writing workshop

*****5/1 – Final exam due at 9pm*****

*****5/4 – Revised paper due at 9pm*****