

WESTERN UNIVERSITY
DEPARTMENT OF PHILOSOPHY
Undergraduate Course Outline 2015-2016
Philosophy 4109F (001): Hume on Ethics and the Passions



Course website

<https://instruct.uwo.ca/philosophy/021-001/>

(cut and paste this address into your browser – including the concluding /)

Access using your uwo e-mail login id and password

Fall Term 2015	Instructor: Lorne Falkenstein
MWF 10:30-11:20	Office Hours: MWF 12:00-1:00, STVH 3141
Classroom: STVH 1145	lfalkens@uwo.ca

DESCRIPTION

A study of Hume's account of the passions as presented in his *Dissertation on the Passions* and *Treatise II*, and of the moral psychology of his *Enquiry concerning the principles of morals* and *Treatise III*. Thomas Reid's criticisms of Hume's views on will, motivation, and artificial virtues will also be considered. In dealing with the passions, Hume focused on pride/humility, love/hatred, and hope/fear. But in dealing with moral psychology and the evolution of the "artificial" sense of justice he came to place an increasing emphasis on benevolence (not the same as love). A further passion, vengeance (not the same as hatred or pride) plays a necessary but largely unacknowledged role, emerging only in his analysis of character traits useful to the individual, where it is misidentified with the sense of self-worth or "greatness of mind." I will propose a Humean theory of passions Hume did not himself specifically analyze and apply this theory to link his moral psychology more closely to his account of the passions.

TEXTS

The following texts are available from the bookstore.

David Hume, *A Treatise of Human Nature*, David Fate Norton and Mary J. Norton (ed), Oxford Philosophical Texts (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000) ISBN: 0198751729

David Hume, *Essays and Treatises on Philosophical Subjects*, Lorne Falkenstein and Neil McArthur (ed) (Peterborough: Broadview Press, 2013) ISBN: 9781551118048

Thomas Reid, *Essays on the Active Powers of Man*, Knud Haakonssen and James Harris (ed) (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2010) ISBN: 9780748617081 (Recommended for advanced students considering further studies of Reid others may download the [electronic copy of the first original edition available through ECCO](#))

OBJECTIVES

Students graduating from this course will be able to explain how Hume accounted for the direct and the indirect passions, why he considered moral judgments to be based on passion rather than reason, why he rejected free choice of the will, why he considered justice to be a merely artificial virtue, and how he accounted for the evolution of a non-self-interested regard to justice and other moral principles. They will be able to identify the strengths and weaknesses of these views. They will be able to identify the principal objections Reid had to Hume's views. They will have identified the important, recent secondary literature on these topics. And they will be able to recount what is said in some of that literature.

REQUIREMENTS

Bibliography Assignment	September 23	-5% if late
Mid term exam	October 21	20%
Term Paper Prospectus	November 11	-5% if late
Term paper	December 9 (earlier if there is an early final)	40%
Final exam	Final Exam Period	40%

Policies:

- Students wishing to audit the course should consult with me prior to or during the first week of classes
- In conformity with departmental policy, all written work must be submitted to *turnitin.com*.
- No papers will be accepted after the last day of classes (December 9, 2015)
- A passing grade on the final exam is a necessary condition for passing the course
- The Department of Philosophy policies governing the conduct, standards, and expectations for student participation in Philosophy courses are available in the Undergraduate section of the Department of Philosophy website at <http://www.uwo.ca/philosophy/undergraduate/policies.html>. It is your responsibility to understand the policies set out by the Senate and the Department of Philosophy. Ignorance of these policies cannot be used as grounds of appeal.

Students who are in emotional/mental distress should refer to Mental Health@Western <http://www.uwo.ca/uwocom/mentalhealth/> for a complete list of options about how to obtain help.