

**Professor Laura Keating   PHILO 380.63   Hume (W)**

When he was only in his mid-twenties, David Hume wrote and published *A Treatise of Human Nature*, in which he claims to put forward a new system of philosophy that he believes “will not be inferior in certainty, and will be much superior in utility to any other of human comprehension.”

In this course we will study Hume’s new philosophy of human understanding as it is presented in Book I of the *Treatise* and in *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding*. In particular, we will study a) Hume’s account of the nature of our ideas, including ideas of time and space, general or abstract ideas, and the idea of necessary connection; b) his theory of the nature of belief, including the causes of belief generally, and specifically, belief in the wise, the unwise, and in animals, and c) the causes of our beliefs in causal connections between things, in the independent and continued existence of objects, and in the existence of a persisting self. Finally, we will consider how Hume uses the results of his investigations to critique some of the principal doctrines that have been forwarded by previous philosophers, and to reflect on the nature and limits of philosophy itself. Throughout the course we will also consider the roles of empiricism, scepticism, and naturalism in Hume’s thinking.

This course satisfies the major requirement of the intensive study of a major figure.

**Texts:**

1) David Hume, *A Treatise of Human Nature*, ed. David Fate Norton and Mary J. Norton (Oxford University Press, 2000). Paperback. ISBN: 0198751729. \$37.95.

2) David Hume, *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding: and Other Writings*, ed. Stephen Buckle (Cambridge University Press, 2007). Paperback. ISBN: 0521604036. \$29.99.