

PHIL 202: EIGHTEENTH CENTURY EUROPEAN MORAL SENTIMENTALISM

Professors: Sam Rickless
Office: HSS 8012
Office phone: 858-822-4910
Office hours: Mondays and Wednesdays 11am-12pm
Email: srickless@ucsd.edu

Course Description

This is a survey course covering the history of sentimentalism in Europe in the eighteenth century. The major sentimentalist debates in the eighteenth century focus on the nature of human virtue (morality), the motive or reason to act virtuously (morally), the role of approval and disapproval in the constitution or determination of virtue, and the mechanisms whereby (morally relevant) approval and disapproval are generated. The protagonists occupy various sentimentalist positions, where sentimentalism is (roughly) the view that the virtues consist in those mental qualities that produce a sentiment of approval (and vices consist in those mental qualities that produce a sentiment of disapproval) in a (disinterested) observer, and rationalism, by contrast, is (roughly) the view that the virtues are dispositions to do what reason judges to be the right thing to do because it is right. We will be looking at the strengths and weaknesses of the views defended by Anthony Ashley Cooper, Third Earl of Shaftesbury (1671-1713), Francis Hutcheson (1694-1746), David Hume (1711-1776), Adam Smith (1723-1790), and Sophie de Grouchy, Madame de Condorcet (1764-1822).

Course Materials

All course materials, except for de Grouchy's *Letters on Sympathy*, are available online.

- Please purchase the following book: *Sophie de Grouchy's Letters on Sympathy: A Critical Engagement with Adam Smith's The Theory of moral Sentiments* (Oxford New Histories of Philosophy: Oxford University Press, 2019), translated by Sandrine Bergès, with an introduction, glossary, and commentary by Sandrine Bergès and Eric Schliesser. (ISBN-13: 978-0190637095) For the purposes of this course, please do **not** use Jonathan Bennett's online Early Modern Texts translation or the edition/translation of Karin Brown and James McClellan III. This is not because these are poor translations, but because we all need to be on the same page, and I prefer to use the Bergès translation.

Course Schedule

September 27: Shaftesbury 1

Reading: *An Inquiry Concerning Virtue or Merit* (Book I)
http://files.libertyfund.org/files/812/0096-02_LFeBk.pdf (pp. 3-44)

October 4: Shaftesbury 2

Reading: *An Inquiry Concerning Virtue or Merit* (Book II)
http://files.libertyfund.org/files/812/0096-02_LFeBk.pdf (pp. 45-100)

October 11: Hutcheson 1

Reading: *An Inquiry Concerning the Original of our Ideas of Virtue or Moral Good*
http://files.libertyfund.org/files/858/0449_LFeBk.pdf (Sections I-V, pp. 83-161, and Section VII, Parts I-V, pp. 176-182)

October 18: Hutcheson 2

Reading: *Illustrations on the Moral Sense* (Sections I, II, IV, V)
http://files.libertyfund.org/files/885/0150_LFeBk.pdf (pp. 133-160, 173-187)

October 25: Hume 1

Reading: *A Treatise of Human Nature* (Book I, Part I, Sections I-VI; Book II, Part I, Sections I-V; Book II, Part I, Section XI; Book II, Part II, Sections I-II; Book II, Part II, Sections V-IX; Book II, Part III, Section IX, Paragraphs 1-8)
<https://oll.libertyfund.org/titles/hume-a-treatise-of-human-nature>

Date and Time to be Determined: Hume 2

Reading: *A Treatise of Human Nature* (Book II, Part III, Section III; Book II, Part III, Section IV, Paragraph 1; Book II, Part III, Section VIII, Paragraph 13; Book III, Part I, Sections I-II; Book III, Part II, Sections I-II; Book III, Part II, Sections V-VI; Book III, Part III, Sections I-VI)
<https://oll.libertyfund.org/titles/hume-a-treatise-of-human-nature>
An Enquiry Concerning the Principles of Morals (Section 9, Appendix 1)
<https://oll.libertyfund.org/titles/hume-enquiries-concerning-the-human-understanding-and-concerning-the-principles-of-morals>

November 8: Smith 1

Reading: *The Theory of Moral Sentiments* (Parts I and II, pp. 1-157; Part VII, Section III, pp. 463-481)
http://oll-resources.s3.amazonaws.com/titles/2620/Smith_TMS-Languages1648_Bk.pdf

November 15: Smith 2

Reading: *The Theory of Moral Sentiments* (Parts III and IV, pp. 161-277)
http://oll-resources.s3.amazonaws.com/titles/2620/Smith_TMS-Languages1648_Bk.pdf

November 22: Smith 3

Reading: *The Theory of Moral Sentiments* (Part VI, pp. 309-388; Part VII, Section II, Chapter III, pp. 440-448)

http://oll-resources.s3.amazonaws.com/titles/2620/Smith_TMS-Languages1648_Bk.pdf

Date and Time to be Determined: De Grouchy

Reading: *Letters on Sympathy* (Letters I-V, pp. 57-117)

Some secondary source materials you might consider consulting for the long term paper:

Donald C. Ainslie and Annemarie Butler, *The Cambridge Companion to Hume's Treatise*

Annette C. Baier, *A Progress of Sentiments: Reflections on Hume's Treatise*

Rachel Cohon, *Hume's Morality: Feeling and Fabrication*

Stephen Darwall, *The British Moralists and the Internal 'Ought', 1640-1740*

Michael B. Gill, *The British Moralists on Human Nature and the Birth of Secular Ethics*

Terence Irwin, *The Development of Ethics: A Historical and Critical Study, Volume 2*

D. D. Raphael, *The Impartial Spectator: Adam Smith's Moral Philosophy*

Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy entries on Shaftesbury, Scottish Philosophy in the Eighteenth Century, Hume's Moral Philosophy, Adam Smith's Moral and Political Philosophy, as well as articles and book chapters by, among others, Bergès and Schliesser on de Grouchy.

Course Requirements and Grading

- One short (no longer than 900 words, around 2-3 pages, double spaced) paper per week, starting at our second meeting (October 4) and ending at our eighth meeting (November 15). Each paper should be posted on the Discussion section of the Canvas website for this course by 5pm on the day before the seminar in which the relevant issues will be discussed (e.g., the short paper for October 4 should be posted before 5pm on October 3). Your paper should, if at all possible, do one (or more) of the following: (i) state clearly and precisely the author's main view on a central issue, solving problems of interpretation, or (ii) provide a logical reconstruction of a difficult argument regarding a central issue, or (iii) criticize the validity or soundness of a (reconstructed) argument regarding a central issue, or (iv) compare/contrast (with a view to analyzing and getting a deeper appreciation of the nature of, or strengths and weaknesses of) relevant positions/arguments proposed by two (or more) authors. If you can't find a way to do one of (i)-(iv), discuss your plans for the paper with me beforehand.
- One long (around 4,500 words) term paper, to be submitted electronically via Canvas before 9am on Friday, December 14. The long paper must address positions and/or arguments to be found in the course readings or in readings previously approved by me. Because this is a history course for which you will receive history of philosophy distribution credit, your final paper should focus on ideas and arguments in the course

readings. I will not accept a paper that focuses on views that have been inspired by, or that count as modern elaborations of, the views of the historical figures discussed in the course. It is appropriate for you to consult secondary source materials that bring up problems of interpretation or that criticize the views defended by these historical figures, but you should discuss those sources with me ahead of time.

- You need to make an appointment to see me to discuss your proposed long paper topic before Thanksgiving. At this meeting, you should have compiled a bibliography for your paper. (If there are any readings in your bibliography that do not appear on the syllabus, you need to place one copy of each of them in my mailbox, or point me to the relevant journal website(s), a few days before the meeting.) The bibliography should (at least as a default matter) include relatively recent secondary source material (articles and/or book chapters) that you have tracked down through the *Philosopher's Index*, the *Arts and Humanities Citation Index*, or some other equally useful index. You should be prepared to articulate your paper's main thesis, the paper's rough structure, along with some of the arguments you will be planning to use in support of the main thesis. All of this material should take the form of a short (2-3 pages) paper prospectus that is emailed to me at least one day before the meeting. I will not give out an incomplete grade unless you have a valid excuse for not being able to complete your paper by the deadline. Valid excuses include such things as serious illness or incapacitation, or family emergency. They do not include the strong desire to make the paper the best that it can be.
- One 15 minute in-class presentation. The purpose of the presentation is to introduce the main issues/problems/arguments in the text to be discussed in seminar that day, raising some of your own questions/comments/criticisms along the way or at the end. The presentation may be related to the short paper, though the short paper (given its length) should be less introductory and more focused. You should not simply read your presentation, though you may speak your way through a handout. A handout is recommended, though not mandatory. Please do not use the handout to summarize the entirety of the reading: the point of the presentation is to focus on the central points and arguments, while leaving out what is relatively peripheral or less important.
- Attendance is required at every meeting, unless a valid excuse is communicated to me in a timely manner (if possible, ahead of time).
- Your grade will be based on the quality of your long paper (75%), your short papers (10%), your presentation (10%), and your participation in seminar (5%). The grade given to the short paper that receives the lowest grade will be discarded in computing the final course grade.
- Please note that I will not be available on November 1 or December 6, so I will work with you to reschedule the seminars originally scheduled for those dates.