

David Hume and his *Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding* (1748)

Start Date 2 September 2016 **End Date** 4 September 2016

Venue Madingley Hall
Madingley
Cambridge

Tutor Dr Peter Holmes **Course code** 1617NRX006

Director of Programmes Emma Jennings

For further information on this course, please contact Public Programme Co-ordinator, Clare Kerr
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To book See: www.ice.cam.ac.uk or telephone 01223 746262

Tutor biography

Peter Holmes studied for his doctorate at Cambridge University on the political thought of Elizabethan Catholics, and has published on this and other subjects in a number of journals and books. He has taught recently on the Undergraduate Certificate in Philosophy at ICE, and supervises students in Political Philosophy at the University of Cambridge. He has led a number of classes in the past on a variety of topics at Madingley Hall. He enjoys studying texts in a multi-disciplinary fashion using both History and Theory as guides.

Course programme

Friday

Please plan to arrive between 16:30 and 18:30. You can meet other course members in the bar which opens at 18:15. Tea and coffee making facilities are available in the study bedrooms.

19:00	Dinner
20:30 – 22:00	Session 1: Introduction to the life and works of David Hume
22:00	Terrace bar open for informal discussion

Saturday

07:30	Breakfast
09:00 – 10:30	Session 2: How we know what we know: Hume's epistemology
10:30	Coffee
11:00 – 12:30	Session 3: Causation and Scepticism in Hume's <i>Enquiry</i>
13:00	Lunch
14:00 – 16:00	Free
16:00	Tea
16:30 – 18:00	Session 4: How free are we? Free Will and Necessity in Hume
18:00 – 18:30	Free
18:30	Dinner
20:00 – 21:30	Session 5: Hume in context: rationalism and empiricism
21:30	Terrace bar open for informal discussion

Sunday

07:30	Breakfast
09:00 – 10:30	Session 6: Hume and Miracles
10:30	Coffee
11:00 – 12:30	Session 7: Scepticism and Religion in Hume
12:45	Lunch

The course will disperse after lunch

Course syllabus

It would be useful if students could bring a copy of the below text to the course, the tutor will provide some extracts so this is not essential. If you are unable to obtain the version below any other edition is acceptable.

David Hume *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding* OUP 2009

Aims:

- To introduce students to the philosophical themes in Hume's *Enquiry concerning Human Understanding*.
- To set Hume's *Enquiry* in its historical context.
- To assess critically Hume's philosophical contribution.

Content:

David Hume is widely recognised as one of the greatest British philosophers. This course will explain Hume's key ideas as set out in his *Enquiry* (1748), and set them in their historical context. The chief areas to discuss are: the bases of our knowledge; the nature of cause and effect; the existence of God and the evidence for miracles; free will and necessity. The course will use a passage from Hume's writings (mainly the *Enquiry*) as the basis for each lecture. We will seek to analyse Hume's doctrine and develop some criticisms of what he says. The first lecture will explore Hume's life and works (using in this case his brief Autobiography as a text.) Second, we will discuss Hume's central epistemological ideas which place him in the empirical tradition. Third, we will look at his famous scepticism about causation. Fourthly, we will look at what he says about Free Will and Necessity. Fifthly we will draw some comparisons between Hume and the 'rationalists', comparing his work briefly with that of Descartes. Sixthly, we will look at his doctrine on miracles. Finally we will look at his broader attack on established religion and place him in the sceptical tradition.

Presentation of the course:

Each session will involve an initial lecture by the tutor, followed by discussion of key themes and passages from the text.

Outcomes:

As a result of the course, within the constraints of the time available, students should be able to:

1. Provide an intelligible account of aspects of the life and works of David Hume.
2. Evaluate his key philosophical ideas in the *Enquiry concerning Human Understanding* and set them in their historical and intellectual context.
3. Have the confidence to read more widely in eighteenth century history and philosophy.

Reading and resources list

It would be useful if students could bring a copy of the below text to the course, the tutor will provide some extracts so this is not essential. If you are unable to obtain the version below any other edition is acceptable.

David Hume *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding* OUP 2009

Listed below are a number of texts that might be of interest for future reference, but do not need to be bought (or consulted) for the course.

Author	Title	Publisher & Date
A J Ayer	<i>Hume</i>	OUP 1980
S Blackburn	<i>How to Read Hume</i>	Granta 2008
H Beebee	<i>Hume on causation</i>	Routledge 2008
R Fogelin	<i>A defence of Hume on miracles</i>	Princeton 2008
J Houston	<i>Reported miracles: a critique of Hume</i>	CUP 1994
P Millican (ed.)	<i>Reading Hume on Human Understanding</i>	OUP 2002
P Russell	<i>Freedom and Moral Sentiment</i>	OUP 1995

Website addresses

1. **Stanford Encyclopaedia of Philosophy:** plato.stanford.edu
2. <http://davidhume.org/>

Note Students of the Institute of Continuing Education are entitled to 20% discount on books published by Cambridge University Press (CUP) which are purchased at the Press bookshop, 1 Trinity Street, Cambridge (Mon-Sat 9am – 5:30pm, Sun 11am – 5pm). A letter or email confirming acceptance on to a current Institute course should be taken as evidence of enrolment.

Information correct as of: 22 July 2016