

HISTORY OF METAPHYSICS; PRIMARY AND SECONDARY QUALITIES  
730:314, SPRING SEMESTER, 2020

INSTRUCTOR: Martha Bolton

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Office hours: W 2:10-3:30 PM; by appointment M 2:10-3:30 PM and Th 2:00-3:00 PM

READINGS: All readings will be available on the course Sakai site or from the University Library electronic resources

REQUIREMENTS: Students are expected to come to all meetings of the class. If you expect to miss a class or two, you may use the electronic reporting form: <https://sims.rutgers.edu/ssra/>. An email will automatically be sent to me. Students are required to complete all assigned readings by the date for which they are assigned. I will sometimes send an outline, notes, or ask you write short answers to a few questions before class. This is intended to facilitate class discussion. Questions, comments, and participation in class discussion are strongly encouraged.

*A short paper will be due around the middle of the semester (5-7 pages) and a long paper will be due at the end of the semester (10-12 pages, approx. 5600-6750 words).*

LEARNING GOALS: A firm understanding of theories of primary and secondary qualities abroad in western philosophy from ancient times to the present, the various grounds proposed for the distinction, reasons for and against accepting it on these grounds, and the metaphysical issues at stake. Enhanced ability to comprehend competing sides of an issue, analyze and evaluate arguments, and argue in defense of a thesis.

#### SCHEDULE

Jan. 23 Introduction

27 Ancient Greek antecedents

Democritus, selected fragments; Aristotle, *De Anima*, 2.6-8

Mi-Kyoung Lee, 'The Distinction between Primary and Secondary Qualities in Ancient Greek Philosophy'

29 Scholastics on sensible qualities

Robert Passnau, 'Scholastic Qualities, Primary and Secondary'

Feb. 1 same

3 Galileo and Descartes; are colors, heat, etc. entirely in the mind?

Galileo, *The Assayer*, in Stillman Drake, trans., *Discoveries and Opinions of Galileo*

Descartes, *Meditations* 2, 5, 6 (mpp 29-34, 63-5, , mpp ); *Principles of Philosophy* (PP) 1, 60-71 (mpp 28-37 )and 4.190-99 (316-324 ); *The World*, ch. 1-2 (mpp 3-10)]

Lisa Downing, 'Sensible Qualities and Material Bodies in Descartes and Boyle', pp. 109-128 (Descartes)

6 Descartes: are colors, etc. physical attributes of bodies?

*Treatise on Man*, mpp 119-202; *Optics*, Disc 1 and 6 (mpp 81-93 and 114-146); PP 4.188-99 (mpp. 15-323); Letter to Chanut, 26 Feb. 1649; CSM 3.168-9

Margaret Atherton, 'Green is Like Bread: The Nature of Descartes' Account of Color Perception'

10 Descartes: are ideas of secondary qualities representational?

*The World*, ch. 1-2 (CSM 1, 81-84); *Meditation (Medn)* 3, mpp 25-44; *Fourth Objections*, mpp 206-7 and *Replies*, mpp. 231-235

Gary Hatfield, 'Descartes on sensory representation, objective reality, and material falsity'

12 same

17 same

19 Boyle: the corpuscular hypothesis as ground of the distinction of qualities

Robert Boyle, *The Origin of Forms and Qualities*, pp. 18-37; *About the Excellency and Grounds of the Mechanical Hypothesis*, Recaptulation, pp. 152-4.

Lisa Downing, 'Sensible Qualities and Material Bodies in Descartes and Boyle', pp. 128-34 (Boyle)

24 Locke: the distinction between primary and secondary qualities

*Essay concerning Human Understanding*, 2.8

Edwin Curley, 'Locke, Boyle, and the Distinction between Primary and Secondary Qualities', *Philosophical Review* 81 (1972), 438-64

26 Locke: gaps in mechanist program; powers—relations, dispositions, causes?

*Essay*, I.1; 2.23.1-8 and 22-31; 4.3,10-16 and 25-29; 4.12.12-13

M. R. Ayers, 'Primary and Secondary Qualities in Locke's *Essay*'

Mar. 2 Locke: resemblance thesis; how do simple ideas of sensation represent the qualities they do?

*Essay*, 2.1.1-8; 2-7; 2.30,13 and 31,1-2 and 32

Robert Wilson, 'Primary and Secondary Qualities'

4 same

9 same

**Short paper due in class.**

11 A.D. Smith, 'Of Primary and Secondary Qualities', (1990) *Philosophical Review*, 99, 221-54

**Mar. 14-22 Spring recess**

22 Berkeley—objection: inseparability of primary and secondary qualities

*Principles of Human Knowledge (PK)*, Introduction (pp. ); *New Theory of Vision*, 126-143

30 Berkeley—objections: Idealism; there are no common sensibles; non-causal mechanist laws  
*Three Dialogues*, mpp 171-195 and 201-02; PHK 58-66 (pp 106-109)  
Samuel Rickless, *Berkeley's Argument for Idealism*, 148-165 and 185-8

23 Hume—objection: solidity cannot be primary  
Treatise, 1.4.4

25 Hume--projectivism about secondary qualities and moral properties  
P. E. Kail, *Projection and Realism in Hume's Philosophy*, ch. 7  
Treatise. 1.3.14.22-27; 3.1.1.1-27, esp. 26

30 same

Apr. 1 Kant—properties of matter and subjective modifications of the senses in Transcendental  
Idealism  
*Prolegomena to Any Future Metaphysics*, Preamble, Part 1 (mpp 265-294); Critique of Pure Reason  
(CPR), Transcendental Aesthetic, On space, A23/B37-A31/B46; General Remarks, A42/B59A46/B59  
Gary Hatfield, 'Kant and Helmholtz on Primary and Secondary Qualities', pp. 304-22 (Kant)

6 Kant—the roots of human cognition of objects: intuition and understanding  
CPR, Transcendental Doctrine of Elements, Introduction, A50/B75-A58/B82  
Rae Langston, *Kantian Humility*, pp. 140-47 and 155-7

Apr. 1 same

6 J. S. Mill--all qualities of external objects are dispositions  
J. S. Mill, *Examination of Sir William Hamilton's Philosophy*  
Prior, E., Pargetter, R. & Jackson, F., 1982, 'Three Theses about Dispositions', *American Philosophical  
Quarterly*, 19: 251–257

8 Langston on Kant: the irreducibility of dispositional properties of objects to their intrinsic  
properties and its implications  
Rae Langston, *Kantian Humility*, pp. 162-185

13 same

16 same

20 Gilbert Harmon, 'The Intrinsic Quality of Experience'

22 Barry Maund, 'Color Eliminativism'

27 Simon Blackburn, 'Space Filling', *Analysis* 50 (1990), 62-65  
James Van Cleve, 'Kant, Putnam, and Secondary Qualities'

29 same

May 4 TBA

### **Final paper**

#### ACADEMIC POLICY:

Academic integrity is taken very seriously in this course. Violations include: cheating, plagiarism, fabrication, denying others access to facilities or information, and facilitating violations of academic integrity. For the current University academic integrity policy, go to <http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/academic-integrity-policy/> Ask the instructor if you have questions about how this policy affects your work for this course.

#### Constructive discussion:

Productive intellectual inquiry—the basic purpose of colleges and universities—requires respectful and constructive discussion that enables all parties to participate fully. Philosophy has an especially vital role to play in facilitating such inquiry, because philosophers have been developing and honing practices of critical discussion over many centuries: techniques for uncovering, justifying, and assessing assumptions behind any claim, from the most obvious to the most controversial.

Philosophy is thus a valuable tool for self-reflection and for communal debate. But like any tool, in order to work, it must be used well. In class, online, and at talks or meetings, we expect all participants to observe basic norms of civility and respect. This means stating your own views directly and substantively: focusing on reasons, assumptions and consequences rather than on who is offering them, or how. And it means engaging others' views in the same terms. No topic or claim is too obvious or controversial to be discussed; but claims and opinions have a place in the discussion only when they are presented in a respectful, collegial, and constructive way.

Students with disabilities requesting accommodations must follow the procedures outlined at <https://ods.rutgers.edu/students/registration-form>.