Philosophy 2/35110
Maimonides and Hume on Religion
Winter 2011, MW 12-1:20
Prof. Josef Stern <j-stern@uchicago.edu>
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Books ordered at the Seminary Coop:
David Hume, Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion and Natural History of Religion
(Oxford World Classics)
David Hume, An Enquiry concerning Human Understanding (Oxford World Classics)

All of the above as well as the following are on reserve:
Charles Manekin, On Maimonides
Kenneth Seeskin, ed., Cambridge Companion to Maimonides (CCM)
David F. Norton, ed., Cambridge Companion to Hume (CCH)
Isadore Twersky, ed. Maimonides Reader (MR)

Readings marked by one asterisk are on Chalk and by two asterisks on Ereserve.

Note: There will be no class on Monday January 17 (Martin Luther King Day); we will add one additional meeting to make up for that day, to be scheduled early on.

Requirements: A take-home midterm (due Tuesday Feb. 8 by 4 pm in my mailbox in Stuart 202) consisting of one or two essay questions and a take-home final examination consisting of two or three essay questions, due Thursday March 16. The final essays should be submitted in hard copy in my mailbox in Stuart 202 and emailed to me as an attachment in Word .doc (not .docx) format. Details will be discussed in class.

Tentative Syllabus

(1) 1/3. Introductory lecture on Maimonides and Hume
*D. F. Norton, “An Introduction to Hume’s Thought,” in CCH
Hume, “Excerpts from Hume’s Letters” (Appendix IV in Enquiry, pp. 161-8)
Hume, “My Own Life” (Appendix V in Enquiry, pp.169-176)

(2) Forms of Philosophical Writing: Dialogues and Guides
1/5 Hume,
“Of Miracles,” Section X of Enquiry, pp. 79-95
Dialogues, Introduction: Pamphilus to Hermippus
1/10-12 Maimonides
(3) Skepticism, Education, and Religion
1/17 MLK Day: No Class
1/19 (+1/20?) Hume
Dialogues
“Abstract of a Treatise of Human Nature” (Appendix I in Enquiry, pp. 133-45)
Enquiry I –V, VII, XII
1/24-26 Maimonides
**Mishneh Torah, “Laws concerning Study of the Torah,” §§11-12; MR

(4) Proving the Existence of (a) God
1/31-2/2 Hume
Natural History of Religion, pp. 134-66, 179-185
Dialogues II, III, IX
2/7-9 Maimonides

(5) The Nature of (a) God: Attributes, Anthropomorphism, Polytheism, and Representations of God
2/14-16 Maimonides
2/21-23 Hume
Dialogues IV-VIII
**Aquinas, “Analogical Predication,” in Brody, 338-346

(6) Proving the Non-Existence of (a) God (aka The Problem of Evil)
2/28 Hume.
Dialogues 10-11,
3/2 Maimonides
Guide I: 2, III: 8, III:10-14, III: 17-18, III: 22-23

(7) Skepticism Revisited, and Religion as a Philosophy
3/7 Hume
Dialogues 1, 12
Natural History of Religion, pp. 183-5
3/9 Maimonides