

Philosophy 2/35110

Maimonides and Hume on Religion

Winter 2011, MW 12-1:20

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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)

Moses Maimonides, Guide of the Perplexed, 2 Volumes, trans. Shlomo Pines (University
of Chicago Press)

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)

Baruch Brody, ed., Readings in the Philosophy of Religion: An Analytic Approach, 2nd
Ed., Prentice-Hall.

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

*J. Kraemer, "Moses Maimonides: An Intellectual Portrait," in CCM

*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

**“Introduction to Heleq” MR 401-23

Guide, Introduction I: 1-2, I: 17, I: 26, I: 50, I: 71, II: 25: 327-8

(3) Skepticism, Education, and Religion

1/17 MLK Day: No Class

1/19 (+1/20?) Hume

Dialogues 1

“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

Guide I: 31-36, I: 46: 97-99, I: 73: 206-214 (10th and 12th premises), II: 24, III: 9, III:15, III: 51-2

(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

*Mishneh Torah, “Laws concerning the Foundations of the Law,” trans. Ralph Lerner, Maimonides' Empire of Light : popular enlightenment in an age of belief

**Mishneh Torah, “Laws concerning Idolatry and the Ordinances of the Heathens,” MR, pp. 71-76.

Guide I: 35-6, I: 46, I: 70-72, II: Introduction, II: 1-5, II: 9-13, II: 17, II: 19, II: 24

(5) The Nature of (a) God: Attributes, Anthropomorphism, Polytheism, and Representations of God

2/14-16 Maimonides

Guide I: 26, I: 35-36, I: 50-1, I: 54-61, I: 68, II: 17, II: 19

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

Guide II: 39-40, III: 27-28, III: 51-54