

First Paper Topic
Philosophy 174
Winter, 2017

Due: February 14, 2018 in class

Write an essay of roughly five pages on the following topic. Use the *Treatise* and the *Enquiry* (if appropriate) as the basis of your work. Be sure to quote the text whenever you attribute a claim to Hume. You may use the numbering convention of the *Treatise* text edition (e.g., 1.1.1.1 for Book 1, Part 1, Section 1, paragraph 1) and the marginal numbers in the *Enquiry* text edition. Papers not turned in on the day due will be penalized progressively, with the penalties increasing each two working days overdue. Papers should be double-spaced, with ample room in the margins for comments.

Throughout the *Treatise*, Hume appeals to the so-called “copy principle,” according to which “*all our simple ideas in their first appearance are deriv’d from simple impressions, which are correspondent to them, and which they exactly represent*” (1.1.1.7).

Explain the meaning of this principle and how it is supposed to be established in the *Treatise*. Explain how Hume uses this principle to support a major philosophical claim such as:

- It is impossible for our abstract ideas to represent no particular degrees of quantity or quality. (1.1.7, 1.3.1).
- The idea of extension is nothing more than that of colored points disposed in a certain way (1.2.3).
- A belief is a lively idea related to or associated with a present impression (1.3.7).
- The ideas of necessary connection, power, agency, force, etc. are qualities of perceptions, not of objects (1.3.14).

Show how Hume applies the principle to **one** of the four cases listed, or another case if you wish. Comment on which principle is more plausible: the principle Hume has rejected or the copy principle.