

**PHIL 110 – GREAT WORKS
PHILOSOPHY AND MEMORY
MTWRF - 11:30 AM – 1:00 PM
MURPHEY – 118**

Instructor:

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About the Course:

Memory plays a pivotal role in our mind. We can report our perceptions, for instance, in part because we can store them in our memory, and then retrieve them when necessary. We know which foods we like and which movie stiles we dislike because we can remember. And we know what the square root of 36 is because once we learned the answer we stored it in our memory. However, memory is a poorly understood cognitive capacity. Although in recent years its nature has been much debated in the psychological and neurological literature, this debate is somewhat foreign to the philosophy of mind. This class attempts to open the door to that debate from the standpoint of three great philosophical texts, all of which approach the subject of memory from different perspectives. First, we will read a work by Thomas Reid, one of the founders of the so-called “Scottish school of common sense”, titled *Essays on the Intellectual Powers of Man*. In this book he provides persuasive arguments against the idea, championed by rationalists (like Descartes and Spinoza) and empiricists (like Hume, but particularly Locke), that memory operates with representations. Then we will read part of *The Principles of Psychology*, by the philosopher/psychologist William James. We’ll see how he would have replied to Reid, and we will examine his suggestions as to how to go about studying memory scientifically. Finally, we will read another great work by French philosopher Henry Bergson titled *Matter and Memory*. Although it was published almost at the same time as James’ masterpiece, Bergson opposes both James’ approach and the common sense approach, with interesting arguments rooted in the very experience of remembering. There will be some ancillary short readings as well, mostly to provide theoretical background, and we will constantly contrast these interesting philosophical views with clinical cases described in the neuropsychological literature.

Grading:

There will be two exams in this class: one in-class test on June 26th and a final exam on July 24th. There will be also two short papers (1000 to 1250 words): one due July 7th, and one due July 22nd. In addition, each student will lead the discussion of one session with a presentation of the assigned text. Another student will be in charge of writing down a protocol of such meeting, to be read at the beginning of the next session. Grades will be weighted as follows:

First exam:	10%
Presentation:	20%
Protocol:	15%
First paper:	20%
Second Paper:	20%
Final exam:	15%

Registered students are required to attend class. Attendance will be called randomly. If a registered student fails to attend to more than 10% of the classes (i.e. 3 or more sessions) with no excuse, s/he will receive an F as a final grade.

Remember: Academic dishonesty in any form is unacceptable, because any breach in academic integrity, however small, strikes destructively at the University's life and work.

The Honor Code and the Campus Code, embodying the ideals of academic honesty, integrity, and responsible citizenship, have for over 100 years governed the performance of all academic work and student conduct at the University. Acceptance by a student of enrollment in the University presupposes a commitment to the principles embodied in these codes and a respect for this most significant University tradition.

Your participation in this course comes with my expectation that your work will be completed in full observance of the Honor Code. (You can learn more about it at <http://instrument.unc.edu>).

Required Texts:

Reid, Thomas. 1983. *Inquiry and Essays*. Hackett: Indianapolis.

James, William. 1890/2007. *The principles of Psychology*. Vol. 1. Cosimo Classics: New York.

Bergson, Henri. 1912/2007. *Matter and Memory*. Cosimo Classics: New York.

Ancillary readings available on Blackboard (BB)

Schedule:

Class	Date	Text
1	June 19 (R)	Introduction. Descartes, Spinoza, and Leibniz (BB)
2	June 20 (F)	Descartes, Spinoza, and Leibniz (BB)
3	June 23 (M)	Hobbes, Hume and Locke (BB)
4	June 24 (T)	Hume and Locke (BB)
5	June 25 (W)	Locke (BB)
6	June 26 (R)	Exam 1
7	June 27 (F)	NO CLASS
8	June 30 (M)	Reid: Essay 1 (pp. 129-159)
9	July 1 (T)	Reid: Essay 2 (pp. 159-180)
10	July 2 (W)	Reid: Essay 2 (pp. 181-206)
11	July 3 (R)	Reid: Essay 3 (pp. 206-216)
12	July 4 (F)	NO CLASS
13	July 7 (M)	James: Chapters 1, 7, and 8. Paper 1 due.
14	July 8 (T)	James: Chapter 9
15	July 9 (W)	James: Chapter 10 (pp. 291-342)
16	July 10 (R)	James: Chapter 10 (pp. 342-401)
17	July 11 (F)	James: Chapter 11
18	July 14 (M)	James: Chapter 15
19	July 15 (T)	James: Chapter 16
20	July 16 (W)	Movie
21	July 17 (R)	Introduction. Bergson: Chapter 1
22	July 18 (F)	Bergson: Chapter 2
23	July 21 (M)	Bergson: Chapter 3
24	July 22 (T)	Conclusion. Bergson: Chapter 4. Paper 2 due.
30	July 24 (R)	Final Exam