

Graham Clay

curriculum vitae
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Department of Philosophy

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Education

University of Notre Dame

Ph.D., philosophy 2019
Thesis: *Hume on Knowledge*

Advisor: Samuel Newlands
Committee: Don Garrett (NYU), Blake Roeber,
Katharina Kraus

M.A., philosophy 2016

University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

B.A., *with distinction*, philosophy (honors), economics 2013

Honors Thesis: *Skeptical Realist Interpretations of Hume*
Advisor: Geoffrey Sayre-McCord
Committee: Simon Blackburn and Ram Neta

Specializations Competencies

Early Modern Philosophy, Philosophy of Mind, and Epistemology
Metaphysics, Ancient Philosophy, Ethics

Publications

2. Aristotle's Argument from Truth in *Metaphysics* Γ4

Analysis, 79 (1): 17-24. 2019.

1. Russell and the Temporal Contiguity of Causes and Effects

Erkenntnis, 83 (6): 1245-1264. 2018.

Teaching

As Instructor of Record and Course Designer:

Citizenship: Voting, Representation, and Parties

PHIL 20451: University of Notre Dame, Fall 2019

Systematic Thinking: God, Identity, and the Moderns

PHIL 20249: University of Notre Dame, Spring 2018

As Teaching Assistant:

History of Modern Philosophy (instructor: Samuel Newlands)

PHIL 30302: University of Notre Dame, Fall 2017

Introduction to Philosophy (instructor: Joseph Karbowski)

PHIL 10101: University of Notre Dame, Spring 2016

Introduction to Philosophy (instructor: Meghan Sullivan)

PHIL 10101: University of Notre Dame, Fall 2015

Works in Progress

Adding a Prong to Hume's Fork (R&R at *Oxford Studies in Early Modern Philosophy*)

Hume, Infallibilism, and Knowledge of the External World (under review)

Can the Berkeleyan Idealist Resist Spinozist Panpsychism? (R&R at *Logical Analysis and History of Philosophy*)

Hume's Denial of the Entailment Thesis (draft available)

Locke: Theist, Agnostic, Dualist (draft available)

How Brouwer Can Help Hume (in progress)

Hume's Incredible Demonstrations (in progress)

Service

Consultant, PhilSurvey project, 2018-present

Editorial Assistant, Notre Dame Philosophical Reviews (NDPR), 2016-2017

Co-Founder, UNC Philosophy, Politics, and Economics Club, 2010-2013

Dissertation Summary - *Hume on Knowledge*

Hume's account of knowledge plays a crucial role in his system, but it has been widely neglected. In my doctoral dissertation, I develop a comprehensive interpretation of Hume's account of knowledge, and I apply my interpretation to a variety of issues (both interpretative and otherwise).

With the help of some of the principles that Hume is universally agreed to endorse, I argue in my first chapter that Hume's passages concerning knowledge support my interpretation of his account of knowledge at the expense of the alternatives. Under my interpretation, Hume holds that (i) every instance of knowledge must be immediately present to the mind, (ii) an intentional object of every instance of knowledge must be a relation that depends only on the intrinsic properties of its relata, and (iii) this relation must have parts of the instance of knowledge as relata. Although these three conditions are extremely demanding—indeed, Hume arrives at them because he holds that knowledge requires absolute certainty—they also make room for Humean perceptual knowledge. This possibility is further supported by passages where Hume states that relations of the right kind hold between the parts of sensed things that are immediately present to the mind. If, for instance, one simultaneously sees a patch of crimson and a patch of scarlet, Hume's view is that one thereby knows that the former is darker red than the latter. So, while in many cases Humean knowledge is hard to come by, it is pervasive in the products of the senses and thus acts as a solid foundation for our subsequent thoughts. In this way, my interpretation of Hume's account of knowledge reveals a new and important aspect of Hume's empiricism.

My second chapter addresses the question of whether Hume allows for the possibility of knowledge without belief. Contemporary epistemologists have been very interested in the relationship between knowledge and belief for decades, and the consensus is that we cannot know something without believing it. I argue that Hume challenges this dogma, both in cases involving sense perception and in cases involving abstract philosophical reasoning. Hume's argumentation surrounding these cases relies heavily on the specifics of his philosophy of mind. Since many contemporary epistemologists seek to remain as neutral as possible with respect to philosophy of mind, I conclude by arguing that contemporary epistemologists have much to gain from studying and emulating Hume's methodology.

Given that Hume holds that a knower cannot err about what she knows, the specter of external world skepticism looms over him. Nevertheless, I argue in my third chapter that Hume's account of knowledge does not rule out knowledge of the external world. I argue that direct realisms—views that maintain that mind-independent things are immediately present to the mind—combine with Hume's account of knowledge to entail the negation of external world skepticism. I conclude by arguing that some strains of direct realism provide even more space for Hume to deny external world skepticism, regardless of how strongly the latter view is formulated.

In my fourth chapter, I argue that Hume maintains that there are sound philosophical arguments with necessary premises that have conclusions that cannot be believed. Hume's position is independently interesting because there is good reason to think that he holds that all of the "refin'd and metaphysical" arguments distinctive of philosophy are of this sort. If Hume is right in even a single case, then we must reevaluate the role and ambitions of philosophical argumentation. My interpretation also has ramifications for our understanding of Hume's use of skeptical arguments. It is commonly held that Hume's primary use of skeptical arguments is as evidence for his account of the mind. Hume maintains that the skeptical arguments he presents all fail to generate beliefs in their conclusions, and he argues that his account of the mind is uniquely able to explain why, or so the common view goes. I argue that this understanding of Hume's relationship to skepticism relies on the assumption that he intends the skeptical arguments to be sound and to have necessary premises. If the arguments do not have these features—as I argue they do—they do not provide evidence for his account of the mind.