IDENTITÉ PERSONNELLE ET SELFHOODCHEZ LOCKE ET SES HÉRITIERS
Personal identity and selfhood in the post-Lockean tradition

PRESENTATION

In this class, we will read and discuss a selection of texts from the anglophone tradition of thinking about personal identity and selfhood that started with "Identity and Diversity", chapter 27 of Book II of Locke's *Essay Concerning Human Understanding*. We will pay particular attention to the conceptual and linguistic innovations introduced by Locke and to the now classic objections raised by such philosophers as Berkeley, Butler, Hume and Reid. These objections have played a significant role in how Locke's theory has been received in contemporary analytic philosophy. One central question will be whether the standard reading of Locke that gives rise to these objections is in fact correct or whether an alternative reading is possible. Though not the focus of the class, we will also do some translation work.

EVALUATION

Two grades: 50 % Written paper/essay (in English). 50% Final Exam

Oral presentations: Instead of writing a paper, you may choose to do an oral presentation. The goal is to start a class discussion. In order to encourage you, I grade these presentations more generously than the papers. These exposés should be brief and direct (10-15 minutes) in English on a section of readings for the week. The format of the presentation is as follows:

1. choose a claim or thesis from the reading that is illustrated or supported with an example
2. explain what the claim means and what the point of the example is
3. evaluate the argument the author presents for it

In doing so, you should to identify at least one problem or question the argument raises and consider how we might respond to it. What did you find interesting about this claim? Did the argument convince you? Why or why not?

The written papers follow the same format, though they should be somewhat more developed. They are **due no later than the week we read the chosen text** (you may hand it in earlier).
→ Approximately 3-4 pages, 12-point font, 1.5-spaced. *Linguistic errors are not penalized as long as I can understand and see effort.*

Written exam during final session, May 14th. The exam will involve questions requiring you to critically examine one or more of the texts we have read.

TEXTS

*PERRY, J. (ed.), 1975/2008, *Personal Identity*, Berkeley: University of California Press, **2nd ed.**

LOCKE, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, Peter H. Nidditch (ed.), Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1975; tr. fr. *Un Essai philosophique concernant l'entendement humain,* traduction par Pierre Coste [1700], Paris: Vrin, 1972; *Essai philosophique sur l'entendement humain: Livres I et II*, traduction par Jean-Michel Vienne, Paris: Vrin, 2002; *Essai sur l'entendement humain,* traduction par Pierre Coste, établissement du texte, présentation, dossier et notes par Philippe Hamou, Paris, Le Livre de Poche, 2009.

FERRET, S. (ed.), *L'Idéntité*. Textes choisis, Paris, Flammarion, 1998 (contient des traductions partielles de plusieurs des textes, notamment de Hume, de Butler et de Reid).

The texts that are not in Perry's collection will be available on Moodle.

SCHEDULE OF READINGS

I. **Locke on Personal Identity and Selfhood and his classical critics**

WEEK 1 – Presentation of the course, translation excercise, Pascal, "Qu'est-ce que le moi?"
WEEK 2 – LOCKE, *Essay*, II.27, "Identity and Diversity" §1-9, presentation suggestion: §6 et 7
WEEK 3 – LOCKE *Essay*, II.27, §10-21, presentation: §15

20 FÉVRIER VACANCES

WEEK 4 – LOCKE *Essay*, II.27, §22-29, presentation: §22
WEEK 5 – BUTLER "Of Personal Identity" ch. 5 in Perry
WEEK 6 – REID "Of Identity", "Of Mr. Locke's Account of our Personal Identity" ch. 6-7 in Perry ; BERKELEY, *Alciphron: or, the Minute Philosopher* (1732) Dialogue VII, Sec. 8 (moodle)

9 ET 16 AVRIL – VACANCES

WEEK 7 – HUME, *Treatise of Human Nature*, Bk. I, Part IV, Sec. 6 "Of Personal Identity" (ch. 11), Appendix "Second Thoughts" (ch. 12)

II. Responses to critics of Locke's approach and an alternative reading

WEEK 8 – Responses to the objections by analytic philosophers: selections from Quinton "The Soul" (ch. 3 in Perry) and Grice "Personal Identity" (ch. 4 in Perry)
WEEK 9 – Abandoning identity in favor of successive selves, selections from Derek PARFIT, "Personal Identity" (Ch. 14 in Perry) and *Reasons and Persons* (extract on moodle)
WEEK 10 – E. LAW, "A Defence of Mr. Locke's Opinion Concerning Personal Identity" (MOODLE)
WEEK 11 – G. STRAWSON "The Secrets of all Hearts: Locke on Personal Identity" (article on moodle)
WEEK 12 – Retour sur LOCKE; MARYA SCHECHTMAN, "Having a Narrative", section from the *Constitution of Selves*, drawing on Locke, pp. 105-114; "Empathic Access: the Missing Ingredient in Personal Identity" (article on moodle)

WEEK 13 – MAI 14 – Exam : Translation + ESSAY QUESTIONS

« Textes philosophiques en anglais », History of Philosophy Master's Program, Spring 2018
Friday, 15:30-16:00, Salle D 690 (en Sorbonne)
Instructor : S. Webb (samuel.webb@paris-sorbonne.fr)

JOHN RAWLS, A THEORY OF JUSTICE

PRESENTATION

This course will consist in the reading, translation and commentary of a select passages of John Rawls' landmark work *A Theory of Justice*, as well as some related texts. We will pay particular attention to the argument from the "Original Position". Rawls claims that this argument allows us to establish a conception of social justice that is both ideally fair and realizable in our non-ideal world. We will examine this claim and the difficulties that it raises. We will also explore the differential reception of this text in the Anglophone world and in France. You should come to each session having done the readings for the week and thought about the questions on the syllabus for that section. You should also translate a brief passage of your choice into French. During each session, we will translate a passage from the week's readings together, compare our translations, and discuss difficulties of interpretation of key passages.

Language: In class, I will primarily speak English, but you may speak English or French. Do not hesitate to ask questions if there is something you do not understand. I will reiterate certain key points in French where necessary.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

-   Reading in English. Acquiring in depth knowledge of J. Rawls' *A Theory of Justice*, its theses, arguments, reception, and applications.
-   Practice communication and philosophical discussion in English
-   Develop argumentation skills
-   Learn the art of translating philosophical concepts and terms from English to French
-   Master the methodology of philosophical textual commentary
-   Compare Anglophone political philosophy to the French tradition and context

TEXT

J. Rawls, A Theory of Justice, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, Revised edition, 1999. [Non l'édition originale de 1971]; traduction fr. de Catherine AUDARD, *Théorie de la justice*, Paris, Seuil, 1987.
(I will sometimes refer to the original edition to point out the sources of some misunderstandings).

EVALUATION

Your grade is composed of the **average of two grades :** 1) an oral or written exposé in English on the readings for the week et 2) an in-class exam (DST). **The exam will take place on the 23rd of March** will consist in the commentary and translation into French of a passage from the text.

Instructions for the exposé or presentation
During each session, one student will present in English an aspect of the readings for the week that they have chosen to focus on. Those who do not present in class are to hand in a written presentation **no later than May 4th** (the earlier the better!). The exposé should last between **15-20 minutes** and be conceived on the model of a seminar presentation or a brief academic "talk". In written form, it should be about **4 pages** (1.5 spaced).

The point of the presentation is to stimulate discussion. You may use the study questions to guide you, but you should choose an aspect of the readings that interests you personally. The presentation should accomplish three things :

1. **Identify a problem raised by the text and a thesis it defends**. In your own words, what is the text talking about and what does it aim to show?

2. **Identify and explain an argument.** How does Rawls attempt to convince us of his position on the point you have chosen? What is the opposing view? What reasons does he give us to accept his position?

3. **Respond to the argument.** Tell us whether you think the argument is convincing and why. In your critical analysis of the argument, point out an aspect that seems interesting or debatable to you. This could be an unexamined presupposition or premise, a possible objection or the way this argument responds to an objection, an ambiguity, a connection to another thinker, an application or extension, or a question that seems relevant but unresolved. In brief, tell us what more needs to be said in your view.

The presentation is a *communication* exercise. You should not simply read a text that you have written, but try to speak directly to the class and make yourself understood. Think about the physical and visual aspect of the presentation. You may prepare a handout or a Powerpoint to outline the argument and the points you want to raise and the specific passages you want to focus on. Do not hesitate to come see me for advice about your particular presentation.

CALENDAR OF READINGS
For each session, you should both read the passages in question and be prepared to answer the questions in class.

I.   JUSTICE AS FAIRNESS

02/02 – Presentation of the course, introduction to Rawls and to *TJ*

09/02 – §§1-3 The role, the subject, and the main idea of the theory of justice
What is a theory of social justice about? To what problem does it respond? What is the relationship between the concept of justice and a conception of justice?

16/02 – **§4** The Original Position and Justification
What is the original position and what kind of argument does Rawls make with it? What is its role in justifying principles of justice in the face of real disagreement?

23/02 – §5 Classical Utilitarianism; **§7** Intuitionism; **§9** Some Remarks about Moral Theory
What are the alternative positions Rawls considers and intends to argue against? What are Rawls' presuppositions about the nature of moral theory, and normative claims in general?

02/03 – VACATION

II.   THE ORIGINAL POSITION AND ITS PROBLEMS

09/03 – **§ 11** The Two Principles of Justice; **§12** The Second Principle; p. 72 on the Difference Principle
What are the two principles of justice that Rawls argues would be chosen in Original Position? What is their relationship to each other? Do these principles seem reasonable? Why or why not? How would society be different if they were realized?

16/03 – **§14** Fair Equality of Opportunity and Pure Procedural Justice
What is fair *equality of opportunity and why does Rawls think it is necessary to achieve justice? How does pure procedural justice work (how does it differ from other forms of justice)?*

23/03 – **Exam (Devoir sur table)** Textual commentary and translation in French.

30/03 – **§17** The Tendency to Equality

In what sense is Rawls' theory (justice as fairness) egalitarian? What is Rawls' critique of meritocracy and is it convincing?

06/04 – Ch. III The Original Position §§**20-24**
What is the nature of arguments for conceptions of justice according to Rawls? What are the arguments he provides for the different conditions on principles in the Original Position? Do these conditions seem universally acceptable? What is the nature of Rawls' argument for the claim that "to each according to his threat advantage is not a conception of justice"? Who might want to defend such a conception and why?

13/04 – Ch. III The Original Position §§**25-30** [mainly 25, 26, and 29]
According to Rawls, why would the two principles of justice, and only those principles, be chosen in the Original Position? What form of collective rationality is assumed by the parties and how is it supposed to lead to a fair outcome? Does this argument make the principles seem applicable in real life?

20/04 et **27/04 –** VACANCES

III. Ideal and Nonideal theory: Towards a realistic Utopia?

04/05 – §39 Priority of Liberty Defined; **§40** Kantian Interpretation of Justice as Fairness
In what does the distinction between ideal and non-ideal theory consist? Why does Rawls propose it? In what sense does the theory of justice as fairness embody Kantian ideals like autonomy and reciprocity? Does it depend on Kantian presuppositions?

11/05 – §47 Precepts of Justice (distribution); **§48** Legitimate Expectations and Moral Desert; **§59** The Role of Civil Disobedience
What is Rawls' approach to distributive justice and why does he consider common sense principles and the utilitarian criterion insufficient? What is the distinction between entitlements to legitimate expectations and moral desert and why does it matter? What role does Rawls envision for Civil Disobedience? Do the conditions Rawls place on its legitimate use seem justified? Is the context of injustice sufficiently addressed?

18/05 – §67 Self-Respect, Excellences, and Shame; **§76** Problem of relative stability; **§86** The Good of the Sense of Justice; **§87** Remarks on Justification
What is the good of self-respect and why does Rawls consider it so important? Is a "society of mutual respect" realistically attainable?
What is Rawls' argument that a society regulated by the principles of justice as fairness would be relatively more stable than the other conceptions he considers? What assumptions does Rawls make about "the problem stability"? How might people develop the sense of justice that Rawls envisions? Rawls claims his theory is "realistically utopian". What does that mean and do you agree with his assessment?

**READINGS IN CONTEMPORARY ANGLO-AMERICAN PHILOSOPHY:
WHAT CAN PHILOSOPHY TALK ABOUT?**

PRESENTATION

The theme of this course is philosophical discussion, how to do it, what it can achieve. Each session will be dedicated to a discussion in English of a philosophical question or topic on the basis of texts from contemporary Anglo-American philosophy. These texts belong to moral and political philosophy as well as epistemology and metaphysics. They express a variety of conflicting views about what living in society with others requires, about our relation to the world and our understanding of ourselves. These are problems with immediate relevance to how we live our lives. We will learn how to evaluate the arguments put forward in these texts and how to develop our own, through exchange with others.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES
- Reading knowledge of in English with philosophical texts.
- Acquire familiarity with contemporary Anglo-American approaches to political philosophy, ethical theory, epistemology, metaphysics and philosophy of mind.
- Practice communication and discussion of philosophy in English
- Develop critical thinking and argumentation skills

EVALUATION

Your grade is composed of the **average of two grades :** 1) an oral or written exposé in English on the readings for the week et 2) an in-class exam (DST). **The exam will take place on the April 18th.**

Instructions for the exposé or presentation
The presentation should accomplish three things :

1. **Identify the problem raised by the text and a thesis it defends**. In your own words, *what* is the text talking about and what does it aim to *show*?
2. **Interpret and explain an argument.** *How* does the author support his or her claim? What reasons does he give us to accept his position?
3. **Respond to the argument.** Tell us whether you find the argument is convincing and why. In your critical analysis, point out an aspect that seems interesting or debatable to you. This could be an unexamined presupposition or premise, a possible objection or the way the argument responds to an objection, an ambiguity. In brief, you should raise a question or problem about the text that you would like to discuss further with the class.

For those who do not present in class, you should hand in a written version of the exposé, following the same format, *the day we discuss the text*. Written exposés should be 2-3 pages, 1.5 spaced, 12 point font.

Students dispensed from attendance only need to pass the exam to validate the class.

Language note : If you do not feel comfortable or able to articulate your ideas in English, say them in French and we will translate them together.

THE READINGS – A Reader containing all the readings will be distributed in class and available on Moodle
We will read the work of the following authors.
Elizabeth Anderson, Elizabeth Anscombe, Nancy Bauer, Daniel Dennett, Ralph W. Emerson, Edmund Gettier, Philippa Foot, Gilbert Harman, Carol Hay, William James, Thomas Kuhn, Martin Luther King, Jr., Krista Lawlor, Richard Moran, Iris Murdoch, Robert Nozick, Martha Nussbaum, Derek Parfit, John Rawls, Mario Rizzo, John Searle, Adam Smith, Amia Srinivasan, Henry D. Thoreau

CALENDAR OF READINGS
[Session **1]** 31/01 Presentation of the class.
Philosophy as open conversation about our convictions in the face of problems.
Nancy Bauer, "Authority and Arrogance" (2010)
The Stone: New York Times Philosophy Blog
http://opinionator.blogs.nytimes.com/2010/06/30/authority-and-arrogance-a-response/

R. W. Ralph Waldo Emerson, *Self-Reliance*

[2] 07/02 *Does disgust (or any emotional reaction) have any place in moral reasoning?*
Carol Hay, "Gross violations" (2014)
https://aeon.co/essays/does-disgust-have-any-place-in-moral-reasoning

Attention and the Moral Significance of "Seeing"
Iris Murdoch, *The Sovereignty of Good* (1970)

[3] 14/02 *How should we choose principles of justice? Fairness, disagreement and bargaining.*
John Rawls, *A Theory of Justice* (1971, revised ed. 1999)
Gilbert Harman, "Justice and Moral Bargaining" (1983)

[4] 21/02 *What should we do about unjust laws?*
Henry David Thoreau, "Civil Disobedience" (1849)
Martin Luther King, Jr. "Letter from Birmingham Jail" (1963)

[5] 28/02 *Do victims of oppression have a duty to resist?*
Carol Hay, "A Feminist Kant"
http://opinionator.blogs.nytimes.com/2013/12/08/a-feminist-kant/

Individual rights, duties, and the role of the state
Robert Nozick, *Anarchy, State and Utopia* (1974), Preface.
Adam Smith, *The Wealth of Nations* (1776), Bk 4, Ch. 9, § 51

07/03 – Vacation, no class

[6] 14/03 **Amia Srinivasan**, "Questions for Free-Market Moralists"
The Stone: New York Times Philosophy Blog
http://opinionator.blogs.nytimes.com/2013/10/20/questions-for-free-market-moralists/

Mario Rizzo, "Questions for Free Market Moralists? Some Answers"
http://thinkmarkets.wordpress.com/2013/10/22/questions-for-free-market-moralists-some-answers/
ThinkMarkets *A blog of the NYU Colloquium on Market Institutions and Economic*

[7] 21/03 *What is it to secure a right? The capabilities approach and the point of equality*

Martha Nussbaum, "Capabilities as Fundamental Entitlements: Sen and Social Justice" (2003)
Elizabeth Anderson, *"*What is the Point of Equality?" (1999)

[8] 28/02   *What is the relationship between truth and usefulness?*
                 William James, *The Meaning of Truth: A Sequel to Pragmatism* (1911)

                 Does science progress towards the "Truth"?
                 Thomas Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (1962), Postscript, 1969.

[9] 04/04   *What can we learn from analytic thought experiments*?
                 Edmund Gettier, "Is Justified True Belief Knowledge?" (1963)
                 John Searle "Minds, Brains, and Programs" (1980) The "Chinese Room" Argument
                 Can computers understand language?
                 Philippa Foot "The Problem of Abortion and the Doctrine of the Double Effect"(1967)
                 "Trolley problems"

[10] 11/04   *Is the self a fictional character?*
                 Daniel C. Dennett, "The Self as a Center of Narrative Gravity" (1992)

                 When (if ever) does it make sense to say someone has become a different person?
                 Derek Parfit on "successive selves" in *Reasons and Persons* (1984)

[11] 18/04 **Examen sur table/Exam in class** – On texts and themes from the course

25/04 – 02/05 Spring Break, no class!

[12] 09/05   *Do we have an intuitive self-consciousness?*
                 Charles S. Peirce, *Collected Papers* vol. 5 Book 2 Question 2

                 What does "I" stand for?
                 Elizabeth Anscombe, "The First-Person" (1975)

[13] 16/05   *How do we know what we want ? Problems of self-knowledge*
                 Krista Lawlor, "Knowing What One Wants" (2009)
                 Richard Moran, *Authority and Estrangement. An Essay on Self-Knowledge*, 2001.