

Duquesne University  
McAnulty College and Graduate School of Liberal Arts

Spring 2020

**Honors Inquiry II: Memory & Revision**

HONR 105-01

MWF 9:00 - 9:50

Fisher Hall 705

**Mr. Daniel Cook**

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Office hours: Mondays & Wednesdays 1:00 - 2:00 pm, or by appointment.

**Course description:** Memory plays a fundamental role in our lives. It allows us to carry our pasts along with us as we age, it stores information that we can later access and use, it allows us to learn from and avoid the mistakes we've made in the past, and it lets us make and keep our promises to others. In this course we will be asking what memory is, how it works, how it helps us, and how it might harm us from a philosophical and literary perspective. We will begin by reading influential philosophical accounts of the nature of memory by Plato, David Hume, John Locke, and Sigmund Freud. We will read sociologist Maurice Halbwach's influential analysis of collective memory. We will then consider Friedrich Nietzsche's more critical account of memory and ask whether forgetting is not just as important to our lives as remembering is. We will end the course by reading Catherine Malabou's philosophical engagement with contemporary neuroscience in order to relate what we'll have learned from philosophy and literature to scientific accounts of memory and revision.

**Course objectives:** This course aims to teach students how to read and enjoy works of philosophy, how to take seriously perspectives other than their own, and how to feel confident expressing philosophical positions and their own positions well both in speech and in writing. It aims to provide students with a basic understanding of philosophy and of the philosophical positions of some the most important thinkers in the history of philosophy.

**Learning outcomes:** Students will be able to locate and understand key concepts in difficult philosophical texts, to produce concise but accurate interpretative essays, to communicate complex ideas clearly, effectively, and confidently, and they will be able to charitably and effectively argue both for and against various philosophical positions.

**Course texts:**

Plato, *Five Dialogues*, translated by G. M. A. Grube (Hackett Publishing Co.)

David Hume, *A Treatise on Human Understanding*, edited by Ernest Mossner (Penguin Classics)

Friedrich Nietzsche, *On the Advantage and Disadvantage of History for Life*, translated by Peter Peruses (Hackett Publishing Co.)

Catherine Malabou, *What Should We Do with Our Brain?*, translated by S. Rand (Fordham)

+ Additional readings distributed on Blackboard.