In this seminar we will focus on the ways in which aspects of the world might be dependent upon humans in some way as to make them not fully objective. We will look at attempts by philosophers to make sense of a distinction between two types of qualities, objective ones and ones that are somehow less so and at attempts to use that distinction to give an account of qualities such as sensory, moral, or aesthetic qualities. We will start with two paradigms for making such a distinction, one found in Plato's *Euthyphro* and the other in Locke's discussion of primary and secondary qualities and then move on to attempts by philosophers to make use of, and elaborate on, these distinctions. Readings will be by Hume, Mackie, Johnston, Pettit, Wright, Rosen, McDowell, Smith, and Wiggins, among others.

**Required Texts:**

Papers downloadable from JSTOR and on reserve.

**Requirements:**

Class participation: Come prepared for class, having read all assigned readings at least twice. Class presentation and a short paper based on that presentation, due before midterm break. Final paper: outline due before Thanksgiving; final version due Friday Dec 3, by 5pm.

**Grading:**

Participation (25%); presentation and midterm paper (25%); final paper (50%). All assignments must be completed to pass the course. Late papers get penalized one third of a letter grade for each day past due date, unless there is a documented medical emergency.

**Class schedule:**

**Week 1 (Aug 31): Introduction to the themes of the seminar**

Plato's *Euthyphro*
Week 2 (Sept 7): Locke's primary and secondary qualities
Locke, *Essay* Bk. 2, Ch. 8.
Mackie, *Themes from Locke*, Ch. 1

Week 3 (Sept 14): The idea of an independent reality

Week 4 (Sept 21): Hume on the standard of taste
David Hume, "The Standard of Taste"

Week 5 (Sept 28): Contemporary attempts to account for value: early Wiggins
David Wiggins, "Truth, Invention, and the Meaning of Life"

Week 6 (Oct 5): McDowell on values, secondary qualities, and the "fabric" of the world
John McDowell, "Aesthetic Value, Objectivity, and the Fabric of the World"
John McDowell, "Values and Secondary Qualities"

Week 7 (Oct 12): Wiggins again
David Wiggins, "A Sensible Subjectivism?"

Oct 13: Midterm paper due by 5pm

Week 8 (Oct 19): Fall vacation: No class

Week 9 (Oct 26): Response-dependence I
Mark Johnston, "Objectivity Refigured: Pragmatism without Verificationism"

Week 10 (Nov 2): Response-dependence II
Philip Pettit, "Realism and Response-Dependence"

Week 11 (Nov 9): Judgment-dependence
Crispin Wright, "The Euthyphro Contrast", from *Truth and Objectivity*

Week 12 (Nov 16): To be decided

Week 13 (Nov 23): To be decided
Outline of final paper due

Week 14 (Nov 30): Wrap-up
Dec 3: Final paper due by 5pm

Week 15 (Dec 7): Vassar Thursday Schedule: No class

Academic accommodations are available for students with documented disabilities. Please schedule an appointment with the instructor early in the semester to discuss any accommodation that may be needed for the course. All accommodations must be approved through the Office of Disability and Support Services (ext. 7584) as indicated in their accommodation letter.