Directions: These topics are suggested topics for a 10-12 page paper, which is an alternative to the two short papers (paper #2 and paper #3). These papers should involve both the close reading and interpretation of passages from the primary works, and some discussion of leading secondary sources. Papers due April 26.

1. Discuss the role which the primary/secondary quality distinction plays in the philosophies of Locke and Berkeley. Be sure to lay out Locke’s arguments for the distinction, and to specify clearly what Locke takes the distinction to be. Then expound Berkeley’s arguments against Locke’s way of drawing the distinction, and provide a detailed account of the relation between Berkeley’s treatment of the primary/secondary quality distinction and his overall argument for immaterialism. Finally, take up the question whether Berkeley’s understanding of Locke’s distinction and the arguments Locke gives for it are faithful to Locke.

2. Explain the differing views of Locke, Berkeley and Hume on the question of causality. (In the case of Locke, you should pay particular attention to Essay IV.6, where Locke denies that there are very many instructive certainties concerning the co-existence of qualities and powers in bodies.) How do their views on causality enter into their overall philosophical systems? How are Hume’s arguments in the Enquiry concerning Human Understanding Section VII, Part 1 supposed to work against both Locke’s and Berkeley’s views? Do they work against them?

3. Explain the differing attitudes of Locke, Berkeley and Hume toward skepticism. You will want to explain what each thought skepticism was, how it arose, what its philosophical significance is, and how each defined himself (and in the case of Berkeley and Hume, defined his predecessors) in terms of his relation to skepticism.

4. Compare and contrast Locke’s and Hume’s projects of providing a scientific account of the nature and workings of the human understanding. In what ways are the conclusions each draws about the extent of human knowledge based on the results of their science of the mind? Discussing the case of causality, personal identity, or the justification of belief in an external world (discuss one of these only), show how Locke and Hume arrived at dramatically different results, and show how these results follow from their different notions of a science of human nature or of the mind.

5. How do Berkeley and Hume attack the Newtonian notion of space as an absolute reality (required for absolute motion) and as mathematically describable? How do these attacks relate to their overall attitudes toward natural philosophy?