

**Title of the course:** *Subjective Idealism*

**Instructor:** Daniel Kodaj

**Course description:**

Subjective idealism—usually associated with two 18th-century philosophers, Berkeley and Leibniz, but also found in Buddhist philosophy—is the view that the physical world is not real: fundamentally, only our (immaterial) minds exist and apparent physical objects like tables, chairs, houses, stars etc. are mere ‘images’ in our minds.

Subjective idealism has been steadily unpopular ever since its inception and philosophers almost universally reject it today. To counter this trend, this course seeks to show that subjective idealism is a perfectly coherent and unrefuted doctrine, and the arguments in its favour are roughly as strong as the arguments for the dogma that the physical world is real. After a quick glance at the history of philosophy, we will discuss contemporary analytic arguments for and against subjective idealism, especially in connection with epistemology and philosophy of science.

**Assessment:**

BA and non-philosophy MA/PhD students:

A midterm exam and a final exam, based on the readings.

Philosophy MA/PhD: Term paper (2000 words). Deadline: the middle of the exam period.

**Topics:**

1. The concept of idealism
2. Berkeley
3. Hume
4. The truthmaker objection
5. The regress of pure powers
6. The ideality of space
7. Idealism and special relativity
8. Idealism and quantum mechanics
9. Idealism and cognitive science
10. Idealism and the mind-body problem

**Readings:**

Readings will be published on the course homepage ([elte.dkodaj.net](http://elte.dkodaj.net)).

**Recommended readings:**

Joshua Farris & Benedikt Göcke (ed.) (2022): *The Routledge Handbook of Idealism and Immaterialism*. Routledge.