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Phil 232 – Kant Syllabus, Spring Term 2006, Section 1001

MW 9:35-10:50, David Straz Hall, R. 442

An online version of this syllabus can be found at <http://academic.mu.edu/phil/lufts/Teaching1.htm>.

Content:

Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason* remains one of the most important books in Western philosophy. It revolutionized the philosophy of the Enlightenment by determining not only the capacities but also the limits of reason and placed modern thought on a new foundation. It was also the most important stimulation for the movements to emerge as developments or critiques of Kant. No philosopher of significance after Kant could afford to ignore Kant and he has been a constant source of inspiration as well as object of severe criticism for philosophers of distinct schools, such as German Idealism, neo-Kantianism, Phenomenology, Anglo-American Analytic philosophy and contemporary Philosophy of Mind. Modern philosophy cannot be understood without at least a rudimentary understanding of Kant's philosophy.

This course will offer a general introduction to Kant's theoretical philosophy by way of a close reading of key passages of Kant's *magnum opus*, the *Critique of Pure Reason*, but we will also study how his theoretical thought is applied to the realm of morality—to Kant, the most important part of philosophy. Therefore, we will also take a look at Kant's moral philosophy in the Second Critique, the *Critique of Practical Reason*, and in the *Groundwork*. In the First Critique, we will focus mainly on the Transcendental Aesthetics and the Transcendental Logic (Analytic and Dialectic). We will discuss the main topics of Kant's philosophy by incorporating classical Kant scholarship.

This class requires no previous knowledge of Kant. Knowledge of German will be an asset but is not required.

Objectives:

This course offers an introduction to Kant on the graduate level. This means that at the end of the semester graduate students should have a basic but solid grasp of the scope of Kant's philosophical system; his notion of transcendental philosophy, the Copernican turn; transcendental idealism; his alleged advancement over traditional philosophical schools (Rationalism, Empiricism); and the way in which theoretical and practical philosophy relate to one another. Students should be able to put Kant into historical as well as systematic perspective, i.e., to understand how Kant could provide the backdrop for the philosophical tendencies to come (e.g., German Idealism, neo-Kantianism, Phenomenology). The overall purpose is to gain a critical and reflected appreciation for the importance of Kant's philosophy. The course will also attempt to hone graduate students' exegetical and interpretative skills through a close and careful reading of the text, as well as develop and further the capacity to formulate one's own questions and to challenge a philosopher's claims, presuppositions, and approaches to timeless philosophical questions.

Texts:

Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason* (Cambridge UP, 1999);

--: *Groundwork for the Metaphysics of Morals* (Cambridge UP, 1996);

--: *Critique of Practical Reason* (Cambridge U Press, 1996).

We will use the translation by Guyer/Wood of the First Critique, though you are encouraged to look at other translations for comparison.

[As for the last two items, you are also free to use the reprint in the edition *Practical Philosophy* (Cambridge U Press, 1996).]

Helpful Secondary Sources:

Otfried Höffe, *Immanuel Kant* (SUNY Press); helpful introductory sketch of Kant's philosophy as a whole.

Sebastian Gardner, *Kant and the Critique of Pure Reason* (Routledge); close commentary to the First Critique, highly recommended.

Allan Wood, *Immanuel Kant* (Blackwell); a new and clear presentation of Kant's entire oeuvre by a renowned Kant scholar.

Henry Allison, *Kant's Transcendental Idealism* (Yale U Press); the classic—needs no introduction (be sure to get the newest edition!).

Georges Dickel, *Kant's Theory of Knowledge. An Analytical Introduction* (Oxford U Press); the subtitle says it all—a new and very clear analytical reading.

For an account of Kant's life and works, take a look at the classic work by Ernst Cassirer, *Kant's Life and Thought* (Yale U Press) and the new biography by Manfred Kuehn, *Immanuel Kant* (Cambridge U Press.).

Finally, the *Cambridge Companion to Kant* is always a good place to get started. I highly recommend purchasing this book.

There are items on Electronic Reserve that I will point you to over the course of the semester, though I also encourage you to check independently.

Method of Evaluation:

The final grade will be calculated as follows: Midterm Exam (take home) 20%; Response Papers 20%; Research Paper 50%; Participation 10%.

The Midterm Exam will consist of an exam with essay questions in take-home format (handed out on March 8, due on March 20).

There will be altogether 10 Response Papers of 1-2 pages length (1.5-space, max. 500 words, please add word count) to be handed in on Mondays (see the Course Schedule for the due dates). Their purpose is to formulate problems/issues/reactions/questions relating to the reading assigned in clear prose (what I do *not* want is a summary!). Incorporating secondary sources is not expected. Each will reach a total of up to 10 points for a maximum total of 100 points overall. Points will be given on the basis of lucidity, insight, originality, and clarity. The grading scale here is, as in all other grading for written work: 100-93 A, 92-87 AB, 86-83 B, 82-77 BC, 76-73 C, 72-67 CD, 66-50 D, 50-0 F.

The Research Paper is due on May 8 and is expected to have a length of 15-20 pages (double-space) and is to incorporate at least *five* secondary sources (these can be books or articles). The idea is to prepare and work on this paper over the course of the semester. This entails that each student is to come up with a research topic on his/her own and should discuss this with me at different points during the semester. The due date for a topic (this includes the anticipated title of the paper and an abstract of ca. half a page) is April 12. At that time, you should have a clear idea of what you want to work on, have done research on it, and have it ready for approval. I expect you to be in touch with me over the course of the semester (in my office hours or via email) to discuss ideas that you are entertaining and problems that you are wrestling with.

Participation will be graded in terms of classroom performance as well as postings on D2L. I intend to make use of D2L extensively and expect you to check it regularly and contribute to it with postings of your own. The discussion forum is intended to further the classroom discussion. There will be no oral presentations; however, each Wednesday class will be opened by a short introductory statement by a student. In this statement (ca. 5-10 minutes) the student assigned to this task will give a short summary of the reading, highlight questions, concerns or problems he/she had with the reading. I intend the class to be discussion-based, not lecture-format. So please come prepared and ready to participate. I do not have an attendance policy. If you are not well prepared, do not bother showing up. Please try to be punctual.

Course Schedule (Subject to Change)

- January 18: **First Day of Class. Technicalia. Introductory Lecture.**
- Jan. 23: Preface A (pp. 91-105 [CUP pagination]). **Reaction Paper I due.**
Suggested reading: Guyer in *Cambridge Companion*.
- Jan. 25: Preface B (pp. 106-124).
- Jan. 30: Introduction A (pp. 127-135). **RP II due.**
Suggested reading: Ch. 3 in Gardner.
- February 1: Introduction B (pp. 136-152).
- Feb. 6: Transcendental Aesthetic: Space (pp. 172-178). **RP III due.**
Suggested reading: Parsons in *Cambridge Companion*.
- Feb. 8: Transcendental Aesthetic: Time (pp. 178-192).
- Feb. 13: The Idea of a Transcendental Logic (pp. 193-200). **RP IV due.**
Suggested reading: Longuenesse on reserve.
- Feb. 15: Transcendental Analytic, Analytic of Concepts (pp. 201-218).
- Feb. 20: Transcendental Deduction, Principles of Transcendental Deduction in General (pp. 219-226). **RP V due.**
Suggested reading: Henrich on reserve.
- Feb. 22: Transcendental Deduction B (pp. 245-266).
- Feb. 27: Schematism (pp. 267-277). **RP VI due.**
Suggested reading: Ch. 8 in Allison, *Kant's Transcendental Idealism* and alternately Para. 19-23 in Heidegger, *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics* (on reserve)
- March 1: Schematism cont.
- March 6: System of Principles. Axioms of Intuition and Anticipations of Perception (pp. 278-295).
- March 8: Analogies of Experience (pp. 279-321).
Suggested reading: Friedman in *Cambridge Companion*. **Midterm Exam handed out.**
- March 13-19: **SPRING BREAK**
- March 20: Postulates of Empirical Thinking (pp. 321-337). **Midterm Exam due.**
- March 22: Phenomena and Noumena, Amphiboly (pp. 354-383).
Suggested reading: Ch. 11 in Allison, *Kant's Tr. Id.*
- March 27: Transcendental Dialectic. Transcendental Illusion and System of Transcendental Ideas (pp. 384-408). **RP VII due.**
Suggested reading: Ameriks in *Cambridge Companion*.
- March 29: Paralogisms of Pure Reason (pp. 409-415 & 445-458).

- April 3: Antinomy of Pure Reason (pp. 459-503).
Suggested reading: Ch. 3 in Allison, *Kant's Tr. Id.*
- April 5: Antinomy cont. (pp. 503-550).
- April 10: Ideal of Pure Reason (pp. 551-589). **RP VIII due.**
- April 12: Appendix to Transcendental Dialectic (pp. 590-623). **Topic + Abstract of Research Paper due.**
- April 13-17: EASTER HOLIDAY
- April 19: Final Discussion of Kant's Theoretical Philosophy.
- April 21: Critique of Practical Reason, Preface + Introduction
Suggested reading: Hill Jr. on reserve.
- April 24: Groundwork, Preface + Section I. **RP IX due.**
- April 26: Groundwork, Section II.
- May 1: Groundwork, Section III. **RP X due.**
- May 3: **Last day of class, Final Discussion.**
- May 8: **Final Paper due.**