

Sebastian Luft, PhD
Department of Philosophy
Coughlin Hall, Suite 141
Marquette University
Milwaukee, WI 53201-1881
Office Phone: 414-288-5960
Email: Sebastian.Luft@marquette.edu
Office Hours: M 1-2, F 3-4 and by appointment

PHIL 301 – *Early German Idealism* Syllabus, Spring Term 2009

MW 2:00-3:15, Johnston Hall, R. 513

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

Content & Objectives:

This graduate seminar is intended as a sequel to the Kant course and prequel to the Hegel course. We will study the emergence of *German Idealism* in the immediate reaction to Kant's *Critiques*. Kant's transcendental philosophy instantaneously sparked a plethora of controversies not only on the part of philosophers, but also generally intellectuals, who admired, but also criticized, further developed, or transformed Kant—or at least attempted to. This inaugurated the golden era of German philosophy later known as German Idealism. This period is fascinating due to the intellectual powers at play and it was, at the same time, energized by political events, such as the French Revolution. The early phase of this movement, beginning with contemporary reactions to Kant and ending, roughly, with the publication of Hegel's *Phenomenology* in 1807, is arguably the most interesting phase of this movement, before the "power centers" in Heidelberg, Jena and Weimar (and elsewhere in Germany) had been established. Not surprisingly, this early period has attracted a great deal of attention in scholarship in recent years. It is acknowledged that this was the most original and creative phase in the history of this movement. We will study the classical figures of this period—Reinhold, Fichte, Hölderlin, Schelling, Jacobi—and attempt to understand the novelty of their approaches as they depart from the Kantian system and his intentions. Knowledge of Kant (at least one of the three Critiques) will be necessary.

The material to be studied in this course intends to lay a solid foundation for the comprehension of "classical" German Idealism, the emerging Romantic Movement, and the critics of Idealism (Kierkegaard, Feuerbach, Marx, Nietzsche), who are incomprehensible without this backdrop.

The course will also attempt to hone graduate students' exegetical and interpretative skills through a close and careful reading of the texts, as well as develop and further the capacity to formulate students' own questions and to challenge a philosopher's claims, presuppositions, and approaches to timeless philosophical questions. At the end of the semester, students will be able to articulate, appreciate and critically evaluate the achievements of the philosophers studied during this semester.

Texts:

- Di Giovanni, G. & Harris, H.S., eds., *Between Kant and Hegel. Texts in the Development of Post-Kantian Idealism*, Indianapolis/Cambridge: Hackett, 2000 (ISBN 0-87220-505-3).
- Behler, E. ed., *Philosophy of German Idealism*. New York: Continuum, 1987 (ISBN 0-8264-0306-9).
- O'Connor, B. & Mohr, G., eds., *German Idealism. An Anthology and Guide*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006 (ISBN 0-226-61673-8).
- Hölderlin, F., *Essays and Letters on Theory*, trans. & ed. Pfau, Th., Albany: SUNY Press, 1988 (ISBN 0-88706-559-7).
- Reinhold, K. L., *Letters on the Kantian Philosophy*, ed. Ameriks, K., trans. Hebbeler, J., Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005.

Helpful & Recommended Secondary Sources:

The Cambridge Companion to German Idealism, K. Ameriks ed., Cambridge: Cambridge U Press, 2000. For good places to get started, see also the other *Cambridge Companions*, e.g., on Kant, Fichte, Hegel, *Kant and Modern Philosophy*, *Hegel and 19th Century Philosophy* etc.

See the bibliography that I am handing out on the 1st day of class for more literature.

For an historico-philosophical background, see:

F. Beiser, *The Fate of Reason. German Philosophy from Kant to Fichte*, Cambridge/London: Harvard University Press, 1987.

Concerning research on Kant & German Idealism, here are some names whose work is reliable and solid: H. Allison, F. Beiser, K. Ameriks, G. di Giovanni, P. Guyer, W. Desmond, R. Pippin, T. Pinkard, D. Brezeale, D. Snow, A. Bowie, A. Wood. You should be aware that a significant chunk of literature on German Idealism is written in German. Here are some of the big names to look out for (some of their writings are translated): O. Pöggeler, D. Henrich, W. Jaeschke, H. F. Fulda, R. Wiehl, L. Siep, R.-P. Horstmann, K. Düsing, H.-G. Gadamer, R. Bubner, M. Theunissen, M. Frank, J. Stolzenberg, G. Zöllner, A. Honneth, Wolfgang Högerebe.

Method of Evaluation:

The final grade will be calculated as follows: Midterm Exam (take home) 30 %; Presentation of Research Paper 15 %; Research Paper 50 %; Oral participation 5 %.

The Midterm Exam will consist of an exam with essay questions in take-home format (handed out on February 25, due on March 4). The questions will be close to the readings and will require a close study of the texts. Quotations from primary *and* secondary sources are expected to be incorporated into the essays.

The Research Paper is due on May 7 and is expected to have a length of 15-20 pages (double-space) and is to incorporate at least *five* secondary sources (books or articles). The idea is to prepare and work on this paper over the course of the semester and to present your initial results during your presentation in April. This entails that each student is required to come up with a research topic on his/her own and to discuss it with me at different points during the semester. The due date for an outline (this includes the anticipated title of the paper, an abstract of ca. half a page, a detailed outline of the argument plus bibliography) is April 22. 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. It is possible for the paper focus to change slightly for the final version, but the general direction should be clear. I expect you to be in touch with me at several occasions throughout the semester (during my office hours or via email) to discuss ideas that you are entertaining and problems that you are wrestling with.

D2L: I intend to make use of D2L extensively (e.g., I will post my lecture notes) 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. I intend the class to be primarily lecture-format, though I do encourage discussion and expect participants to come prepared and ready to participate when called upon. 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 12:	First Day of Class, Technicalia
Jan. 14:	Opening Lecture
Jan. 19:	MLK Day, No Class
Jan. 21:	Kant, Intro
Jan. 26:	Kant, <i>Critique of Pure Reason</i> , B Deduction, part I
Jan. 28:	Kant, B Deduction, part II
February 2:	Reinhold, <i>Letters on the Kantian Philosophy</i> , 1 st Letter (on reserve)
Feb. 4:	Reinhold, 2 nd Letter

Feb. 9: Reinhold, 3rd Letter
Feb. 11: Reinhold, 4th Letter

Feb. 16: Fichte, *Aenesidemus* (di Giovanni, pp. 104 ff.)
Feb. 18: *Aenesidemus*, cont.

REMINDER: Feb. 22, 3 pm: Aquinas Lecture, Prof. Garber (Princeton)

Feb. 23: Fichte, *Science of Knowledge*, 1st Intro (O'Connor, pp. 40 ff.)
Feb. 25: *Science of Knowledge*, cont. – **MIDTERM EXAM** (take home)

March 2: Schelling, *Of the I as the Principle of Philosophy* (O'Connor, pp. 61 ff.)
March 4: *Of the I*, cont. – **MIDTERM EXAM DUE**

March 9–15: **No class (SPRING BREAK)**
March 9: **MIDTERM GRADES** available

March 16: Jacobi, *Open Letter to Fichte* (Behler, pp. 119 ff.)
March 18: *Letter to Fichte*, cont.

March 23: Hölderlin, *Judgment and Being* (Pfau, pp. 37-38)
March 25: Hölderlin, *On the Operations of the Poetic Spirit* (Pfau, pp. 62 ff.)

March 30: *On the Operations*, cont.
April 1: **No Class** (Luft giving lecture at conference)

April 6: Hegel, Introduction to the *Phenomenology of Spirit* (O'Connor, pp. 81 ff.)
April 8: Introduction, cont.

April 10-13: **No class (EASTER BREAK)**

April 15: Presentations I, II & III. Presenters: 1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

April 20: Presentations IV, V & VI. Presenters: 4. _____
5. _____
6. _____

April 22: Presentations VII & VIII. Presenters: 7. _____
8. _____

April 27: The Oldest Systematic Program of German Idealism (Behler, pp. 161-63)
April 29: Last Day of Class, Final Discussion

May 7: **FINAL PAPER DUE**