
PHL 253

Kant & His Successors

Spring 2018
The College of William & Mary

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Office Hours: TTH 2:00pm – 3:00pm
Classroom: James Blair 201
Time: TTH 12:30pm – 1:50pm

Overview

Immanuel Kant is one of the most influential philosophers in the Western tradition. Reactions to his philosophy were many and varied. In this course, we consider some of the main tenets of Kant's metaphysics and epistemology and responses to it from Hegel, Schopenhauer, and Nietzsche. We will trace Kant's "transcendental idealism" through Hegel's "absolute idealism," to Schopenhauer's philosophy of will, and challenges to German Idealism and the Enlightenment from Nietzsche. Some of the topics on which we will address in these works include the nature of reason and its limits, the possibility of a priori knowledge, idealism, the nature of the self and freedom.

Requirements

1. Attendance (5%)
2. Four exams (45%)
3. Four short essays or one long essay (50%)

Assignments

Exams

There will be four in-class exams given at the end of the unit for each philosopher. Exams will focus on central ideas of each philosopher. Exams may be multiple choice, fill in the blank, or short essay.

Essays

In this course, you have a choice of writing assignments. *You can either write four expository essays or one expository essay and one longer essay.* The four essays are expository essays that are no longer than 750 words each. The longer essay will be on a topic of your choice and it must contain a thesis statement, for which you argue. The longer essay should be no longer than 3000 words.

Materials

The following books are required for this course:

- Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*. (trans. Pluhar), Hackett, 1996.
- Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*. (trans. Miller) Oxford, 1977.
- Schopenhauer, *The World as Will and Representation*. Vol. 1. (trans. Payne) Dover, 1969.
- Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*. (trans. Del Caro) Stanford, 2014.

Grading Scale

- A: 90-100 (90-93.5: A-, 94-100: A)
- B: 80-89 (80-83.5: B-, 84-86.5: B, 87-89: B+)
- C: 70-79 (70-73.5: C-, 74-76.5: C, 77-79: C+)
- D: 60-69 (60-63.5: D-, 64-66.5: D, 67-69: D+)
- F: 0-59

Schedule

The following schedule is may be *amended* during the course of the quarter. All readings come from required course books. Optional readings can be found on the course Black Board page.

Week 1:

Thursday 1/18: Syllabus, Early Modern and Enlightenment Background

Week 2:

Tuesday 1/23: First and Second Prefaces: (pp. 5 – 41)

Thursday 1/25: Introduction B: (pp. 43 – 63)

Add/Drop Ends 1/26

Week 3:

Tuesday 1/30: Transcendental Aesthetic: (pp. 71 – 104)

Optional: Stephen Palmquist, “The Kantian Grounding of Einstein’s Worldview” (PDF)

Thursday 2/1: The Categories of the Understanding: (pp. 121 – 133); Transcendental Deduction of the Categories: (pp. 175 - 201)

Essay 1 Due

Week 4:

Tuesday 2/6: Distinction between *Phenomena* and *Noumena*: (pp. 303 – 322)

Thursday 2/8: The Transcendental Dialectic: Antinomy of Pure Reason: (442 – 464)

Week 5:

Tuesday 2/13: Ideal of Pure Reason: (563 – 595); Merold Westphal “Christian Philosophers and the Copernican Revolution” (PDF)

Optional: Hill and Boxill, “Kant and Race” (PDF)

Thursday 2/15: Review and **Kant Exam**

Week 6:

Tuesday 2/20: “Introduction” to Hegel’s *Lectures on the History of Philosophy* (PDF)

Thursday 2/22: *Phenomenology of Spirit* Introduction: §73-§89 (pp. 46-57); Robert Stern on Hegel’s Dialectic (audio)

Optional: Singer, “The Odyssey of the Mind” (PDF)

Week 7:

Tuesday 2/27: Sense-Certainty: §90-§110 (pp. 58-66)

Thursday 3/1: Perception: §111-§131 (pp. 67-79)

Optional: Singer, “The Odyssey of the Mind” (PDF)

Week 8:

Tuesday 3/6: **Spring Break**

Thursday 3/8: **Spring Break**

Week 9:

Tuesday 3/13: Lordship and Bondage: §178 - 196 (pp. 111-119); Franz Fanon, “The Black Man and Recognition” in *Black Skin, White Masks* (PDF)

Optional: Sandra Harding, “Standpoint Theory...”

Thursday 3/15: The Certainty and Truth of Reason: §231 – 239 (pp. 139 – 145); Absolute Knowing: §788 – 808 (pp. 479 – 493)

Optional: Singer, “The Odyssey of the Mind” (PDF)

Essay 2 Due

Last day to withdrawal Friday 3/16

Week 10:

Tuesday 3/20: Review and **Hegel Exam**

Thursday 3/22: *The World as Will and Representation* Preface to the First Edition, and Book 1, §§1–7

Week 11:

Tuesday 3/27: Book 2, §§17–19; §§21–22; §§25 (129-130); §§26 (130-135); §§27 (145-152); §§29

Thursday 3/29: **No Class**

Week 12:

Tuesday 4/3: Book 3, §§34–36 (184-192); §§39; §§51 (252-255); §§52

Optional: Brian McGee, “Schopenhauer’s Influence on Creative Writers”

Thursday 4/5: Book 4, §§57; §§61; §§63; §§68

Week 13:

Tuesday 4/10: Review and **Schopenhauer Exam**

Thursday 4/12: Excerpts from *The Birth of Tragedy* (PDF)

Essay 3 Due

Week 14:

Tuesday 4/17: *Beyond Good and Evil* Preface and “On the Prejudice of Philosophers”

Thursday 4/19: **No Class**

Week 15:

Tuesday 4/24: “The Free Spirit”; W.E.B Du Bois, *Souls of Black Folks*, “Of Our Spiritual Strivings”; Kathleen Marie Higgins, “Double Consciousness and Second Sight”

Optional: “How Martin Luther King, Jr. Used Nietzsche, Hegel, and Kant to Overturn Segregation in America”

Thursday 4/26: Review and **Nietzsche Exam**

Essay 4 Due or Long Essay Due

No Final Exam

Of Special Note

Attendance

Attendance is *mandatory*. Attendance will be taken at arbitrary points during the semester. You get 3 free documented absences during the semester. For each documented absence after your 3rd you will lose 1% off of your final grade. Please be on time to class. But if you are late to class, please enter the room quietly and unobtrusively. Absences may be excused for the following reasons only: (a) a serious medical issue (i.e., one requiring hospitalization or confinement in the infirmary), (b) a family emergency (i.e., death or emergency hospitalization of an immediate family member), (c) conflicting University-related events, (d) religious observances, or (e) jury duty.

Missed Tests

Make up or alternative tests will not be granted without documented proof of either (a) a serious medical issue (i.e., one requiring hospitalization or confinement in the infirmary), (b) a family emergency (i.e., death or emergency hospitalization of an immediate family member), (c) conflicting University-related events, (d) religious observances, or (e) jury duty. If you miss a test and do not have documented proof of these cases, you will receive a 0 (zero) as your score. (Alternate tests should be scheduled ahead of time for reasons (c) through (e).)

Papers

Papers will be marked down 1/3 of a letter grade for each day they are late. I am happy to help you get an early start on your written assignments. You are responsible for backing up texts composed on a computer, and failures of software or hardware are not acceptable reasons for a late assignment. I highly recommend using Dropbox to back up your files: <http://www.dropbox.com/>

If you do not understand why you received the grade you did, please come see me. Under no conditions will your grade be lowered if you do come see me to discuss a grade you received. *However, if you do want clarification you must submit to me in writing your question or concern before we meet in person.*

I also encourage you to take advantage of the writing resources on campus. The *Writing Resources Center* in Swem Library offers free feedback on your written work, including help with drafting, organizing, and editing your assignments. Find the writing center online at <http://www.wm.edu/as/wrc/>.

Plagiarism

Plagiarism is a serious matter and will be handled by the appropriate authorities. According to official William & Mary policy, plagiarism is “the presentation, with intent to deceive, or with disregard for proper scholarly procedures of a significant scope, of any information, ideas or phrasing of another as if they were one’s own without giving appropriate credit to the original source” (Section IV, C: Honor Code Violations). Turning in any work which is not your own and not properly acknowledged as such will result in a recommendation for failure in the course and subject you to further action by the university. Please review the university policy on academic dishonesty and speak to me if you have questions. See:

https://www.wm.edu/offices/deanofstudents/services/studentconduct/studenthandbook/honor_system/section_VI/index.php

Writing Resources Center

The Writing Resources Center, located on the first floor of Swem Library, is a free service provided to W&M students. Trained consultants offer individual assistance with writing, presentation, and other communication assignments across disciplines and at any stage, from generating ideas to polishing a final product. To make an appointment, visit the WRC webpage www.wm.edu/wrc.

Class Behavior

You are responsible for being prepared for each class session, which means having carefully read the assignment for each day of class and thought of questions you would like to discuss. You are responsible for all material covered in both lecture and the required readings.

I ask that all members of the class conduct themselves in a respectful manner. Respect for others takes a number of forms in this class, and in academic life generally. In the first place, it means that we need to be sensitive to how our behavior in class affects others. For example, I ask that students be conscientious about how your use of technology affects others in class. Take conversations and phone calls outside. Please do not text, chat online, or surf the net in class. If your behavior becomes problematic or disruptive, I will ask you to leave. I ask that you have intellectual respect for others, as well. This means that if you disagree with a position that someone holds, you should assume that the person is at least as smart as you are, and that the person probably has good reasons for thinking as he or she does. Your job is to be a good listener and exchange ideas, not to attack and degrade others.

Students with Disabilities

It is the policy of The College of William & Mary to accommodate students with disabilities and qualifying diagnosed conditions in accordance with federal and state laws. Any student who feels s/he may need an accommodation based on the impact of a learning, psychiatric, physical, or chronic health diagnosis should contact me privately to discuss your specific needs. Students will also need to contact Student Accessibility Services staff at 757-221-2509 or at sas@wm.edu to determine if accommodations are warranted and to obtain an official letter of accommodation. For more information, please see www.wm.edu/sas.

Additional Resources

Not all resources (especially those online) are created equal! You will not need to read or research any other material than the required readings to succeed in this course. However, you may be interested in pursuing our topics further. In addition to the optional readings I will provide on our course website, I recommend two websites in particular:

The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy: www.plato.stanford.edu/

The Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy: www.iep.utm.edu/

Philosophy Compass: [http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/journal/10.1111/\(ISSN\)1747-9991](http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/journal/10.1111/(ISSN)1747-9991)