

Philosophy 3230/German Studies 3590: Kant (Revised October 14)
Fall 2017

Immanuel Kant (1724-1804) is one of the most highly regarded and influential of the modern European philosophers. In this course we will focus on the *Critique of Pure Reason* (1781/1787), and the epistemological and metaphysical position that Kant develops in that work. More specifically, we will examine Kant's transcendental idealism, his theory of mental representation, his demonstration of the applicability of a priori concepts to objects of experience (the "transcendental deduction"), the theory of causation and causal powers, his views on the limits of our knowledge, and his practical justification of belief that we are free and that God exists. We will also consider Kant's perspective on the role of philosophy and its prospects for yielding knowledge, and how its methodology differs from that of the empirical sciences and from mathematics.

Instructor: Derk Pereboom; dp346@cornell.edu
Office Hours: M 1.15-2.15 and by appointment
Office: Goldwin Smith 323

Class time: MWF 11.15-12.05
Classroom: Rockefeller 102
Course website: Blackboard

Main texts:

Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, ed. and tr. P. Guyer and A. Wood.
New York: Cambridge University Press, 1987. <http://strangebeautiful.com/other-texts/kant-first-critique-cambridge.pdf>

Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Practical Reason*: tr. W. S. Pluhar, Indianapolis: Hackett, 2002. <http://www.morelightinmasonry.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/06/Kant-Critique-of-Practical-Reason-Cambridge.pdf>

Primary texts on line:

Stephen Palmquist's site at Hong Kong Baptist University:
<http://www.hkbu.edu.hk/~ppp/Kant.html>

Some influential books that cover many of the main topics in the *Critique of Pure Reason*:

Henry Allison, *Kant's Transcendental Idealism: An Explanation and Defense*. New Haven: Yale, 1983. (Revised edition, 2004)

Paul Guyer, *Kant and the Claims of Knowledge*. New York: Cambridge, 1987.

Patricia Kitcher, *Kant's Transcendental Psychology*. New York: Oxford 1990.

James van Cleve, *Problems from Kant*. New York: Oxford, 1999.

Two good introductory texts on the *Critique of Pure Reason*:

Georges Dickel. *Kant's Theory of Knowledge*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2004.

Jill Vance Buroker. *Kant's 'Critique of Pure Reason': An Introduction*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006.

Reference text:

The most important of these is the on-line Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy ("*SEP*"), which is free to all users. There are some very helpful articles on various aspects of Kant's work there, as well as links to other resources.

Written work for undergraduates:

(1) A 5-7 page exercise on an assigned topic, due Friday, October 20.

(2) An exam on Friday, November 10.

(3) A 12-15 page paper due Friday, December 8.

(4) Weekly questions: once a week, on a day of your choice, you'll need to hand in a typed paragraph-long question about the reading from Kant for that day. These questions should demonstrate thoughtful attention to the text and refer to a particular passage or two.

Grading:

Questions/Participation/Attendance: 20%

Short paper: 20%

Exam: 30%

Long paper: 30%

On-line guide to writing a philosophy paper by Jim Pryor (NYU):

<http://www.jimpryor.net/teaching/guidelines/writing.html>

Topics and readings:

1. The place of the *Critique of Pure Reason* in the history of modern philosophy.

2. Motivations for transcendental idealism and for the project of the *Critique of Pure Reason*:

- a. The critique of rationalist metaphysics and the defense of ethics and theistic religion, Prefaces Avii - xxii; Bvii - xlv; Introduction B1-30.
- b. Turning back skepticism about knowledge of physical objects; 4th Paralogism in A, A366-380.

3. Methodological preliminaries

- a. The analytic/synthetic distinction, B10-B18, A19/B33-A22/B36.
- b. The theory of mental representation, A50/B74-A52/B76, A67/B92-A83/B109; A321-2/B376-7.
- c. The a priori method of transcendental philosophy: The Transcendental Doctrine of Method, Chapter 1, sect. 4: A783/B811- A794/B822.

4. The anti-empiricist/anti-Humean arguments:

- a. The Transcendental Aesthetic: space and time as forms of intuition, A19/B33-B73.
- b. The Transcendental Deduction, A84/B116-B129, A115-130, B129-B169.
- c. The Analogies: Kant on causation, A176/B218-A218/265; especially the Second Analogy, B232-A211/B256.
- d. The Postulates, Refutation of Idealism, and the General Note to the System of Principles. A218/B265-B294.

5. The anti-rationalist/anti-Leibnizian arguments:

- a. The Amphiboly: humility about knowledge of things in themselves and fundamentally intrinsic properties, A260/B316-A292/B349.
- b. The Paralogisms: why rational psychology is impossible, A338/B396-A366.

6. Transcendental Idealism and Things in Themselves:

- a. Phenomena and Noumena, A235/B294-A260/B315.
- b. Freedom.

Background: Baruch Spinoza (1632-1667), Rejection of free will: *Ethics*, Part II, Propositions 48 and 49, and Concluding Note (at the end of Part II); *Ethics*,

Part III, note to Proposition 2.

<http://www.earlymoderntexts.com/authors/spinoza>; and at
<https://www.gutenberg.org/files/3800/3800-h/3800-h.htm>.

Kant on transcendental freedom: A532/B560-A557/B585; *Critique of Practical Reason*, Ak V [28]-[31], [42]-[50], [95]-[106]; *Critique of Judgment*, §§76-77.

c. God, Ideal of Pure Reason, A567/B595-A704-B732; Canon of Pure Reason, A795/B823-A831/B859; *Critique of Practical Reason* Ak V [123]-[146].