



PH-329: Seminar in Kant

Fall 2010

L.M. Jorgensen

Immanuel Kant (1724-1804) was one of the most influential philosophers of the modern period. This seminar will begin with a close study Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason*, which covers a wide range of topics, including the nature of knowledge and our ability (or lack of ability) to know the answers to ultimate questions, the nature of our minds, the reality of space and time, self-consciousness, free will, God, and immortality. For each of these latter topics, Kant argues for an intellectual humility—once we understand what's necessary for our experience of ourselves and the world, we will see that there are a great many things that we cannot know. Nevertheless, some of these beliefs—free will, for example—are essential to conceiving of ourselves as moral agents. With this in mind, we will end the semester with a look at Kant's moral theory and consider how it relates to his claims about the nature of reality and the limits of knowledge.

Course Objectives

There are four main objectives for this course:

1. *Engage* with Kant's philosophy at an advanced level, which will include *studying* closely the texts themselves, *evaluating* the arguments presented there, *distinguishing* among possible interpretations, and *formulating* your own understanding of Kant's central theses (at least in a preliminary way).
2. *Develop* a research project, which will include *identifying* relevant secondary sources and *integrating* and *evaluating* them in away that deepens your own thinking about the subject.
3. *Discuss* Kant's philosophy and its implications with your classmates in a *sustained* and increasingly *independent* way.
4. *Collaborate* with others in the class, helping them clarify, sharpen, and strengthen the defense of their views.

Your grade in this class will be a function of how well you accomplish these objectives. Assignments and grade distribution will be determined in collaboration with the class.

Instructor Information

Email: ljorgens@skidmore.edu

Office: Ladd Hall, Room 212

Office Hours: Mon-Thu, 1-2 p.m. and by appointment

Course Texts

The following texts are required for this course and should be available in the Skidmore Shop:

Kant, Immanuel, *Critique of Pure Reason*, transl. Paul Guyer and Allen Wood (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1997; ISBN: 9780521657297).

Identified as **CPR** in the reading schedule below.

Kant, Immanuel, *Groundwork for a Metaphysics of Morals*, transl. Mary Gregor (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1998; ISBN: 9780521626958).

Identified as **Groundwork** in the reading schedule below.

Buroker, Jill Vance, *Kant's Critique of Pure Reason: An Introduction* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2006; ISBN: 9780521618250).

Identified as **JVB** in the reading schedule below.

Attendance and Participation

Attendance and participation is mandatory. I *will* be grading your participation in class. Any absence will automatically reduce your attendance/participation grade by 10 percentage points. **Six or more absences, whatever the reason, will result in automatic failure of the course.**

Participation should not be understood in terms of simply promoting your own views—if that's *all* you did, you would not be a good participant. Good participation means that you are actively engaged *during the class time* in trying to understand clearly the arguments being presented. So, even if you don't yet have a view of your own on the issue under discussion, good participation will include asking clarifying questions (of me and of your classmates), raising possible counterexamples, proposing alternative ways of understanding an argument, uncovering underlying assumptions, and any other way of honestly and respectfully engaging with the issues being discussed.

Grading Policy

I will follow the evaluation rubric outlined in the course catalog when assigning grades:

A+, A	Distinguished work
A-, B+, B	Superior Work
B-, C+, C	Satisfactory Work
C-, D+, D	Passing, poor-quality work
F	Failure, no credit earned

Late Work: Any late work will be graded down by 1/3 of a grade for each day that it is late. **You will receive no credit for work that is more than a week late.**

Example: a B paper will receive a B- if handed in one day late; it will receive a C+ if it is handed in two days late; etc.

Exams: I do not allow make-up exams. If you are in need of special accommodations for a disability or for religious reasons, please contact me well in advance of the exam.

Honor Code: Violations of academic integrity or the honor code will not be tolerated. If you are in doubt about whether something constitutes a violation of the honor code, it is your responsibility to consult with me first. **Any violation of the honor code will result in failure of the class.**

Schedule

Wednesday, Sept. 8: Introduction to the Course

Monday, Sept. 13: The Problem of Human Reason

CPR, A Preface & B Preface (99-124)

JVB, 1-13

Wednesday, Sept. 15: NO CLASS – Prof. Jorgensen will be out of town

Monday, Sept. 20: Synthetic *A Priori* Knowledge

CPR, B Introduction (136-152)

JVB, 14-35

Wednesday, Sept. 22: Space as a Necessary Condition of Experience

CPR, Transcendental Aesthetic: Space (172-178)

JVB, 36-57

Monday, Sept. 27: Time as a Necessary Condition of Experience

CPR, Transcendental Aesthetic: Time (178-192)

JVB, 57-72

Wednesday, Sept. 29: Concepts and Categories

CPR, Transcendental Logic Introduction and Metaphysical
Deduction §§13-14 (193-203, 219-226)

JVB, 73-80, 103-106

Monday, Oct. 4: The Categories Applied to Objects I

CPR, Transcendental Deduction §§15-20 (245-252)

JVB, 116-127

Wednesday, Oct 6: The Categories Applied to Objects II

CPR, Transcendental Deduction §§21-27 (253-266)

JVB, 127-135

Monday, Oct. 11: The Bridge Between Pure Concept and Sense

CPR, Schematism (267-283)

JVB, 136-145

Wednesday, Oct. 13: Reply to the Skeptics I

CPR, General Principle of the Analogies and First Analogy (295-304)

JVB, 163-173

Monday, Oct. 18: Reply to the Skeptics II

CPR, Second Analogy (304-316)

JVB, 173-183

Wednesday, Oct. 20: Refutation of Idealism

CPR, Refutation of Idealism (326-329)

JVB, 188-200

Monday, Oct. 25: Rational Psychology I

CPR, First and Second Paralogisms (411-422, 445-446, 328-341, 368-372)
JVB, 201-216 (end of top paragraph)

Wednesday, Oct. 27: Rational Psychology II

CPR, Third and Fourth Paralogisms (422-444, 446-458)
JVB, 216-225

Monday, Nov. 1: Rational Cosmology

CPR, First Antinomy (459-475, 496-528)
JVB, 226-239

Wednesday, Nov. 3: Freedom and Necessity I

CPR, Third Antinomy (484-489, 532-546)
JVB, 244-248, 253-263

Monday, Nov. 8: Rational Theology I

CPR, Ideal of Pure Reason (551-569)
JVB, 264-274

Wednesday, Nov. 10: Rational Theology II

CPR, Ideal of Pure Reason, cont'd (569-589)
JVB, 274-283

Monday, Nov. 15: The Ends of Reason and the Role of Moral Faith

CPR, The Canon of Pure Reason (672-690)
JVB, 284-304

Wednesday, Nov. 17: Searching for the Supreme Principle of Morality

Groundwork, Preface & Section One (all)
Korsgaard's Introduction to the *Groundwork* (vii-xv)

Monday, Nov. 22: The Categorical Imperative

Groundwork, Section Two (406-421)
Korsgaard's Introduction to the *Groundwork* (xv-xxi)

Wednesday, Nov. 24: Break

Monday, Nov. 29: Humanity as an End, Never as a Means

Groundwork, Section Two (421-433)
Korsgaard's Introduction to the *Groundwork* (xxi-xxiii)

Wednesday, Dec. 1: Autonomy

Groundwork, Section Two (434-445)
Korsgaard's Introduction to the *Groundwork* (xxiii-xxv)

Monday, Dec. 6: Freedom and Necessity II

Groundwork, Section Three (all)
Korsgaard's Introduction to the *Groundwork* (xxv-xxx)

Wednesday, Dec. 8: Last Class

Bibliography

The secondary literature on Kant is enormous—this bibliography barely scratches the surface. But the following texts should give you a way into the secondary sources as you discover topics that interest you. I have indicated with an asterisk the sources that I think are more introductory or accessible and which would be good places to start.

Primary Sources

The Cambridge Edition of the Works of Immanuel Kant in Translation includes good English translations of Kant's central works. The following six volumes are particularly useful:

Kant, Immanuel, *Critique of Pure Reason*, transl. Paul Guyer and Allen Wood (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1997).

Kant, Immanuel, *Critique of the Power of Judgment*, ed. and transl. Paul Guyer and Eric Matthews (Cambridge: Cambridge UP 2000).

Kant, Immanuel, *Lectures on Ethics*, ed. and transl. J.B. Schneewind and Peter Heath (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1997).

Kant, Immanuel, *Lectures on Logic*, ed. and transl. J. Michael Young (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1992).

Kant, Immanuel, *Practical Philosophy*, ed. and transl. Mary Gregor and Allen Wood (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1996).

[This volume includes the *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*, the *Critique of Practical Reason*, and *The Metaphysics of Morals*, among other shorter works on practical philosophy.]

Kant, Immanuel, *Religion and Rational Theology*, ed. and transl. Allen Wood and George di Giovanni (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1996).

[This volume includes *Religion Within the Boundaries of Mere Reason* and *On the Miscarriage of all Philosophical Trials in Theodicy*, along with other works on religion and theology.]

The following volume collects primary source materials of eighteenth-century German philosophy that Kant would have known and to which he responds:

Kant's Critique of Pure Reason: Background Source Materials, ed. and transl. Eric Watkins (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2009).

General Works on Kant

Cassirer, Ernst, *Kant's Life and Thought*, transl. James Haden (New Haven: Yale UP, 1981).

*Guyer, Paul, *Kant* (New York: Routledge, 2006).

*Kuehn, Manfred, *Kant: A Biography* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2001).

*Wood, Allen, *Kant* (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2005).

Kant's Theoretical Philosophy

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

Ameriks, Karl, *Kant's Theory of Mind*, Second Edition (Oxford: Oxford UP 2000).

Ameriks, Karl. *Interpreting Kant's Critiques* (Oxford: Oxford UP 2003).

Bennett, Jonathan, *Kant's Analytic* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1966).

Bennett, Jonathan, *Kant's Dialectic* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1974).

*Buroker, Jill Vance, *Kant's Critique of Pure Reason: An Introduction* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2006).

*Caygill, Howard, *A Kant Dictionary* (Blackwell, 1995).

*Dicker, Georges, *Kant's Theory of Knowledge* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2004).

*Gardner, Sebastian, *Routledge Philosophy Guidebook to Kant and the Critique of Pure Reason* (New York: Routledge, 1999).

Grier, Michele, *Kant's Doctrine of Transcendental Illusion* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2001).

*Guyer, Paul (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Kant* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1992).

Guyer, Paul, *Kant and the Claims of Knowledge* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP 1987).

Langton, Rae, *Kantian Humility: Our Ignorance of Things in Themselves* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1998).

Longuenesse, Béatrice, *Kant on the Human Standpoint* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2009).

Strawson, P.F., *The Bounds of Sense: An essay on Kant's Critique of Pure Reason* (London: Methuen, 1966).

Van Cleve, James, *Problems from Kant* (Oxford: Oxford UP 1999).

Kant's Practical Philosophy

Guyer, Paul, *Kant on the Experience of Freedom: Essays on Aesthetics and Morality* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1993).

Guyer, Paul (ed.), *Kant's Groundwork for the Metaphysics of Morals: Critical Essays* (Rowman & Littlefield, 1998).

Herman, Barabara, *The Practice of Moral Judgment* (Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1993).

*Hill, Thomas E., Jr. (ed.) *The Blackwell Guide to Kant's Ethics* (Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009).

Korsgaard, Christine, *Creating the Kingdom of Ends* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1996).

O'Neill, Onora, *Constructions of Reason: Explorations of Kant's Practical Philosophy* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1990).

*Sedgwick, Sally S., *Kant's Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals: An Introduction* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2008).

*Timmerman, Jens, *Kant's Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals: A Commentary* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2007).

*Uleman, Jennifer K., *An Introduction to Kant's Moral Philosophy* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2010).

Wood, Allen, *Kant's Ethical Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1999).

Wood, Allen, *Kantian Ethics* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2008).