1. Course Aims and Objectives

The aim of this course is to develop an understanding of Kant’s *Critique of Pure Reason*, its place in the development of modern philosophy and some of the major questions it raises. In the course of the lectures we also aim to develop an understanding of how to construct and critically assess arguments in philosophy and identify problems of consistency and justification. Students taking this paper will be expected to:

1. Acquire a detailed knowledge of the *Critique of Pure Reason*
2. Be able to state the main doctrine expounded in this text
3. Have some awareness of interpretative problems relating to this text
4. Be able critically to discuss this doctrine and the arguments used to support it.

2. Lecture and Seminar Content

Preliminary note: I list a lot of secondary sources below for each lecture and seminar. Don’t try to read all, or even most of it. The list is there for those who want to look at certain topics in more depth as well as for the purpose of your essays. For the seminars, I’ll expect you to have familiarised yourself with the primary reading as well as at least one of the secondary readings listed in preparation for each class. I particularly recommend Gardner’s Routledge guide [which is available as an e-book from the library website]. I’ll also expect you to have thought about the discussion questions ahead of each seminar.

**Week 1 – (17/09)**

**Lecture 1:** The Copernican revolution and transcendental idealism

**Seminar question:** What does Kant mean by a ‘critique’ of reason? Why does he think there is a need for such a critique?


**Secondary reading:**

**Week 2 (24/09)**

**Lecture 2:** The possibility of synthetic a priori knowledge

**Seminar question:** What does the analytic/synthetic distinction amount to? Can it be successfully drawn? What role does it play in Kant’s argument for transcendental idealism?

**Primary reading:** *C.P.R.*, Introduction (B1-B30). *Prolegomena*, 119-125 [4:365-371].

**Secondary reading:**

**Week 3 (1/10)**

**Lecture 3:** The a prioricity of space

**Seminar question:** Explain the significance of Kant's argument(s) for, the claim that space and time are transcendentally ideal. What does he mean? Why is it important? Is his argument successful?

**Primary reading:** *C.P.R., 'The Transcendental Aesthetic' (B33-B73). Prolegomena, 36-40 [4:285-6].

**Secondary reading:**


**Week 4 (8/10)**

**Lecture 4:** The antinomies of pure reason

**Seminar question:** Do contemporary astrophysical theories about the limits of space or the beginning of the universe have any bearing on the conclusions of the arguments of the First Antinomy?

**Primary reading:** *C.P.R., 'The Antinomy of Pure Reason' (B432-488), Prolegomena 86-87 [4:332-3], 104-108 [4:350-4].

**Secondary reading:**


**Week 4 – (tbc/10) @ tbc**

Seminar 1: How to write a successful essay on Kant

**Week 4 – (12/10) @ tbc**

**Lecture 5:** The third antinomy of pure reason: freedom vs. determinism

**Seminar question:** Is Kant successful in securing freedom from the threat of natural determinism?

**Primary reading:** *CPR, B472-479; B560-586.*

**Secondary reading:**

*Very easy:* Wood (2005): 96-100,


**No lectures or seminars in week 5**

**Week 6 (22/10)**

**Lecture 6:** Things in themselves, noumena and transcendental objects  
**Seminar question:** What is Kant’s argument in favour of things in themselves? Is it convincing?

**Primary reading:** CPR, ‘Phenomena and Noumena’ (B294-315). Prolegomena, 40-46 [4 :288-94].

**Secondary reading:**


**Essay deadline: tbc**

**Week 7 (29/11)**

**Lecture 7:** The Metaphysical and Transcendental deduction  
**Seminar question:** What is the role of the deduction in Kant's overall argument for transcendental idealism? What does it mean for his system if the deductions are unsuccessful?

**Primary reading:** *C.P.R.*, Transcendental Logic, Introduction and Division I, Transcendental Analytic, Book I, Ch. I (A 66-83/B 92- 116); *C.P.R.*, Transcendental Analytic, Book I, Ch. II (A 84- 95/B 116-129), and A 95-130 (for the TD in the A-edition) or B 129-169 (for the TD in the B-edition)

**Secondary reading:**

Very easy: Wood (2005): Ch. 3.


**Week 8 (5/11)**

**Lecture 8:** The second analogy and the principle of causation  
**Seminar question:** What is the status of causation for Kant? Does he provide a successful answer to Hume’s skeptical doubts about causation?

Secondary reading:


Week 9 (12/11)

Lecture 9: The Refutation of Idealism

Seminar question: Why does Kant need a refutation of idealism? Is his refutation successful?


Secondary reading:


Week 10 (19/11)

Lecture 10: The canon of pure reason

Seminar question: Discuss Kant’s three questions: “What can I know? What ought I to do? What may I hope? And What is man?” What do they mean? How do they relate to each other?

Primary reading: *C.P.R.*, ‘Canon of pure reason’ (A795-830).

Secondary reading:


Week 10 (tbc) @ tbc

Seminar 2: How to improve your essay technique

Week 11 (26/11)

Lecture 11: Kant’s critical system and its legacy
Seminar question: What are the major sources of tension in Kant's Critique? Can they be addressed within the Kantian system. Find inspiration in the reception of Kant by German Idealists.

Primary reading: C.P.R., ‘Architectonic of pure reason’ (A832-851).
Secondary reading:
Easy: Beiser, The Fate of Reason (Harvard UP, 1987), 'Introduction'.
Easier: Luchte (2007): Part 4

ESSAY DEADLINE: tbc

3. Readings

(i) Primary texts

The primary text (Kant’s CPR) is essential reading. You MUST have access to a copy of it. I recommend the following edition:

An early version of this translation can be found online here:
http://userpages.bright.net/~jclarke/kant/

Note: The Critique came out in two editions (the ‘A’ edition in 1781, and the ‘B’ edition in 1787) and most versions available today are an amalgamation of both. So long as your copy of the Critique has the correct referencing (e.g. A94/B127) on the side of the text, any edition will be usable. However, I strongly recommend the edition mentioned above.

The text is difficult and you will need to read it more than once to understand it. You need to read it both before and after classes, if you want to understand it.

This website provides a simplified translation of parts of the CPR:
http://www.earlymoderntexts.com/f_kant.html

I will also be referring to what is known as Kant's “textbook version” of the CPR, the Prolegomena. I’ll be using the following translation:

Kant, Prolegomena to Any Future Metaphysics (Cambridge University Press, 1997).

(ii) Secondary texts

The reading list below mentions some introductions to Kant’s philosophy as a whole, as well as some commentaries to the Critique of Pure Reason, and collections of essays on Kant.

- General introductions
R. Scruton Kant: A Very Short Introduction (Routledge, 2001)
A. Wood *Kant* (Blackwell, 2005)

For an overview of *CPR*, I particularly recommend:

**- Guides to the first Critique**

I particularly recommend this one:

These books guide you whilst you're reading the *CPR* – they are useful additions to the Gardner:

**- More detailed commentaries that I refer to in my notes:**

H. Allison, *Kant's Transcendental Idealism* (Yale UP, 1983)
J. Bennett *Kant's Analytic* (CUP, 1966)
J. Bennett *Kant's Dialectic* (CUP, 1974)
G. Bird (ed.) *A Companion to Kant* (Blackwell, 2006)
P. Guyer (ed.) *The Cambridge Companion to Kant* (CUP, 1992)
P. Guyer *Kant and the Claims of Knowledge* (CUP, 1987)
R. Langton *Kantian Humility* (OUP, 1998)
J. Van Cleve *Problems from Kant* (OUP, 1999)
R. Walker *Kant* (Routledge, 1978)

**- Online reading**

**General reading**
P. Guyer, 'Immanuel Kant,' *Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy*:
http://www.rep.routledge.com/article/DB047
Glossary of Kant's technical terms: http://www.hkbu.edu.hk/~ppp/ksp1/KSPglos.html

**Reading organised by topics**
M. Grier, Kant's Critique of Metaphysics, *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*:
http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/kant-metaphysics/
M. Schönfeld, Kant's Philosophical Development, *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*:
http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/kant-development/

**Podcasts**
Adrian Moore on Kant’s metaphysics: http://www.philosophybites.libsyn.com/index.php?post_id=379821#
Susan Stuart on Kant’s epistemology: http://www.podbean.com/podcast-detail?pid=22016
Anthony Grayling on Kant: http://www.bbc.co.uk/radio4/history/inourtime/greatest_philosopher_immanuel_kant.shtml

**NB:** You will find a number of extra papers on the course website. Use them once you’ve chosen your essay questions.