1. Course description, objectives, and expectations

This course will present a comprehensive picture of Kant’s *Critique of Pure Reason*. We will cover the different questions and arguments of Kant’s Transcendental Idealism in the order in which they appear in the *Critique*. The objective of this course is three-fold. **First**, to develop a more advanced understanding of Kant’s metaphysics and epistemology as presented in the *Critique of Pure Reason*. **Second**, to recognise the place of this work in the development of modern philosophy and in the history of philosophy to this day more generally. **Third**, with a combination of analysis of primary sources and secondary literature, this course has the aim of enhancing key philosophical abilities such as the analysis and commentary of primary texts and the reconstruction and evaluation of arguments.

Students taking this course will be expected to read the parts of the *Critique* required for each lecture, together with the relevant secondary literature for each topic. On completion of this course, students should be able to:

1. Demonstrate a **detailed understanding** of Kant’s *Critique of Pure Reason* and its place in the history of western thought
2. **State confidently** the main doctrines presented in this text
3. Engage with **primary texts** by identifying and assessing questions and arguments
4. Have some awareness of interpretative **problems and objections** to Kant’s theory

2. Lecture schedule and readings

**Note about primary sources:**

The essential reading for all lectures is the *Critique of Pure Reason* (CPR). You must have access to a copy of it and bring it to class. The following edition is strongly recommended:

1. **Kant, Critique of Pure Reason**, edited by N. Kemp Smith, Palgrave


We will also read parts of the *Prolegomena to any Future Metaphysics*, which Kant wrote afterwards in order to provide a summary of the CPR. The following edition is strongly recommended:

Lecture schedule (complete references in Section 4 below):

**WEEK 1. Background and Kant’s Copernican Revolution**
Seminar discussion: What does Kant mean by a ‘critique’ of reason? Why does he think that there is a need for such a critique?

*Primary reading:*  
*CPR*, Preface to the Second Edition Bvii-xliv,  

*Secondary reading:*  
Burnham & Young (2007) 5-23  
Gardner (1999) Chapter 1

**WEEK 2. Synthetic a priori knowledge**
Seminar discussion: What is the distinction between analytic/synthetic knowledge? Can it be successfully drawn? What is its role in Kant’s argument for transcendental idealism?

*Primary reading:*  
*CPR*, Introduction (B1-B30)  
*Prolegomena*, 119-125 [4:365-371]

*Secondary reading:*  
Gardner (1999) Chapter 3  
Van Cleve (1999) Chapter 2

**WEEK 3. The transcendental aesthetic**
Seminar discussion: 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:*  
*CPR*, The Transcendental Aesthetic (B33-B73)  
*Prolegomena*, 36-40 [4:285-6]

*Secondary reading:*  
Gardner (1999) Chapter 4  
Janiak (2016), ‘Kant’s views on space and time’

**WEEK 4. Phenomena and noumena**
Seminar question: What is Kant’s argument in favour of the things in themselves? Is it successful?

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

*Secondary reading:*  
Gardner (1999) 200-6  
Ward (2006) 97-103  
Langton (1998) Chapter 1

*Optional reading (more complex):*

  Langton (1998) Chapter 2  
  Van Cleve (1999) Chapter 7  
  Chignell (2014) ‘Modal motivations for noumenal ignorance’
WEEK 5. The transcendental analytic I: Categories
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:
CPR, Transcendental Logic, Introduction and Division I, Transcendental Analytic, Book I, Chapter I (A 66-83/B 92-116)
CPR, Transcendental Analytic, Book I, Ch. II (A 84-95/B 116-129)
Secondary reading:
Wood (2005) Chapter 3
Longuenesse (2005) Kant on the Human Standpoint, Chapter 4
Optional reading (more complex):
Van Cleve (1999) Chapter 7
Pereboom (2019) ‘Kant’s transcendental arguments’

WEEK 6. Participation session (We’ll discuss the details during week 1)

WEEK 7. The transcendental analytic II: The analogies of experience
Seminar question: What is the status of causation for Kant? Does he provide a successful answer to Hume’s skeptical doubts about causation?
Primary reading:
Prolegomena, 63-65 [4:310-11]
Secondary reading:
Ward (2006) 73-81
Buroker (2006) 173-83
Gardner (1999) 165-88
Optional reading (more complex):
De Pierris & Friedman (2018) ‘Kant and Hume on causality’
Longuenesse, Kant on the Human Standpoint, Chapter 6
Ginsborg (2017) ’Why must we presuppose the systematicity of nature?’

WEEK 8. The antinomies of pure reason
Seminar question: Is Kant successful in securing freedom from the threat of natural determinism?
Primary reading:
CPR, ‘The Antinomy of Pure Reason’ (B432-488)
Secondary reading:
Burnham& Young (2007) 146-151
Wood (2005) 89-100
Gardner (1999) 245-264
Optional reading (more complex):
Allison (1990) Kant’s theory of freedom, Part 1

WEEK 9. The refutation of idealism
Seminar question: Why does Kant need a refutation of idealism? Is his refutation successful?
Primary reading:
CPR, Transcendental Analytic, Book II, Ch. II (B274-9)
Prolegomena 128-131 [4:374-6]
Secondary reading:
- Emundts (2010) ‘The refutation of idealism and the distinction between phenomena and noumena’
- Buroker (2006) 188-97
- Guyer (1999) 179-88

Optional reading (more complex):
- Strawson (1966) Chapter 3
- Allison (1983) Chapter 10

WEEK 10. The ideal 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:
- CPR, ‘Canon of pure reason’ (A795-830).

Secondary reading:
- Gardner (1999) Chapter 9
- Ward (2006) Chapter 8

WEEK 11. Kant's legacy. German idealism.
Seminar question: What are the major sources of tension in Kant's Critique?

Primary reading:
- CPR, ‘Architectonic of pure reason’ (A832-851).

Secondary reading:
- Gardner (1999) Chapter 10
- Walker (1978) Chapter 10

Optional reading (more complex):
- Sedgwick (2006) ‘Hegel’s critique of Kant’

3. Assessment

This course will be assessed by a shorter mid-term essay (1500 words) due on Thursday 24th October by 12 noon (35%) and a final essay (2500 words) due on Thursday 12th December by 12 noon (60%). Students will also have to prepare a creative presentation worth 5%. You can choose any of the seminar questions for your essays.

4. Complete reading list

Most secondary readings are available online via library log in. If for some reason you are unable to get a copy of a required reading, do let me know.

H. Allison (1990) Kant’s Theory of Freedom, Cambridge University Press (available online via library log in)


J. Buroker (2006), Kant's Critique of Pure Reason. An Introduction, Cambridge University Press (available online via library log in)
D. Burnham & H. Young (2007), *Kant’s Critique of Pure Reason*, Edinburgh University Press (available online via library log in)


S. Gardner (1999), *Routledge Philosophy Guidebook to Kant and the Critique of Pure Reason*, Routledge (available online)

H. Ginsborg (2017) ‘Why must we presuppose the systematicity of nature? In M. Massimi & A. Breitenbach (eds.), *Kant and the Laws of Nature*, Cambridge University Press (available online via library log in)


A. Janiak (2016), ‘Kant's views on space and time’, *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*

R. Langton (1998), *Kantian Humility: Our Ignorance of Things in Themselves*, Oxford University Press (available online via library log in)

B. Longuenesse (2005) *Kant on the Human Standpoint*, Cambridge University Press (available online via library log in)


J. Van Cleve (1999), *Problems from Kant*, Oxford University Press (available online via library log in)

R. Walker (1978) *Kant*, Routledge


A. Wood (2005), *Kant*, Blackwell