Kant’s Critical Philosophy – PHIL 10157

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 – (19/09)**
Lecture 1: The Copernican revolution and transcendental idealism
Seminar 1: Discussion of *Letter to Herz*, 21 February 1772.
Discussion question: What does Kant mean by the 'critique' of reason? Why does he think there is a need for such a critique?

**Primary reading:** *C.P.R.*, Preface to second edition (Bvii-xliv).

**Week 2 (26/09)**
Lecture 2: The possibility of synthetic a priori knowledge
Discussion 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).
**Week 3 (3/10)**
Lecture 3: Kant’s Critique of traditional metaphysics and the Paralogisms
Seminar 3: Discussion of the first Paralogism, CPR A348-A351.
Discussion question: Does Kant succeed in refuting Descartes’ cogito?

**Primary reading:** C.P.R., 'Introduction to the Transcendental Dialectic' (B349-366).
**Secondary reading:** Transcendental Dialectic, Book II, (B399-432)

**Week 4 (10/10)**
Lecture 4: The antinomies of pure reason
Seminar 4: Discussion of the first antinomy, CPR, B454-B461.
Discussion 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?


**Week 5 (17/10)**
Lecture 5: The third antinomy of pure reason: freedom vs. determinism
Seminar 5: Discussion of the third antinomy, CPR, B472-B479
Discussion question: Is Kant successful in securing freedom from the threat of natural determinism?

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

**Week 6 (24/10)**
Lecture 6: Things in themselves, noumena and transcendental objects
Discussion question: What is Kant’s distinction between noumena in the negative sense and noumena in the positive sense?

**Primary reading:** CPR, 'Ideal of Pure Reason' (B618-630, B642-8), ‘Regulative Employment of Reason’ (B670-96), 'Phenomena and Noumena' (B294-315).

Essay due – Thursday 27th October 2016, by 12pm

Week 7 (31/11)
Lecture 7: The a prioricity of space
Seminar 7: Discussion of Kant’s argument from incongruent parts in the Inaugural Dissertation (403) and Prolegomena (285-6).
Discussion question: Explain the significance of, and assess Kant’s argument(s) for, the claim that space and time are transcendentally ideal. What does he mean? Why is it important?

Primary reading: C.P.R., 'The Transcendental Aesthetic' (B33-B73)

Week 8 (7/11)
Lecture 8: The Metaphysical and Transcendental deduction
Seminar 8: Discuss Kant’s argument in C.P.R., B143-152.
Discussion 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)

Week 9 (14/11)
Lecture 9: The second analogy and the principle of causation
Seminar 9: Discussion of the principle of causality, B232
Discussion question: Does Kant provide a successful answer to Hume on causation?


**Week 10 (21/11)**
Lecture 10: The Refutation of Idealism  
Seminar 10: Discussion of *C.P.R.* B274-9  
Discussion question: Does Kant provide a successful refutation of idealism?

Primary reading: *C.P.R.*, Transcendental Analytic, Book II, Ch. II (B274-9)  

**Week 11 (28/11)**
Lecture 11: Kant’s critical system and its legacy  
Seminar 11: Discussion / Wrap-up  
Discussion question: What are the major flaws in Kant’s Critique? Find inspiration in the reception of Kant by German Idealists.

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

**Essay due- Thursday 15th December 2016, by 12pm**

**Philosophy workshops**
Seminar 1 (tbc): How to write a successful essay on Kant  
Seminar 2 (tbc): How to improve your essay technique

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:

Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, edited by Norman Kemp-Smith, Palgrave 2007. 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

(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:
  P. Guyer, Kant (Routledge, 2006): Part I.

- Guides to the first Critique

  I particularly recommend this one:

  This book guides you whilst you’re reading the CPR – it is a useful addition to the Gardner:
  D. Burnham, Kant’s Critique of Pure Reason (Edinburgh UP, 2007)

- Further 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)
  P. F. Strawson The Bounds of Sense: An Essay on Kant’s Critique of Pure Reason (1966)
  J. Van Cleve Problems from Kant (OUP, 1999)
  R. Walker Kant (Routledge, 1978)

- Online reading

  General reading
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/
A. Janiak, Kant’s views on space and time, *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*:
http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/kant-spacetime/
D. Pereboom, Kant’s transcendental arguments, *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*:
http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/kant-transcendental/
G. De Pierris & M. Friedman, Kant and Hume on causality, *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*:
http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/kant-hume-causality/

**Podcasts**
Adrian Moore on Kant’s
Susan Stuart on Kant’s epistemology: http://www.podbean.com/podcast-detail?pid=22016
Nigel Warburton on Kant:
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.