

Spring 2011

MAPH 34229/PHIL 27505  
**KANT'S THEORETICAL PHILOSOPHY**

Tuesdays and Thursdays 9:00-10:20, G-B 321

Instructor: Thomas Land

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Office Hours: Wednesdays 2:00-3:30 or by appmt.

There is a course website for this course on [chalk.uchicago.edu](http://chalk.uchicago.edu). Please notify the instructor if you cannot access the course website.

### **COURSE DESCRIPTION**

This course provides an introduction to the *Critique of Pure Reason*, one of the central texts in the history of philosophy. Its guiding theme is Kant's attempt to vindicate the idea that metaphysics provides us with a special kind of non-empirical knowledge. Kant is convinced (i) that any genuinely philosophical knowledge is metaphysical knowledge; (ii) that the very possibility of such knowledge is called into doubt by prevalent conceptions of the human mind (such as those of Descartes, Locke, Leibniz, and Hume); and (iii) that assuaging this doubt (and thus vindicating metaphysical knowledge) requires a careful analysis of human cognitive capacities. In this course we study the account of our cognitive capacities that Kant proposes and ask whether he succeeds in vindicating metaphysical knowledge. In particular, we consider Kant's claim that the two most basic capacities, sense-perception and conceptual thought, are distinct in nature and yet are required to cooperate in a particular way if there is to be any knowledge at all. In considering this claim we will discuss the following topics: spatial representation; concepts; the relation between empirical knowledge and a priori knowledge; self-consciousness; causality; and the nature of the soul. The focus will be on a close study of Kant's text. The class will be a mix of lecture and discussion.

### **REQUIRED TEXTS**

The following texts are available at the Seminary Co-op Bookstore:

Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, transl. Paul Guyer and Allen Wood, New York: Cambridge UP, 1998

Sebastian Gardner, *Kant and the Critique of Pure Reason*, New York: Routledge, 1999

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

The remaining readings are available on the Chalk site for this course under 'Course Documents'.

Note on the translation: In class, we will use the Guyer/Wood translation. But students are encouraged to consult, in addition, the following other translations (as well as the German original, if possible):

- Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, transl. Norman Kemp Smith, revised second ed., New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003 (first edition published in 1923)
- Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, transl. Werner Pluhar, Indianapolis: Hackett, 1996

The German text of the *Critique* (along with the rest of Kant's corpus) is available online at <http://korpora.org/Kant/verzeichnisse-gesamt.html>

## COURSE REQUIREMENTS

1. Class Participation: Regular attendance and participation in class discussion is required for all students who wish to take the course for credit. Participation accounts for 15% of the final grade. Good participation in class discussion is participation that moves the discussion forward. This can take different forms at different times – sometimes it can be, e.g., asking a question. Indeed, asking a question when you don't understand something is an important component of class discussion and is vital for students' learning. Another important component is listening to and addressing what other people say. Finally, more is not always better; that is, I will not give the best participation grade to the person who talks the most. Quality matters.

2. Discussion Question: Before each class, you must submit a question about the reading assigned for that class to the Chalk discussion board. The question can be no longer than half a page and must be submitted by 7:00pm the night before class. These questions let me know what in Kant's text you find difficult to understand, what you find interesting, and what you would like to discuss. They represent one way in which you can shape lectures and class discussion. Discussion questions account for 20% of the final grade.

3. Midterm Exam: There will be a take-home midterm exam, which will be due in fifth week. The midterm accounts for 25% of the final grade.

4. Final Paper: Students must write a final paper, which accounts for 40% of the final grade. For undergraduates, the paper may be no longer than 3000 words. For graduate students, the paper may be no longer than 4000 words.

For Spring Quarter graduates, the final paper is due at noon on Monday, May 30. For all other students, the final paper is due at 5:00pm on June 8. All papers must be submitted in hard copy to my mailbox at the MAPH main office, Classics 117.

Students are required to get their paper topics approved by the instructor. Spring Quarter graduates must submit a paper topic (max. one page) by May 16; all other students must submit a paper topic by May 19. Students are also encouraged to discuss their paper topics with me.

For advice on how to write a good philosophy paper, please consult Jim Pryor's guidelines at [www.jimpryor.net/teaching/guidelines/writing.html](http://www.jimpryor.net/teaching/guidelines/writing.html).

## COURSE SCHEDULE

Note: This schedule is tentative. We may fall behind in class discussion, and I reserve the right to update the course schedule as we go along. In any case, you should keep up with the reading according to the current version of the course schedule unless instructed otherwise.

March 29      A-Preface (Avii-xxii)

March 31      B-Preface (Bvii-xliv)  
Letter to Herz, February 21, 1772  
Gardner, 27-50

recommended:  
Gardner, 9-26

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April 5        Introduction (B1-29)  
Gardner, 51-63  
Buroker, 27-35

recommended:  
Lanier Anderson, "The Introduction to the *Critique*: Framing the Question"

April 7        Transcendental Aesthetic, §1

recommended:  
Manley Thompson, "Singular Terms and Intuitions in Kant's Epistemology"

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April 12      Transcendental Aesthetic, §2 -6  
Gardner, 65-85  
Buroker, 36-57

recommended:  
Charles Parsons, "The Transcendental Aesthetic"

April 14      Transcendental Aesthetic, §§7 and 8  
Gardner, 87-113  
Buroker, 57-72

recommended:  
Henry Allison, *Kant's Transcendental Idealism*, Chps. 1&2  
Karl Ameriks, "Kantian Idealism Today"

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April 19 Transcendental Aesthetic concluded: no new reading

April 21 No class

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April 25 **midterm due** at 4:00pm in my mail folder in Classics 117 (MAPH main office)

April 26 Introduction to Transcendental Logic (A50/B74-A66/B91)  
Gardner, 115-131

April 28 Clue to the Discovery of All Pure Concepts I and II (A66/B91-A76/B101)  
Buroker, 80-93

recommended:

Beatrice Longuenesse, "Kant on A Priori Concepts: The Metaphysical Deduction of the Categories"

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May 3 Clue to the Discovery of All Pure Concepts III (A76/B102-A83/B109)  
Gardner, 131-135  
Buroker, 93-102

recommended:

Manley Thompson, "Philosophical Approaches to Categories"

May 5 Transcendental Deduction, §§13, 14 (A84/B116-B129)  
Gardner, 135-145

recommended:

Lewis White Beck, "Did the Sage from Königsberg Have No Dreams?"  
Stephen Engstrom, "The Transcendental Deduction and Skepticism"

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May 10 Transcendental Deduction (B), §§15-17 (B129-B139)  
Buroker, 116-123

May 12 Transcendental Deduction (B), §§18-21 (B139-B146)  
Buroker, 123-128

recommended:

Dieter Henrich, "The Proof-Structure of Kant's Transcendental Deduction"

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May 17 Transcendental Deduction (B), §§22-27 (B146-B169)  
Gardner, 145-165  
Buroker, 128-135

May 19 Analytic of Principles: Introduction, Schematism, Highest Principle of Synthetic Judgments (A130/B169-A158/B197)  
Gardner, 165-171  
Buroker, 136-145

recommended:

Peter Strawson, "Imagination and Perception"

Wilfrid Sellars, "The Role of Imagination in Kant's Theory of Experience"

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May 26 Analogies of Experience I: General Principle and First Analogy (B218-A189/B232)  
Gardner, 171-179  
Buroker, 163-173

May 28 Analogies of Experience II: Second Analogy (A189/B232-A211/B256)  
Buroker, 173-183

recommended:

Eric Watkins, "The System of Principles"

Michael Friedman, "Causal Laws and the Foundations of Natural Science"

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May 30 Final paper due at noon for Spring graduates (no extensions)

May 31 Concluding discussion: no new reading

June 2 Reading period: no class

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June 8 Final paper due