

Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason* (Prospective Syllabus)

Course Description

Immanuel Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason* has been viewed both as a culmination of the epistemological inquiries of the early-modern period as well as the inauguration of the German-idealist traditions. Whether or not these depictions are correct, both attest to the significance of Kant's work. In this course, we shall see what all the fuss is about, from Kant's striking conception of how our faculties contribute to experience to his critique of traditional metaphysics.

Required Texts

Kant, Immanuel. *Critique of Pure Reason*. Translated and edited by Paul Guyer and Allen W. Wood. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1998.

Recommended Texts

Buroker, Jill Vance. *Kant's Critique of Pure Reason: An Introduction*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006.

Schedule of Readings [each "*" corresponds to 1-3 class sessions]

Unit 1: Background

Kant's Critical Turn

* Kant's 1772 Letter to Marcus Herz

Recommended: Desmond Hogan, "Kant's Copernican Turn and the Rationalist Tradition"

The Project

* Prefaces to the A- and B-editions of the *Critique of Pure Reason* (CPR 99-124); Preface and Preamble of the *Prolegomena to any Future Metaphysics*

Basic Terminology and Definitions

* Introductions to the A- and B-editions (127-152)

Exercise for Unit 1: In a maximum of 3 pages, carry out the following three tasks: (1) formulate and clarify Kant's distinctions between *a priori* & *a posteriori* cognition and between synthetic & analytic judgments; (2) explain what synthetic *a priori* cognition is supposed to be; and, (3) summarize Kant's answer (so far) for why we should suppose that we have synthetic *a priori* cognition.

Unit 2: Space & Time and Transcendental Idealism

Space & Time and Transcendental Idealism

* The B-Edition Transcendental Aesthetic (172-192)

Recommended: Andrew Janiak's "[Kant's Views on Space and Time](#)"

* Allen W. Wood, "Transcendental Idealism"

Exercise for Unit 2: In a maximum of 3 pages, present argument outlines for Kant's view that our representations of space and time are pure forms of intuitions. More specifically, pick one of

space or time, then outline one of Kant's arguments that the representation of it is *a priori*, and then outline one of his arguments that it is also intuitive rather than conceptual.

Unit 3: The Conceptual Nature of Experience

Transcendental Logic and the Metaphysical Deduction of the Categories

* Transcendental Logic (193-203) and The Metaphysical Deduction (204-218)

Recommended: Béatrice Longuenesse, "Kant on *a priori* Concepts: The Metaphysical Deduction of the Categories"

The Transcendental Deduction

* The Problem (219-226)

Recommended: Karl Ameriks, "Kant's Transcendental Deduction as a Regressive Argument"

* The A-Edition's Deduction (226-244)

Recommended: Allen W. Wood, "The Transcendental Deduction of the Categories"

* The B-Edition's Deduction (245-266)

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

Recommended: Henry Allison, Kant's Transcendental Idealism, Ch. 6

Exercise for Unit 3: In a maximum of 3 pages, summarize Kant's answer for how synthetic *a priori* cognition is possible, and explain the role of transcendental idealism in Kant's answer.

Unit 4: Principles of Human Experience

The Analytic of Principles

* The Schematism (267-277)

* The Power of Judgment (278-286)

* Substance (295-304)

Recommended: Eric Watkins, "The System of Principles"

* Causality (304-321; 654-658)

Recommended: Eric Watkins, "The System of Principles"

Refutation of Idealism and Transcendental Idealism Reconsidered

* Refutation of Idealism, (326-329) and Footnote on pp. 121-122

Recommended: Henry Allison, "Inner Sense and the Refutation of Idealism"

* Phenomena and Noumena in the B-Edition (354-365)

Unit 5: The Illusions of Metaphysics

The Transcendental Dialectic

* Transcendental Illusion and Ideas of Pure Reason (384-410, 590-604)

* The Third Antinomy (459-469, 484-489, 532-550)

Recommended: Allen W. Wood, "The Antinomies of Pure Reason"

* The Ideal of Pure Reason, God, and the Ontological Proof (551-569)

Recommended: Michelle Grier, "The Ideal of Pure Reason"

Term-Paper Prompts

- * Summarize the problem that Kant aims to address in the transcendental deduction. Then, select either the A- or B-edition and outline the key steps of Kant's argument.
- * Explain the arguments of the "subjective deduction" or "threefold synthesis" passage in the A-edition's transcendental deduction. What do these arguments contribute to the transcendental deduction's main task?
- * What in the world is going on in the "Schematism" chapter? Clarify the problem Kant aims to address and outline Kant's solution to that problem.
- * Outline Kant's argument for the permanence of substance in the First Analogy. In doing so, make clear its debt to earlier arguments of the first *Critique*. Finally, critically evaluate the argument: is it convincing?
- * Outline Kant's argument for the principle of causality in the Second Analogy. In doing so, make clear its debt to earlier arguments of the first *Critique*. Finally, critically evaluate the argument: is it convincing?
- * Summarize the distinctions between empirical/transcendental idealism/realism. Using this, clarify the aim of the B-edition's "Refutation of Idealism" and explain how Kant's argument is supposed to reach this aim. Is Kant's argument successful?
- * Select one of Kant's antinomies, then: i) explain the thesis; ii) explain the antithesis; iii) summarize how Kant responds to the antinomy; and, iv) evaluate Kant's response.