

PHIL 312 19th CENTURY GERMAN PHILOSOPHY

Spring 2009

T/R 10-1125

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Johnson 303 (x2824)

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COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course examines the major figures of 19th century German philosophy, including Kant, Fichte, Hegel, Marx, and Nietzsche. Despite their different philosophical standpoints, all of them are preoccupied with some of the most fundamental problems in philosophy, including the nature of reality (metaphysics), the foundations of knowledge (epistemology), and the problem of freedom (morality and political obligation). The work done by these philosophers precipitated the revolutionary development of the social sciences like anthropology, sociology, psychology and economics in the work of figures like Weber, Durkheim, Levi-Strauss, Freud and Spencer, and thus represents the most influential tradition of philosophy in history.

The goal of this course is for students to gain a broad understanding of this tradition of German Idealism and its critics through a close reading of some key texts. It begins with a review of Kant's transcendental idealism, which is an attempt to synthesize the two great traditions of early modern philosophy called rationalism and empiricism. From there it explores Fichte's critique of Kant's dualism between reason and nature as well as Hegel's criticism that both Kant's and Fichte's idealism is "subjective" rather than "Absolute." The last part of the course turns to some important criticisms of these ideas in Marx's critique of philosophy and Nietzsche's critique of modernity.

REQUIRED TEXTS

1. J.G. Fichte, *Introduction to the Wissenschaftslehre* (Hackett)
2. G.W.F. Hegel, "Spirit" from *The Phenomenology of Spirit* (Hackett)
3. Kenneth Westphal, *An Introduction to Hegel's Epistemology* (Hackett)
4. Karl Marx, *Selected Writings* (Hackett)
5. Friedrich Nietzsche, *Gay Science* (Cambridge)

There will also be required and recommended articles to read that can be found on the electronic reserves website for this course. The textual editions and/or translations I have selected can be found in the Occidental College Bookstore (x2630). They are affordable and you must use these editions since we will be reading the texts closely as a class.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

The course requires *minimally* completing the following assignments. No late assignments will be accepted without prior approval, which will NOT be granted as last minute requests by email. No exceptions.

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|-----------------------------|------------|-----------|
| (3) Presentations (1-2 pp.) | 15 percent | TBD |
| (2) Short papers (5 pp.) | 50 percent | 3/5, 4/21 |
| (1) Long paper (10 pp.) | 35 percent | 5/5 |

Class attendance and participation is expected. There are five basic rules in this classroom: (1) read all assigned material before class and bring it with you, (2) ask questions if you don't understand, (3) participate in the discussion if you have something to say, (4) respect others, and (5) turn off your wireless devices.

It is the policy of Occidental College to make reasonable accommodations for qualified individuals with disabilities. If you require such accommodations to complete your course requirements, please see me no later than the second week of classes. For information on documentation requirements for such requests, contact the Center for Academic Excellence (x2849).

This syllabus represents a contract. As students you are expected to fulfill your obligations in this course, just as the Administration, Faculty, and students of Occidental College have a right to expect me to fulfill my duties as instructor.

ACADEMIC HONESTY

Plagiarism is misrepresenting the work of others as your own. Plagiarizing published material and more general forms of academic misconduct like borrowing other students' papers will be turned over to the Judicial Examiner. For such academic dishonesty it is standard to receive an "F" for the course, as well as additional punitive measures. There is an Academic Code at Occidental College that can be found at the following link: <http://departments.oxy.edu/studentlife/studenthandbook/academic.policies/academic.ethics.html>

SCHEDULE

WEEK 1: IMMANUEL KANT

1. Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, "B-Deduction"
2. Kant, "3rd Antinomy"
3. REQ: Allison, "The Third Antinomy"
4. REC: Pippin, "Kant on the spontaneity of mind"

WEEKS 2 - 3: J.G. FICHTE

1. "Review of Anesidemus"
2. "First Introduction" to *Wissenschaftslehre*
3. "Second Introduction"
4. "Chapter 1"
5. REQ: Wood, "Fichte's Philosophical Revolution"
6. REC: Breazeale, "How to Make an Idealist"
7. REC: Pippin, "Fichte's Contribution"

WEEKS 4 - 10: G.W.F. HEGEL

1. "Introduction" to *The Phenomenology of Spirit*
2. "Self-Consciousness: Lord and Bondsman"
3. "Spirit, I: Ethical Order"
4. "Spirit, II: Alienation and Culture"
5. "Spirit, III: Morality"
6. REQ: Westphal, Ch. 1-3
7. REQ: Westphal, Ch. 4-6
8. REQ: "Skepticism, Knowledge, and Truth in the Jena Phenomenology"
9. REC: Pippin, "Kantian and Hegelian Idealism"
10. REC: Pippin, "Satisfying Self-Consciousness"

WEEKS 10 - 12: KARL MARX

1. *1844 Manuscripts*
2. *German Ideology*
3. *Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right*
5. REC: Elster, *Karl Marx: An Introduction*

WEEKS 12 - 14: FRIEDRICH NIETZSCHE

1. *Gay Science*
2. REQ: Pippin, "Nihilism Stands at the Door"
3. REQ: Pippin, "The Death of God and Modern Melancholy"