

KANT'S PRACTICAL PHILOSOPHY

Kant's practical philosophy is one of the most influential if not the most influential ethical theories today. It paved the way for thinking of the moral good as the norm but the one of which we ourselves are the legislators. It defined the way we think of human autonomy, dignity, and human rights. In this seminar, we will focus on the close reading of the seminal texts in Kant's practical philosophy: *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*, *Critique of Practical Reason*, and *Religion Within the Limits of Reason Alone*. The aim of the course will be to understand some fundamental concepts of Kant's practical philosophy such as his notion of autonomy, justification of freedom and morality, moral agency, moral psychology, the highest good, and his conception of radical evil. We will also be reading contemporary commentators of Kant's practical philosophy in order to understand better its various receptions today, such as, for example, the distinction between moral realism, constructivism, and constitutivism.

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Required Texts:

I. Primary (ordered through the bookstore):

Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Practical Reason* (1788), trans. and ed. by Mary J. Gregor, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999. [CPR]

Immanuel Kant, *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals* (1785), trans. and edited by Mary J. Gregor, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999.

Immanuel Kant, *Religion Within the Boundaries of Mere Reason*, ed. Allen Wood and George di Giovanni, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998.

II. Secondary (available on Canvas through 'Course Reserves'):

Allison, *Kant's Theory of Freedom*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990. [TF]

Ameriks, *Interpreting Kant's Critiques*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003. [IKC] e-book

Bagnoli, Carla (ed.), *Constructivism in Ethics*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013. [CE] e-book

Engstrom, Stephen, "The Concept of the Highest Good in Kant's Moral Theory," *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 52, 1992: 747-80.

Guyer, Paul, "From a Practical Point of View: Kant's Conception of a Postulate of Pure Practical Reason," *Kant on Freedom, Law and Happiness*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Herman, Barbara, "On the Value of Acting from the Motive of Duty," *Philosophical Review* 90, 1981: 359-82.

Korsgaard, Christine, "Kant's Formula of Humanity," *Kant-Studien* 77, 1986: 183-202.

O'Neil, Onora, *Constructions of Reason: An Exploration of Kant's Practical Philosophy*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989. [CR]

Reath, Andrews/Timmermann, Jens (eds.), *Kant's 'Critique of Practical Reason': A Critical Guide*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010. [CG]

Wood, Allen, *Kant's Ethical Thought*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999. [KET]

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

(1) Paper (50%):

1 longer paper, approx. 5000-7000 words long with additional research of the secondary literature on your topic

(2) Paper proposal and outline (required but not graded)

(3) 1 Presentation (10%)

(4) 13 1-page response papers (25%):

Your 1-page papers should consist of a short exposition and an evaluation of the author's main ideas. The papers are always on the readings for the upcoming class.

(5) Attendance and Participation (15%):

You are expected to come to class regularly, on time, prepared and ready for discussion. Attendance is mandatory. If you cannot attend for some legitimate reason (e.g. illness, family emergency) you must notify me in advance. Excuses after the fact will not be accepted. You can have up to one unexcused absence. Each additional unexcused absence will negatively affect your participation grade and your final grade.

Academic Honesty:

All students are expected to be familiar with Temple University's policies on academic honesty. For reference, see the "Temple University Student Code of Conduct" at <http://policies.temple.edu> (policy number 03.70.02)

Academic Rights and Responsibilities Policy:

Freedom to teach and freedom to learn are inseparable facets of academic freedom. The University has adopted the policy on Student and Faculty Academic Rights and Responsibilities posted at <http://policies.temple.edu> (policy number 03.70.02)

Incomplete Policy:

I follow the incomplete policy of the College of Liberal Arts. It is stated at <http://www.temple.edu/cla/Advising/Faculty/incomplete.asp>
Incompletes are granted only in documented cases of interfering circumstances beyond the student's control (such as illness, disability or family emergency). Incomplete contracts should be completed and signed preferably by the last day of classes.

Disability Statement:

This course is open to all students who meet the academic requirement for participation. Any student who has a need for special accommodation because of a disability should contact me to discuss the specific situation as soon as possible. I will work with Disability Resources and Services (215-204-1280; 100 Ritter Annex) to coordinate reasonable accommodations for students with documented disabilities. Please register with Disability Resources and Services *in advance*, if you have a relapsing/remitting disability and there is a possibility it may interfere with your work this semester.

SCHEDULE OF READINGS:

I THE 'GOOD WILL'

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| Week 1 | Kant, <i>Groundwork</i> I and II |
| Week 2 | Ameriks, "Kant on the Good Will" [IKC, Ch.7: 193-211];
Herman, "On the Value of Acting from the Motive of Duty" |

II MORAL REALISM/ANTIREALISM

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| Week 3 | O'Neil, "Constructivism in Ethics" [CR, Ch. 11: 206-219];
Korsgaard, "Kant's Formula of Humanity" |
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III THE JUSTIFICATION OF MORALITY AND FREEDOM

Week 4 Kant, *Groundwork* III; Allison, “The Deduction in Groundwork III,” [KTF, Ch. 12: 214-227]; Ameriks, “Kant’s Groundwork III Argument Reconsidered” [IKC, Ch. 9: 226-249]

Week 5 Kant on the moral law as the “Fact of Reason,” CPR, 139-166; Allison, “The Fact of Reason and the Deduction of Freedom,” [KTF, Ch. 13: 230-249]

Week 6 Kant on the moral law as the “Fact of Reason,” CPR. 166-186; Pauline Kleingeld, “Moral Consciousness and the Fact of Reason” [CG, Ch. 4: 55-73]; Ameriks, “Pure Reason of Itself Alone Suffices to Determine the Will” [IKC, Ch. 10: 249-263]

IV THE MORAL MOTIVATION

Week 7 Kant on the object of pure practical reason and the Typic: CPR, 186-198

Week 8 Kant on the moral motivation and the feeling of respect: CPR, 198-225; Engstrom, “The *Triebfeder* of Pure Practical Reason” [CG, Ch. 5: 73-90]

V THE ANTINOMY OF PRACTICAL REASON

Week 9 CPR, 226-236; Watkins, “The Antinomy of Practical Reason: Reason, the Unconditioned, and the Highest Good” [CG, Ch. 7: 145-168]

Week 10 Engstrom, “The Concept of the Highest Good in Kant’s Moral Theory”; Guyer, “From a Practical Point of View”

VI THE PRIMACY OF PRACTICAL REASON

Week 11 CPR, 236-258; Willaschek, “The Primacy of Practical Reason and the Idea of a Practical Postulate” [CG, Ch. 8: 168-197]

VII THE DOCTRINE OF METHOD

Week 12 CPR, 261-271; Bacin, “The Meaning of the *Critique of Practical Reason* for Moral Beings: the Doctrine of Method of Pure Practical Reason” [CG, Ch. 9: 197-216];

Week 13 THANKSGIVING HOLIDAY

VIII THE RADICAL EVIL

- Week 14 Kant, *Religion*, Part I (45-73); Allison, Ch. 7, “*Wille, Willkür, and Gessinnung*” [KTF, Ch. 7: 129-146]
- Week 15 Wood, “The Historical Vocation of Morality” [KET, Ch. 9: 283-321]/Discussion of paper proposals and outlines