

Modern Philosophy II 2016-17

Michaelmas: Kant Reading List and Essay Titles



Lectures & tutorials: Dr. Andrew Cooper

Module aims

To introduce students to Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason* and to the philosophies of major figures – drawn from a list including Hegel, Schopenhauer, Nietzsche and Wittgenstein – who were deeply influenced by, or who reacted against, him. Students will become acquainted with some of the main arguments found in the texts studied, critical and interpretative issues raised by the texts, and the place of the authors studied in the history of Western philosophy.

Syllabus

In the first half of the module attention the focus is Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason*; the second half concentrates on his successors. Topics discussed include transcendental idealism, the will, the self, and perspectivism.

Set text for Part I

Kant *Critique of Pure Reason* (henceforth CPR): The Cambridge edition is the preferred version: *Critique of Pure Reason* (ed. and trans. Paul Guyer and Allen Wood: Cambridge University Press, 1999). Two alternative editions are also fine: *Critique of Pure Reason* (trans. Norman Kemp Smith: Palgrave, 2007); *Critique of Pure Reason* (trans. Werner Pluhar: Hackett, 1997). The Cambridge version is a little more expensive, but worth it, as it is the standard text used in academic publications. Please **bring it to all classes**.

If you are finding the text heavy going, have a look at Bennett's simplified version, but avoid relying on it and do not cite it: <http://www.earlymoderntexts.com/authors/kant>

Essays

The following essay titles allow for a variety of ways of approaching Kant's critical philosophy. You can also form your own essay title, but consult with me first.

- What was the nature of the influence of Hume *or* Leibniz upon Kant?
- Why did Kant want to establish the existence of synthetic *a priori* truths? Critically assess his reasoning.
- Evaluate critically Kant's best argument for transcendental idealism.
- 'The representations of space cannot, therefore, be empirically obtained from the relations of outer appearance' (Kant). Explain and discuss.
- Is Kant right to think that space and time are *a priori* forms of intuition?
- Is Kant's transcendental deduction of the categories successful?
- Is there any sound version of the argument of the Second Analogy?
- Is Kant's view that there are synthetic *a priori* truths ultimately indefensible?
- 'I have found it necessary to deny knowledge, in order to make room for faith' (Kant). Explain and discuss.
- Discuss Kant's 'refutation of idealism'.
- What, according to Kant, is Reason, and how does it differ from the Understanding?
- What are the problems that Kant identifies with rational psychology? How serious are they?
- 'Kant's distinction between appearances and things in themselves is fundamentally a distinction between two kinds of properties of things: relational and intrinsic.' Discuss.
- Do Kant's Antinomies demonstrate the truth of transcendental idealism?
- How convincing do you find Kant's theory of transcendental freedom?

Essays should be a maximum of 2000 words. I will give more guidelines for essay writing in tutorials throughout the term.

Essay due date: 15th December 2016

General readings

Most of these are available through online access through the library website – see Oxford Scholarship Online, eBook Library, and Cambridge Companions Online.

General introductions

Gardner, *Kant and the Critique of Pure Reason* (Routledge: 1998)

O'Shea, *Kant's Critique of Pure Reason* (Acumen: 2012)

Guyer, *Kant* (Routledge: 2006)

Useful collections

Bird, G (ed.), *A Companion to Kant* (Blackwell, 2006)

Guyer, P. (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Kant* (Cambridge, 1992)

Guyer P. (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Kant and Modern Philosophy* (Cambridge, 2006).

Guyer, P. (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Kant's Critique of Pure Reason* (Cambridge, 2010).

Advanced works

Allison, H.E., *Kant's Transcendental Idealism* (Yale, 2004)

Ameriks, K, *Interpreting Kant's Critiques* (OUP, 2003)

Guyer, P, *Kant and the Claims of Knowledge* (Cambridge, 1998)

Strawson, P.F., *The Bounds of Sense*, (Methuen, 1966)
Kitcher, P., *Kant's Transcendental Psychology* (OUP, 1990)

Dictionaries

One of the main obstacles to understanding Kant's work is his terminology. The following provides a very helpful guide to understanding the meaning of each of the main terms:
Caygill, H., *A Kant Dictionary* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1995)

Required and suggested reading by lecture topic

Please read the primary texts before each session. The secondary reading is there to help guide you through some of the more difficult ideas of the module and to provide a first port of call for the essay.

Lecture 1 – Background and Introduction to CPR

Kant's CPR is one of the most difficult and exciting texts in philosophy. In this introductory lecture we will explore the influence of Hume and Leibniz on Kant, situating Kant's critical philosophy in the context of the enlightenment. We will examine Kant's analogy with Copernicus's method in the natural sciences, raising the provocative question that will continue throughout the module: to what degree does the structure of the mind determine our experience of the world?

Primary reading

The Preface to the A Edition, *Avii-Axxii*.
The Preface to the B Edition, *Bvii-Bxliv*.
The A Introduction, A1-A16/B30.
The B Introduction, B1-A16/B30.

Secondary reading

Schönfeld, Martin, 'Kant's Philosophical Development,' *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (Fall 2008 Edition)*, Edward N. Zalta (ed.),
<http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2008/entries/kant-development/>
Beiser, Frederick: "Kant's intellectual development 1746-1781" in *The Cambridge Companion to Kant*, 26-61.
Guyer, Kant, Ch. 2.
Hogan, Desmond, 'Kant's Copernican Turn and the Rationalist Tradition' in *The Cambridge Companion to Kant's Critique of Pure Reason*, 21-40.

Lecture 2 – The Project of the Critique: the synthetic a priori and the Copernican turn

Our aim in this lecture is to clarify the intention of Kant's project by focusing on his central question, how are synthetic *a priori* judgments possible? To understand what this question means, and why it is important, we will examine the *a priori/a posteriori* distinction, the difference between analytic and synthetic judgments, and how Kant's controversial idea of a synthetic *a priori* judgment could solve the problems of metaphysics. This will lead us to Kant's famous assertion that 'thoughts without content are empty, intuitions without concepts are blind' (A51/B76).

Primary reading

The Preface to the A Edition, Avii-Axxii.
The Preface to the B Edition, Bvii-Bxliv.
The A Introduction, A1-A16/B30.
The B Introduction, B1-A16/B30.

Secondary reading

Gardner, Chs. 1&2.
Guyer, *Kant* Ch. 2.
Dicker, *Kant's theory of knowledge: an analytical introduction*, Ch. 1 (OUP: 2004)
Walker, Ralph: *Kant* (Routledge, 1978), Ch. 1.
Van Cleve, *Problems from Kant* (OUP: 1999) Ch. 2.

Lecture 3 – Space and Time: the transcendental aesthetic

Our task in this lecture is to reconstruct Kant's account of space and time as the 'pure (*a priori*) forms of sensible intuition'. Against Newton's notion of space as a container, and Leibniz's view of space as relations, Kant argues that space cannot be an empirical concept derived from outer experience, and nor does it exist independently of the subject. In his 'metaphysical exposition' of the concept of space, Kant argues that our representation of space cannot be obtained through experience, for outer experience is only possible through such a representation. Our aim will be to understand exactly what Kant means by an exposition, and how it leads to his conceptions of space and time.

Primary reading

Transcendental Aesthetic
(Space) A19/B34 – A24/B40
(Time) A30/B46 – A32/B49

Secondary reading

Bennett, J. *Kant's Analytic* (Cambridge, 1966), Ch. 5.
Dicker, Ch. 2.
Falkenstein, Lorne, "Kant's Transcendental Aesthetic" in *A Companion to Kant*, 140-153.
Gardner, Ch. 4
Guyer, *Kant* pp. 51-70.
Parsons, C. "The Transcendental Aesthetic", in *The Cambridge Companion to Kant*, 62-100.
Shabel, L. "The Transcendental Aesthetic" in *The Cambridge Companion to Kant's Critique of Pure Reason*, 93-117.
Van Cleve, Ch. 3.
Falkenstein L., 'Was Kant a Nativist?' *Journal of the History of Ideas* (1990): 573-97. Reprinted in P. Kitcher (ed.) *Kant's Critique of Pure Reason* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 1998).
Warren, 'Kant and the Apriority of Space', *Philosophical Review*, 107 (1998): 179-224.

Lecture 4 – Transcendental Idealism

In §3 of the Transcendental Analytic, Kant moves from the metaphysical exposition of the concept of space to the transcendental exposition. Here he reaches his famous conclusion that we can speak of space 'only from the human standpoint' (A26/B42) and that space has 'transcendental ideality' (A28/B44). Thus we find ourselves at the heart of Kant's transcendental idealism. Our task is to understand why Kant thinks that mathematics is a body of synthetic *a priori* knowledge, and how his 'argument from geometry' is supposed to work. The implications of this argument are vital to Kant's project: it aims to show us that we can have non-empirical intuition, which is basic to the possibility of synthetic *a priori* judgments.

Yet are we convinced by Kant's claim that we can have no knowledge of things in themselves?

Primary reading

Transcendental Aesthetic

(Space) §3: Transcendental Exposition of Space, B40-1

Conclusions from the above concepts, A26/B42-A30/B45

(Time) §§6-7: Conclusions from these concepts, Elucidation, A32/B49-A41/B58

§8: General Remarks on the Transcendental Aesthetic, A41/B59-A49/B73

Secondary reading

Allison, Chs. 1, 2

Bennett, J. *Kant's Analytic* (Cambridge, 1966) Ch. 2.

Dicker, Ch. 2.

Gardner, Chs. 1&2.

Guyer, *Kant* 51-70.

Collins, A. *Possible Experience* (University of California, 1999), Chs. 1, 2, 3.

Van Cleve, James, Ch. 1, Ch 10

Potter, Michael, *Reason's Nearest Kin*, (Oxford: 2002) Ch.1.

Friedman, M. (1992). *Kant and the Exact Sciences*. (Harvard University Press: 1992), Chapter 1.

Matthews, H. "Strawson on Transcendental Idealism" in Walker (ed.) *Kant on Pure Reason* (Oxford, 1978)

Lecture 5 – The Transcendental Deduction

In this lecture we examine Kant's idea of a 'transcendental argument', one of his most influential contributions to philosophy. Roughly, a transcendental argument for Kant begins with a premise about our thought we take as granted, and then reasons to a conclusion that is the unobvious presupposition and necessary condition of the possibility of this premise. The Transcendental Deduction uses this form of argument to demonstrate against empiricist psychology that certain *a priori* concepts correctly apply to objects of our experience. The specific *a priori* concepts whose applicability Kant aims to vindicate are given in the Table of the Categories (A80/B106).

Primary reading

Transcendental Analytic

The Metaphysical Deduction A67-A71/B92-96

The Introduction to the Transcendental Deduction A84-95/B116-129.

The B Version of the Deduction B129-B168.

Secondary reading

Dicker, Ch. 4.

Guyer, Paul, 'The Deduction of the Categories: The Metaphysical and Transcendental Deductions' in Guyer (ed.) *The Cambridge Companion to Kant's Critique of Pure Reason*, 118-150.

Allison, Ch. 7

Cassam, Q. (1987) 'Transcendental Arguments, Transcendental Synthesis and Transcendental Idealism,' *Philosophical Quarterly*

Henrich, D. 'Kant's Notion of a Deduction and the Methodological Background of the First Critique' in E. Förster (ed.) *Kant's Transcendental Deductions* (Stanford, 1989),

Longuenesse, Beatrice, 'Kant on a priori concepts: The metaphysical deduction of the categories' in Guyer (ed.) *The Cambridge Companion to Kant and Modern Philosophy*, 129-168.

Lecture 6 – The Analogies

We now turn to unpacking Kant's rich notion of experience a little more closely. Experience for Kant always involves the application of concepts, that is, through 'the representation of a necessary connection of perceptions' (B218). It is 'empirical knowledge', involving the synthetic unity of perceptions. To show that experience is possible only through the presentation of a necessary connection of experience, Kant examines the Analogies, dynamical principles that deal with existence and the relations between things (Kant calls them the 'rules of universal time determination'). Kant's aim in the Analogies is to show how *objective* temporal order is determined, given that it cannot come from experience alone. We will focus on the Second Analogy, where Kant aims to justify the principle that every event has a cause.

Primary reading

The Transcendental Analytic

Second Analogy, A189/B232-A211/B256.

Secondary reading

Allison, Ch 9.

Dicker, Ch. 7.

Guyer, P. *Kant and the Claims of Knowledge* (CUP, 1987), Ch. 10.

Strawson, P.F. *The Bounds of Sense* (Methuen, 1966), pp.133-146

Van Cleve, Ch. 9.

Lecture 7 – Idealism, Phenomena, and Noumena

In this lecture we examine Kant's distinction between phenomena and noumena, giving particular focus to the Refutation of Idealism he adds to the second edition of CPR. We will explore what Kant means by the idea of the 'thing in itself', which leads us to ask whether transcendental idealism is a metaphysical or epistemic theory. This will raise one of the key interpretive challenges of CPR: whether Kant's project is capable of defeating scepticism.

Primary reading

Transcendental Analytic

On the ground of the distinction of all objects in general into phenomena and noumena,
A235/B294- A260/B315

Refutation of Idealism, B274-B279

B-Preface, Bxxxix-Bxli – note.

Secondary reading – Transcendental Idealism

The Fourth Paralogism (A-edition), A366-380.

Allison, Chs. 2-3, 11

Gardner, Chs. 5 & 6.

Van Cleve, Ch. 10.

Langton, R. *Kantian Humility: Our Ignorance of Things in Themselves* (OUP, 1998) Chs. 1, 2, 10

Secondary reading – Refutation of Idealism

Guyer, *Kant* pp.116-122

Aquila, R. 'Personal Identity and Kant's "Refutation of Idealism"', *Kant-Studien*
1979 Bennett, J. *Kant's Analytic* (Cambridge, 1966) Ch. 14.

- Carl, W., 'Kant's Refutation of Problematic Idealism: Kantian Arguments and Kant's Arguments against Skepticism' in Bird (ed.) *A Companion to Kant*, 182-191.
- Cassam, Q. (1993) 'Inner Sense, Body Sense, and Kant's "Refutation of Idealism"', *European Journal of Philosophy*, (1), 111-127.
- Emundts, Dina, 'The Refutation of Idealism and the Distinction between Phenomena and Noumena' in Guyer (ed.) *The Cambridge Companion to Kant's Critique of Pure Reason*, 168-189.

Lecture 8 – The Transcendental Subject

Moving to the Transcendental Dialectic, we now arrive at Kant's exciting and complex idea of the self as the 'transcendental unity of apperception'. Central to Kant's project in CPR is the claim that the 'I' is not an object of knowledge, but rather the vehicle for any objective representation as such. Kant develops this argument in the Paralogisms, which diagnoses the errors of rational psychology. The Paralogisms (i.e. fallacious arguments) argue invalidly from the formal unity of *thought* of the subject of thinking to the conclusion that the *soul* is a real substance that is self-identical throughout experience. Kant's claim is that consciousness is not a representation distinguishing an object but rather a form of representation.

Primary reading

Transcendental Dialectic

Paralogisms of Pure Reason, A341/B399-A348-B406.

B-edition, B406-B432.

Secondary reading

Brook, A., *Kant and the Mind* (Cambridge, 1994) Chs.1, 2, 7, 8.

Gardner, Ch. 7.

Guyer, pp.134-138.

Kitcher, P., *Kant's Transcendental Psychology* (Oxford, 1990), Ch. 7.

Strawson, P.F. *The Bounds of Sense* (Methuen, 1966), Part 3, Section II.

Thiel, U. 'The Critique of Rational Psychology' in Bird (ed.) *A Companion to Kant*, 207-221.

Van Cleve, Ch. 11.

Wuerth, Julian, 'The Paralogisms of Pure Reason,' in Guyer (ed.) *The Cambridge Companion to Kant's Critique of Pure Reason*, 210-244

Lecture 9 – Transcendental Freedom

Kant thought that the errors of metaphysics could be diagnosed in the form of antinomies. Reason's illusions unavoidably manifest themselves in the form of contradictions, each side of which seems naturally plausible. Kant's argument is that unless we accept the transcendental idealist distinction between appearances and things in themselves, we will be committed to accepting mutually incompatible arguments. Our focus will be on the third antinomy: that there must be at least one first or uncaused cause (spontaneity) and that everything takes place solely in accordance with causal laws. In other words, it concerns the possibility of freedom in the causally exhaustive world of modern science. Kant's solution is as exciting as it difficult: *both* sides can be true, *if* we restrict our denial of a free cause to the natural and sensible world and rather affirm its existence in a noumenal world of things in themselves. This argument has huge implications for Kant's understanding of the relation between theoretical and practical philosophy, which plays out in his second and third *Critiques*.

Primary reading

Transcendental Dialectic

The antinomy of pure reason, A405/B432-A425/B453.
Third Antinomy, A444/B472-A451/B479.
On the interests of reason in these conflicts. A462/B490-A497/B525.

Secondary reading

Gardner, Ch. 7.
Guyer, 138-145.
Allison, H.E. *Idealism and Freedom* (CUP, 1996)
Allison, H.E. 'Morality and Freedom: Kant's Reciprocity Thesis', in P. Guyer (ed.) *Kant's Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals* (Rowman and Littlefield, 1998)
Strawson, P.F. 'Freedom and Resentment', in *Freedom and Resentment and Other Essays* (Methuen, 1974), 1-25.
Wood, Allen, "Kant's Compatibilism" in A. Wood, ed., *Self and Nature in Kant's Philosophy*, 73-101.

Lecture 10 – The Critical Project: Knowledge, Morality, Art

In this final lecture on Kant we take a step back to look at the implications of Transcendental Idealism. We will also consider Kant's critical philosophy as a project that extends from CPR to *Critique of Practical Reason* and *Critique of the Power of Judgment*. We will explore the way that CPR – and the critical project as a whole – has irrevocably shifted the landscape that has encompassed the past two hundred years of philosophical activity. This will anticipate our discussion of Nietzsche in the next part of the module, who was a deep and exciting reader of Kant.

Primary reading

Critique of Practical Reason, Introduction (see DUO)
Critique of the Power of Judgment, Introduction §1-4 (see DUO)

Secondary reading

Ameriks, K, *Interpreting Kant's Critiques*, Chs. 6 & 12
Guyer, Kant, Introduction, Chs. 5 & 10.
Guyer (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Kant*, Ch. 14