

“Self and Other: Continental Philosophy from Kant to Foucault”

Gray Cox, Winter '09

11:10-12:35 TF in the Straus Room

Office on second floor of Davis

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This course will introduce students to – and give them practice working with – some of the central concerns, concepts, and philosophical methods associated with the continental European traditions that grow out of and respond to the transcendental idealism initiated by Kant. Ways in which understandings of objects, the Self, freedom and relations with Others vary will be used as central themes to explore connections and contrasts between these philosophers. The central texts focused on will include Sartre's *EXISTENTIALISM IS A HUMANISM*, Kant's *PROLEGOMENA* and selections from his *FIRST CRITIQUE* and moral philosophy, Hegel's *PHENOMENOLOGY*, Kierkegaard's *FEAR AND TREMBLING*, David Abram's *THE SPELL OF THE SENSUOUS*, and Foucault's *THE HISTORY OF SEXUALITY, PART I*. Other texts that may be read in excerpts include, 20th century writings on phenomenology and existentialism by Buber, Tillich, Freire, Ortega y Gasset, and de Beauvoir. Class format will alternate between lecture, discussion and seminar style textual exegesis. Evaluations will be based on a series of short papers and a final paper on an independent reading agreed upon. Class discussions will include occasional examination of passages in the original language of the primary texts. Students with fluency in German, French, Spanish or Danish will be encouraged to practice exegesis in the original language. The level will be introductory to intermediate but students wishing to take the course at a more advanced level with more extended work in exegesis of difficult texts may arrange to do so. HS, \$20 lab fee

The primary goals of the course are: 1.) to familiarize students with core texts and ideas from the Continental tradition that have had far reaching influences in psychology, literature, social science, politics, art and elsewhere and 2.) to develop students abilities to decipher and critically analyze complex philosophical texts in discussions and in writing.

Homework -- Each day you should write one or more questions on specific passages and general concepts or claims – framed as carefully as you can, using quotation and citing text. These are assigned for each class unless some other project is due. You should email them to Gray ahead of the class. They will be used to help structure the class discussion.

Short papers providing exegesis of some passage or critical analysis of some key idea – one to two pages in length, bringing a hard copy to class and emailing Gray an electronic version for follow up comments. It is important that these papers be done before class because you will be asked to share them in class. One on Kant's *PROLEGOMENA* or moral theory, one on Abram's *THE SPELL OF THE SENSUOUS*, and one on Hegel's *PHENOMENOLOGY OF THE SPIRIT* **or** Kierkegaard's *FEAR AND TREMBLING*.

Final project – 5-7 pages -- pick a text and do an explication of the author's core concepts or an exegesis of some key, related texts dealing with a common theme or

problem. (You are encouraged to write on one of the texts in the course but may pick some other in this tradition agreed up with Gray.)

Exegesis problem sets - one due at end of Kant section and one at the end of term. These are take home writing assignments in which you will be asked to explain and criticize specific passages or concepts, claims or arguments from the works we have read. They will provide an opportunity to reread the texts and try to clarify what can be made clear -- and reveal as mysterious things that are mysterious by nature.

All written work should be submitted electronically and will be commented on electronically during the term. Copies will be kept for evaluation at the end of the term. If you take this course for a letter grade the evaluation will be determined at the end of the term and will be based on: class participation and homework 20%, short papers 25%, problem sets 30%, final paper 25%.

Collaborative discussion on papers and problem sets is strongly encouraged. But individuals should write their own papers – unless another arrangement is made with Gray (e. g. if two people want to write a collaborative final project).

Schedule

1/6 Introductions and lecture on Descartes' Meditations and themes of the course [survey of student background, interests and other courses)
recommended: Rene Descartes' Meditations, available online at:
<http://evans-experientialism.freewebspace.com/descartesmeditations01.htm>

1/9 Jean Paul Sartre, EXISTENTIALISM IS A HUMANISM
(French version available online at: <http://www.danielmartin.eu/Textes/Existentialisme.htm>)

Short writing assignment: Pick a passage from the text that seems puzzling or raises some question for you and quote it and then frame the puzzle or question as clearly as you can. (This can be just a few sentences but it should be typed and emailed in ahead of class.)

recommended BBC documentary "All Too Human":
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cdKx71XD4Ss>

1/13 Immanuel Kant. PROLEGOMENA TO ANY FUTURE METAPHYSICS, pp. 3-45

Recommended: W. T. Jones, KANT AND THE NINETEENTH CENTURY and Hatfield's introduction

1/16 PROLEGOMENA, pp. 46 to end

1/20 Kant's FIRST CRITIQUE, Transcendental Aesthetic and selections from Don Ihde's DOING PHENOMENOLOGY

1/23 Kant's FIRST CRITIQUE: Transcendental Logic and the Second Analogy
Kant FC, Phenomena and Noumena, Third Antinomy

1/27 Kant FOUNDATIONS OF THE METAPHYSICS OF MORALS

Recommended: W. T. Jones, KANT AND THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

1/30 Reread sections from Kant

- DUE: First Exegesis Problem Set, Monday, 2/2 at 9:00 am
- 2/3 David Abram, THE SPELL OF THE SENSUOUS, pp. 1-44
view interview with Julia Kristeva
- 2/6 THE SPELL OF THE SENSUOUS
- 2/10 THE SPELL OF THE SENSUOUS
- 2/13 THE SPELL OF THE SENSUOUS, and selection from Paulo Freire, THE PEDAGOGY OF THE OPPRESSED
- 2/17 Hegel PHENOMENOLOGY OF MIND, "Introduction" and "Sense Certainty" and selection from Robert Stern on HEGEL AND THE PHENOMENOLOGY OF SPIRIT
Recommended: W. T. Jones, KANT AND THE NINETEENTH CENTURY
- 2/20 Hegel, PHENOMENOLOGY OF MIND on "Lordship and Bondage" and selection from Robert Stern on HEGEL AND THE PHENOMENOLOGY OF SPIRIT
Recommended: Selections from Herbert Marcuse on REASON AND REVOLUTION and Simone de Beauvoir, THE SECOND SEX, "Introduction"
- 2/24 Kierkegaard, FEAR AND TREMBLING
Recommended: W. T. Jones, KANT AND THE NINETEENTH CENTURY
- 2/26 FEAR AND TREMBLING and selection from Martin Buber I AND THOU
- 3/3 Selections from Nietzsche's BEYOND GOOD AND EVIL
Michel Foucault, selections from DISCIPLINE AND PUNISH
Foucault, THE HISTORY OF SEXUALITY, PART I
- 3/6 THE HISTORY OF SEXUALITY
- 3/10 Foucault, HS
DUE: Second Exegesis Problem Set
- 3/13 Closing
DUE: Final Paper