**Seminar 1: Introduction**

**Goal**: reading, interpretation, discussing phil texts & write papers on phil subjects

**Remarks on this course**:

* form of seminar,
* discuss Practical Reason (rejects all moral principles such as theonomy; revolutionary texts; principle of autonomy; )
* follow the sequence of original texts (16 + 2 excurses)
* reports for each session
* reading questions before each session (grasp key points & perspective)
* read respected para. before session

**Introduction**

**1. General estimation of Kant**

central concept: critique, reason, freedom

subject the Enlightenment to criticism: reflect, foundation of 3 famous questions, turning point of the epoch of European Enlightenment

* What can I know (epistemology)
* What should I do
* What may I hope for
* (I, the person in extension perspective; different modality; fourth question by Kant: What is Man)

1st Critique of Pure Reason: objective action; morals; Metaphysics;

2nd Practical Reason: shape phil & non-phil ethic debates (reject prevailing eudaimonia, Aristotle, theonomy principles; put forward principle of self-legislation of the will - autonomy)

2 reasons for moral phil revolution:

* essence of ethics, nature of it (morality); Rousseau; know new moral (ordinary = self-consciousness within everyone, but Phil must illuminate it) (rhetoric question: whoever wanted to invent a principle for ethics only by first inventing ethics?) (No man can do this) (Kant only put forward a new formula)
* new formula serves to morality itself (theoretical & practical gain)

**2. Four driving forces by which Kant is inspired**

1) Enlightenment

refine all about self thinking; release of common human reason;

text: the answer to what is enlightenment (essay)

Kant: intellectual democrat

* not an overcoming of superstition;
* moral task of eternal life (practical attitude);
* thinking of oneself;
* **“Enlightenment is the emergence of humanity from its self-inflicted immaturity.”**
* first practically, secondary significance – epistemologically; simply imitation / cognitive cognitions are as good as meaningless;
* knowledge of social, moral, scientific sciences is actually a hindrance to Enlightenment; educated but not virtuous / happy;
* driving force of Enlightenment => morality
* (immaturity, personal capacity, employ one’s understanding without directions from someone else)

2) Methodological goal of judicative critique

critique: judicative critique of ?; ? form;

self-critique: self understanding rather than others

democratic character: can be achieved by anyone; no exceptional knowledge; limits on common capacity; (courage, thoroughness, patience)

role: prosecutor, defendant, judge (supreme court, with principles)

* different from Plato (philosopher king, power to rule) position
* democratic position: democratization of phil.

3) Morality of that motif as that in 1st critique

phil. of practices, not only as subject of reflection;

not only theoretical, but also other dimensions;

subordination of knowledge to morality:

* could be instrumentalization: compromise the value of knowledge
* desire to investigate the motivating ground of speculation concerning a priori principles of practical reason
* as a science: has an innate value itself

answer the question: why Man exists? what does Man has to do?

* morality. (not knowledge)
* (knowledge not eliminates morality’s intrinsic value, not instrumentalizes morality)
* connected back to self-reflection

4) Comprehensive cosmopolitanism (世界主义)

Phil by def: transgress particular boundaries

euro-centric arrogant

Kant: lived in Konigsberg, but a provocative world citizen

* reputation worldwide
* half research, half social life
* capable of emulation, curiosity about everything, read widely & intensively
* phil. sense: culture’s 7 dims (knowledge, morality, unity of both natural world & morality, pedagogy, ? including art, self evidently ?, history) => cosmopolitan phil.

3 elements to politics: (in the material sense)

* challenge of moral politics in natural conditions (state of war)
* constitutional laws by means of universalizable principles (??)
* internal peace

diagnosis: …

all interconnected by 4 famous questions

**3. Kant’s revolution in moral phil.**

rejects …

principle of self-legislation: of the will, autonomy

2 reasons for this revolution:

* present the self, nature of morality (subjective): do because we like (feel the duty, and do the duty)
  + moral legality: we act in accordance with moral obligations
* democratic element: ordinary man already understands morality & interpret it as absolute obligation => what’s the principle?

revolutionize the philosophy of morality, not morality itself

concerned with new formula (serves morality itself)

practical phil.’s 2 sides: (sketched in intro, detailed in session 2)

* negative, destructive: critique of principle of happiness(empirical, imperative-based motif), of the will of God, of skepticism(no science / quasi-science of moral phil.), of Hume (reason is actually slave of passion – empirical subjective factor)
* reconstructive: fundamental principle or pure practical reason exists & provable; formula, categorical imperative(act in accordance with subjective principles := maxims, universalizable; obligation), the fact of reason

Kant:

* pPR: ethics of capacity of willing (与knowledge在相对的另一端); pure & absolute, really have that;
* Cpr: theoretical reason, but don’t have knowledge of freedom, will of God
  + rationalist: eternal life, objective knowledge
  + empiricist / skeptics: no pure pr, only pr in empirical sense
  + Kant: no, but has something else – pure practical reason
  + Kant’s thought experiment: ask one to give a false word to save his life; morally wrong to do this (possible to overcome the desire to save one’s own life, demanded)

**4. Two provocations for this revolution**

2 provocations in moral phil.:

1) idea of high school: complex;

* moral demand + natural desire of happiness; moral phil. (no lying etc.) doesn’t guarantee happiness;
* new question: senseful world if virtuous ≠ happy? (What I may hope for)
* the possibility of deficit to become happy by being a virtuous man, maybe expanded in transcendental word (?); happiness in proportion to real life (??)

2) duty of moral principles ≠ desire of happiness

* Kant doesn’t defend this
* Scheler’s verses

**QA:**

Q1: Any philosophical meaning in the choice of “I” in “What can I do”-like questions?

A1: It means the 4 questions are concerned with me, with anybody, rather than an intellectual game. Talk about every normal human being.

Q2: 4 driving forces for Kant’s moral phil. or his entire life? (the limits of reason, how is metaphysics possible in science) => Is this pursuit “metaphysics as a science” also a driving force? Or does it belong to the 4 categories of forces?

A2: 4 are more basic, fundamental. … (TODO)

Q3: What’s the difference between Kant’s way and other philosophers to do moral phil.?

A3: Eudaimonia (Aristotle), contemporary like哈贝马斯, communicative ethics, conversed Kantian moral phil.; But I thinks Kant has better arguments.

Basic principle is something that can / cannot be relativized. (inability to become relativized is said in the word categorical)

(TODO)