

Kant's *Epistemology of Religion*

FALL 2016

Instructor: Lawrence Pasternack, Ph.D.

Office: 267 Murray Hall

Email: LRP@okstate.edu

Office Hours: Tuesdays 11:30am-12:30pm

Required Texts

- Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, trans. Norman Kemp Smith (Palgrave: 2003)
(Note: St Martin's Press has the same translation & uses the same pagination)
- Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Practical Reason*, trans. Mary Gregor
(Cambridge: 1997) ISBN 978-0-521-59962-7
- Immanuel Kant, *Religion within the Boundaries of Mere Reason*, trans. George Di Giovanni
(Cambridge 1998) ISBN 978-0-521-59964-1

Recommended Texts

- Lewis White Beck, Commentary on the *Critique of Practical Reason*
- **Henry Allison, *Kant's Transcendental Idealism*** (1st or 2nd Edition)
- Henry Allison, *Kant's Theory of Freedom*
- Fredrick Copleston, *A History of Philosophy*, Vol. 6
- **Sebastian Gardner, *Kant and the Critique of Pure Reason***
- Paul Guyer, *Kant and the Claims of Knowledge*
- **Lawrence Pasternack, *Kant's Religion within the Boundaries of Mere Reason*** (Routledge)
- Allen Wood, *Kant's Moral Religion*
- Further recommendations upon request

Course Outline

This course offers an introduction to Kant's Transcendental Idealism, focusing in particular on its epistemic strictures and how these strictures inform his philosophy of religion. Until very recently, most interpreters have ignored the bulk of his philosophy of religion, often dismissing its more "affirmative" moments as mere "wobbles" in thought, or perhaps "capitulations" to the religious powers of his day. Nevertheless, Kant took great interest in the relationship between faith and reason. In the B-Preface to the *Critique of Pure Reason*, he explains that one of Transcendental Idealism's significant contributions is that it establishes the "limits to knowledge" so as to secure the "room for faith" (Bxxx). Likewise, in the First Preface to the *Religion*, he states that "morality inevitably leads to religion" (6:8n). We shall thus explore the so-called "restriction thesis" of Transcendental Idealism and whether the "affirmative" elements of Kant's philosophy of religion are compatible with it. As we shall see, Kant argues that practical reason carries a "prerogative" to extend our cognition beyond the limits of theoretical reason, thus grounding religious assent.

After working through some of the core features of Transcendental Idealism, we will then turn to Kant's critique of the traditional proofs for God's existence. We will then move to Kant's practical philosophy, particularly his doctrine of the Highest Good, and its relevance to the positive side of his philosophy of religion. Finally, we will turn to his most controversial religious work, *Religion within the Boundaries of Mere Reason*, exploring in particular its underlying religious epistemology.

Readings and Deadlines

August 18	RATIONALISM & EMPIRICISM	(overview)
	<u>I. CRITIQUE OF PURE REASON</u>	
August 23	Preface and Introduction	Bvii-Bxxix (pages 17-28)
	On Mathematics & Geometry	B1-A16/B30 (pages 41-62)
		Pages: 52-55, 182-184, 197-201, 259-260, 576-593
	Transcendental Aesthetic:	
August 25	Space and Time	A19/B33-A30/B45 (pages 65-74)
August 30	Elucidation & General Observation	A36/B53-V73 (pages 79-91)
	Transcendental Analytic:	
September 1	Transcendental Logic & Pure Concepts	A50/B74-B116 (pages 92-119)
September 6	Analogies of Experience/First Analogy	A176/B218-A189/B232 (pages 208-217)
	Second Analogy	A189/B232-A211/B256 (pages 218-233)
	Transcendental Dialectic:	
September 8	Phenomena and Noumena	A235/B294-A260/B315 (pages 257-275)
September 13	Introduction to the Dialectic	A293/B349-A309/B366 (pages 297-307)
	Third Antinomy	A444/B472-A445/B473 (pages 409-411)
	Third Antinomy - Solution	A532/B560-A558/B586 (pages 464-479)
September 15	Ideal of Pure Reason	A567/B595-A630/B659 (pages 485-524)
	Canon of Pure Reason	
September 20	Highest Good and "Holding-to-be-True"	A804/B832-A831/B858 (pages 635-652)
September 22	Overflow	
September 27	Review	
September 29	Test	
	<u>II. CRITIQUE OF PRACTICAL REASON</u>	
October 4	Dialectic of Practical Reason	5:107-5:119
October 6	Practical Postulates	5:119-5:132
October 11	<i>Glaube</i> (Faith/Belief)	5:132-5:146
October 13	Overflow or the 1791 "Theodicy" essay	8:255-8:271
	<u>III. RELIGION WITHIN THE BOUNDARIES OF MERE REASON</u>	
October 18	First and Second Prefaces	6:3-6:11
October 20	Part One: on <i>Ought Implies Can</i>	6:39-6:53
October 25	Part Two: General Remark (Miracles)	6:84-6:89
October 27	Part Three: Ethical Community	6:93-6:100
November 1	Part Three: Historical Belief	6:115-6:124
November 3	Part Four: "Pure Rationalism"	6:151-6:157
November 8	Part Four: Conscience and Doctrine	6:170-6:190
November 10	Topic to be selected by class, Abstract Due	
November 15	Overflow	
November 17	Review	
November 22	Test	
November 29	Paper discussion	
December 1	Paper discussion	

Assignments

• Tests

200 points

- there will be two tests
- tests will be weighed equally
- tests will be composed of short to mid length questions (i.e. a few sentences to a few paragraphs)

• Abstract for Term Paper

Due November 10th by 5pm

50 Points

- The abstract should be 2-3 pages (500-750 words) in length. A bibliography of secondary sources suitable to the chosen topic should be attached to the abstract.
- The bibliography should include at least **EIGHT** narrowly focused, recent (post 1980), premiere sources (ask if you don't know what this implies). These eight cannot include any listed in the syllabus. Sources may be either books or articles. Non peer-reviewed sources are not acceptable. Books whose scope is broader than the chosen paper topic **MUST** be cited with specific chapters or page ranges.
- It is expected that you have read the eight or more sources while preparing your abstract and refer to some of their positions in the abstract. Although you are expected to use eight recent sources other than those listed in the syllabus, you can still use older sources and listed sources to help develop your abstract and paper. The point is that you learn to do a significant level of background research and learn the terrain of debate on the issue you have decided to address.
- Thus, you are **EXPECTED** to make **VIGOROUS** use of the **Philosopher's Index** to develop your bibliography.
- Your abstract and bibliography should demonstrate a familiarity with the more influential publications on your paper's topic over the past decades and the connections between these publications.
- It is **STRONGLY** recommended that you discuss your topic with me prior to submitting the abstract.
- It is **STRONGLY** recommended that you begin your research no later than Spring break.
- I will return the abstract to you within a week of receiving it. If major changes are suggested, you will be asked to submit a new abstract.

• Term Paper

Due December 8th by 5pm

150 points

- Your paper should be 12-15 pages (3000-4000 words) in length.
- Your paper should navigate through the philosophical terrain formed by the secondary literature and develop your paper's thesis thereby.
- Papers that do not develop the ideas discussed in an approved abstract will receive a 0.
- **Papers must be submitted via the D2L drop box in .doc, .docx, .pdf, rtf, or .wpd format.**
- All source material must be fully cited: any ideas you take from a source must clearly represent the ideas as not your own and be fully cited; any language you take from a source must clearly represent the language as not your own and be fully cited.

Total: 400 points

Grading Scale (for final grades): A=360-400, B=320-359, C=280-319, D=240-279, F=0-239

Policies

- Attendance will be checked at the beginning of class. There is no direct penalty for poor attendance; however, good attendance (and participation) **may** be considered when calculating borderline final grades. If you come late to class, it is your responsibility to notify me after class. If you need to leave early, see me before class.
- Papers must be submitted typed, double spaced, with 1" margins and stapled.
- Late assignments will be penalized at a rate of 10 points per week (or any part thereof). This penalty may be waived (at the professor's discretion) if given prior approval or in cases of a properly documented medical or family emergency.
- Students are expected to familiarize themselves with the University's policy on academic integrity and scrupulously abide by it. Be warned that I will vigorously pursue any suspected violations and believe that the most stringent disciplinary action is almost always warranted.
- Official University Policies can be found in University Policy 2-0822, the "Oklahoma State University Student Rights and Responsibilities Governing Student Behavior" and the "Oklahoma State University Syllabus Attachment"