

Kant's Critique of Pure Reason

2 Credits/4 ECTS Credits

MA Elective

Instructor: Mike Griffin (griffinm@ceu.edu)

The focus of this course is Kant's theoretical philosophy: his epistemology and metaphysics. We will aim for a systematic reconstruction of Kant's solution to various philosophical problems through a close reading of the texts, principally the Critique of Pure Reason (CPR) and the Prolegomena to any Future Metaphysics (Prolegomena). We will also look at some of the work of Kant's predecessors, which presents the essential background for his ideas.

Goals and outcomes: We will follow the methodology common among analytically-minded historians of philosophy in the English speaking world. Our aim is to produce reconstructions of the arguments which are clear, accurate, logically rigorous and philosophically critical. We therefore want to develop the following skills: presenting, with a minimum of jargon, the central claims of our philosophers so that it is clear to a thoughtful non-specialist what these claims mean; providing textual evidence that our interpretation is accurate; making explicit the logical structure of the arguments, which includes uncovering implicit principles and assumptions; and finally, evaluating the arguments for cogency and persuasiveness and considering possible responses to objections.

Course Requirements: It is essential that you attend the course regularly, prepared to discuss the readings. At the end of the term you will write a paper of 2000 words on a topic you have chosen and discussed with me.

Assessment: Your grade will be based on two drafts of the paper, the first due in the 10th week and the final due at the coursework deadline.

Topics: The following is a list of the main topics and readings for the course. If there is sufficient interest, some of the topics may be changed, dropped, or discussed at greater length.

1	Some Distinctions: Analytic vs. Synthetic, A Priori vs. A Posteriori, Necessary vs. Contingent Leibniz's Theory of Truth: Selections from Philosophical Essays Hume's Relation of Ideas vs. Matters of Fact: Enquiry, secs. II-IV Kant's synthetic a priori: CPR, Prefaces and Introduction, A1/B1-A16/B30. Prolegomena, secs. 1-6
2	Space and Geometry: Ontological Issues Relationism vs. Absolutism: Selections from Leibniz's correspondence with Clarke Kant on Incongruent Counterparts: Selections from The Inaugural Dissertation and the Prolegomena.
3	Space and Geometry: Epistemological Issues Hume's Empiricism: Selections from Part II of Hume's Treatise Kant's Transcendental Idealism: Critique, Transcendental Aesthetic, A18-41/B33-59, A42-49/B59-73; The Fourth Paralogism A367-80; Prolegomena, secs. 6-13.
4-6	The Central Argument: The Transcendental Deduction of the Categories (i) Transcendental Deduction §§13-14, A84/B116-A95/B129. (ii) Transcendental Deduction A, Section 2, A95-A114.

	(iii) Transcendental Deduction B, §§15-23. Prolegomena, §§18-20. (iv) Transcendental Deduction B, §§24-27.
7	Substance Substance as self-subsisting entity: Selections from Descartes and Spinoza Substance as the principle of unity and activity: Selections from Leibniz's Philosophical Essays Substance as substratum: Locke's Essay, Book II, ch. 23 CPR First Analogy (A182-89/B 224-32)
8	Causality Hume's critique of causal beliefs and naturalism: Treatise Book I, part II, secs. 3-10. CPR Second Analogy (A189-211/B232-56)
9	The Idealisms of Leibniz, Berkeley and Kant Selections from Leibniz's Philosophical Essays Selections from Berkeley's Principles of Human Knowledge CRP Second Antinomy (A434-443 /B462-471) CRP Refutation of Idealism (B274-279)
10	The critique of Leibnizian Monadism Selections from Leibniz's Monadology and the New Essays on Human Understanding CPR Amphiboly of the Concepts of Reflection (A260-92/B316-49)
11	Freedom and Necessity A Libertarian View: Selections from Descartes Two Determinist Views: Selections from Leibniz and Hume CPR Third Antinomy. A444-53/B472-81; A491-502/B519-530, A532-58/B560-86.
12	Critiques of the Traditional Proofs for the existence of God The Ontological and Cosmological Arguments of Descartes and Leibniz Kant's "The Only Possible Ground of Proof for a Demonstration of the Existence of God." (A567-620/B595-648)