

SPRING 2006

PHIL 401: KANT AND SCHOPENHAUER

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Clough 402
Official Office Hours: 11:00-11:50 WF; 2-3 TR & by appt.

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I. COURSE DESCRIPTION AND GOALS: This course was generated and designed as an opportunity to study the whole of Kant's Critical Philosophy. The primary goal is to read all three Critiques carefully and to master them to the best of our ability. The text is our master in this class, and I expect you each to be committed to understanding Kant as fully and deeply as possible. This may differ from a more usual approach in that the following are inappropriate ends and means: seeking only an overview or a general understanding of Kant's project, not understanding long stretches of passages, expecting someone else to put the pieces together or define key terms, not truly trying to think like Kant. The goal isn't to slavishly adhere to Kant's philosophy; there will be plenty of room for critical reflection of his project. But each of you should "own" Kant in some deep sense, akin to my own embrace of him as "the beloved."

We'll work with Schopenhauer at the end of the semester. His work is derivative of Kant's and so won't pose the same sort of challenges. Still, we will approach him with the same level of seriousness.

Given the level of the class and its general nature, the class will be held as a seminar. This basically means that you are expected to be mature, equal participants in this study of Kant, freed from your any vestiges of self-incurred tutelage. Some of us will have more experience with Kant and so will offer help when possible. Still, you should aim to become something of a Kant scholar, able both to discuss the details of his arguments with others scholars and also to convey the significance of his thought to the layperson.

Your most likely challenge in this class will be getting the reading done. I encourage you to develop, early on, a habit of doing your work for this class. Consider it "Kant time," a special time that you regularly do your Kant studying.

Our readings will be fairly long so that we won't be able to cover all the material you read and might have questions about. Hence, we should take a selective, representative approach. What does this mean? It means that while you should read the entire assignment and seek to understand all that you read, our class discussion will focus on a couple of passages of significance. What we do in class, then, will be a representative example of the kind of work you do as you study Kant.

II. COURSE OUTLINE

A. For what can we hope? Kant's answer

1. Critique of Pure Reason (Kemp Smith translation, Palgrave Macmillan, 2nd Edition)
2. Critique of Practical Reason (Beck translation, MacMillan Publ)
3. Critique of Judgment (Pluhar translation, Hackett Publ)

B. For what can we hope? Schopenhauer's answer

1. Selections from the World as Will & Representation (2 Volumes, Dover Publ)

III. COURSE WORK:

Required Course Work:

80% 4 papers (@ 20%)

20% Prep/Participation (Discussion Participation, Guides)

A. Papers (20%): There will be 4 papers, one on each Critique and one on Schopenhauer. The general expectation is that you will generate an individualized topic that interests you, though we can work together on that. The late penalty for papers will be 1/3 letter grade per calendar day late.

B. Preparation/Participation: Since this is a seminar, you will be expected to be prepared and to participate regularly. Your prep/participation grade will be the average of 1 and 2, with consideration given to 3.

[1] **Discussion Participation:** *Qualitative* participation is vital to your learning and is expected throughout the semester. A good way of preparing is to read with your Kant Dictionary and your Questions Journal (see 3 below) handy, filling in new definitions and explanations or answering questions you have asked. Discussion participation involves (i) contributing your own views, questions, and reactions to the readings & class discussion, and (ii) carefully listening to, questioning, and responding to the views of others.

When determining your discussion participation grade, I look at the *quality* and *pattern* of your participation over the course of the semester. The *quality* of your work is gauged in terms of its (i) **clarity**, (ii) **insight**, and (iii) **sophistication**. In assessing the *pattern* of your work, I look at (i) **consistency**, (ii) **effort**, and (iii) **improvement** and **progress** (or regress) you make in critically discussing materials throughout the semester.

Minimal participation, low attendance, and disruptive or dominating classroom behavior result in a low participation grade. Failure to prepare (complete the assigned reading) and/or to bring the relevant texts to class will result in an absence for that session. If you are concerned about your participation performance, please don't hesitate to talk with me.

Attendance: You are expected to attend all classes. If you must miss a class, you are responsible for all material covered and assignments distributed or collected. Since I consider attendance a factor of participation, I don't distinguish between "excused" and "unexcused" absences. (If you're not present, you can't contribute.) Three things count as an **absence** in this class: (1) not being present during class, (2) being tardy, and (3) not bringing your texts and other preparatory materials (dictionary, journal) to class. If you have more than 2 absences (which is the equivalent of a week), your prep/participation grade will drop 1/2 letter grade per additional day missed. Also, you are expected to contact me so we can discuss your attendance.

[2] **Kant Sherpas:** Each of you will serve as our guide on the Mt Everest that is Kant twice during the semester. Our general goal is to explore the Critiques in a manner that truly deepens our understanding and command of Kant's thought.

Your guide should consist of *three* main items:

(1) **Overview, Passages, and Significance:** The goal here is to present the main issues from the reading in a clear manner that captures the heart of the reading. Your overview should highlight the most important points, moves, or issues Kant (or Schopenhauer) considers in the reading. Your goal here will primarily be to articulate these points clearly and accurately. Also, select a couple of passages that are central and/or that you wish us to discuss. Finally, you should also discuss the significance of the overview & passages. Significance is usually a function of an idea's relation to some larger purpose (or goal), so consider how the points you highlight help develop (or perhaps complicate) Kant's project (either in the specific Critique or in all of them). When we work with Schopenhauer, you might also address the significance of his points by thinking about their relation to Kant.

(2) **Key ideas or terms** that are introduced and (hopefully) defined (or redefined) in the day's reading. I recommend listing these in the order in which they appear, though this isn't necessary. It is necessary to identify the page(s) on which the term is explained or defined. If a term receives an important redefinition in the day's reading, include it as well.

(3) A list of two or three **items with which you need help**. Draw these items from your Kant journal. It's best to present your item clearly and with enough detail so that we can see what the problem is. I would recommend offering no more than three of these items. Once you list them, I encourage you to ask whether there is any relation or common link between them. If there is, note that.

Sherpas should be well-written, proofed, and no more than two pages long (single spaced, roughly 700-800 words). Email your prompt to the class (20476@rhodes.edu, + Ben Lyon lyobm1@rhodes.edu) no later than 9 a.m. on the day that you sherpa. I hope everyone will be able to read the sherpa prior to class, but you don't need to print it out; I will make copies for the class.

Follow-up Assessment: After presenting your sherpa, reflect on it to determine how your understanding of the material has changed or deepened. Then write a follow-up assessment in which you:

- (i) Summarize class discussion of your sherpa, noting the main comments and questions made in response to it. Indicate clearly how you did (or now would) respond to these.
- (ii) Explore how your view has changed (or deepened) as a result of discussion and further study. (By "further study" I mean to include the following readings we do in that book. This gives you the opportunity to consider your prompt in a larger context.) It's most likely that you will spend most time addressing part 3 (Things I need help with), though it's also quite likely that your understanding of the significance of your sherpa points will change.

Your assessment is *due no later than* (you can hand it in sooner) *the 1st class meeting* after we complete the relevant book.

Grading criteria: Sherpas (and the follow up) will be graded on the basis of **clarity, organization, insight, and sophistication**. The latter two criteria will most likely be tied to your ability to (a) select vitally important passages – attending to detail without losing the overarching point(s) – and (b) offer a penetrating (and helpful) assessment of the reading's significance. Asking good questions (in part 3) will also reveal the quality of your treatment of the material. Finally, your follow-up is an excellent opportunity to deepen your understanding of the material, so be sure to treat it thoughtfully (vs generally and superficially). Some students treat follow-ups as after-thoughts and so throw away a valuable opportunity for growth.

[3] **Additional Means:** To encourage you continual engagement with the material, the following are key mechanisms:

- A. Keep a Kant dictionary.
- B. Keep a journal of ongoing questions. A strong journal will (a) raise very good questions, and (b) return to and answer some of them as your understanding of Kant develops.

These are important for ensuring that you keep up with the work and also for preparing you for papers. Bring them to *each* class meeting (hence, keep them together in a flat notebook). I will collect these occasionally and give a + (excellent), √ (good), – (needs improvement), or 0 (no, or virtually no, substantive work done). At the end of the semester, I will look at the profile of this work. Especially if your final grade is borderline (e.g., an 89% or a 90%), excellent work can push your grade up (e.g., from a B+89 to an A-) and poor work can push your grade down (e.g., from an A-90 to a B+).

IV. MISCELLANEOUS:

• **Grading Criteria:** See “Grading Criteria for Written Work” handout for specifics.

A	94 and up	B+	87-89	C+	77-79
A-	90-93	B	84-86	C	74-76
		B-	80-83	C-	70-73 etc.

• **Successful Classroom:** In our class everyone has a right to express a genuine observation, curiosity or criticism, but no one has a right to put one down. Respect towards all members of the class and to course content is the key. I work hard to generate a setting in which we can be honest and critical, but my efforts are futile without your individual contributions. Impediments to a successful classroom include tardiness, lethargy, excessive absences, and leaving the classroom before the end of the hour. We are biological creatures, but since we also have a certain mastery over our bodies, please take care of your biological needs before class.

• **Computer Component:** You are responsible for any notes, assignments, etc. that I send out via e-mail. In addition, you will be expected to check documents left on the Academic Volume. I will announce new documents which need to be read; if you are absent, you are responsible for reading these. If you’re unfamiliar with computer use, please check with one of the computer staff; they’ll be happy to help you.

• **Honor Code:** The Honor Code stipulates that *all* the work you submit is to be your own. You are encouraged to discuss topics and assignments with your colleagues, but the work you hand in must be your own, i.e., it must be formulated and written in your own words and style reflecting your own thoughtful treatment. If you have any questions about the Honor Code, please ask me.

*****This syllabus is subject to revision (but don’t worry; I’ll discuss any changes with the class before I make them).*****

CALENDAR

	<i>1/12 Critique I 7-91 (84 pp)</i>
<i>1/17 92-170 (78 pp)</i> Sherpa 1:	<i>1/19 170-208 (38 pp)</i> Sherpa 2:
<i>1/24 208-257 (49 pp)</i> Sherpa 3:	<i>1/26 257-297 (40 pp)</i> Sherpa 4:
<i>1/31 297-383 (86 pp)</i> Sherpa 5:	<i>2/2 384-436 (52 pp)</i> Sherpa 6:
<i>2/7 436-485 (49 pp)</i> Sherpa 7:	<i>2/9 485-525 (40 pp)</i> Sherpa 8:
<i>2/14 525-573 (48 pp)</i> Sherpa 9:	<i>2/16 573-629 (56 pp)</i> Sherpa 10:
<i>2/21 629-671 (42 pp)</i> Sherpa 11:	<i>2/23 Schopenhauer on Kant</i> Sherpa 12:
<i>2/28 Critique II 3-42 (39 pp)</i> Sherpa 13: PPR 1 due 3/1 at 5PM	<i>3/2 Critique II 43-74 (31 pp)</i> Sherpa 14:
<i>3/7 Critique II 74-110 (36 pp)</i> Sherpa 15:	<i>3/9 Critique II 111-168 (57 pp)</i> Sherpa 16:
<i>3/14 SPRING BREAK</i>	<i>3/16 SPRING BREAK</i>
<i>3/21 Critique III 3-39 (36 pp)</i> Sherpa 17: PPR 2 due 3/22 at 5PM	<i>3/23 Critique III 43-84 (41 pp)</i> Sherpa 18:
<i>3/28 Critique III 85-140 (55 pp)</i> Sherpa 19:	<i>3/30 Critique III 141-170 (29 pp)</i> Sherpa 20:
<i>4/4 Critique III 170-207 (37 pp)</i> Sherpa 21:	<i>4/6 Critique III 209-232 (23 pp)</i> Sherpa 22:
<i>4/11 World as representation</i> • Schopenhauer Biography • pp. 3-35 §1-7 • pp. 50-58 §10-12 • pp. 83-91 §16 Sherpa 23: PPR 3 due 4/12 at 5PM	<i>4/13 EASTER BREAK</i>
<i>4/18 World as will</i> • pp. 95-114 §17-23 • pp. 127-130 §25 • pp. 130-139 §26 • pp. 153-165 §28-29 Sherpa 24:	<i>4/20 Platonic Ideas</i> • p. 169 §30 • pp. 181-184 §35 • pp. 194-5 §37 • pp. 233-236 §49 • pp. 269-307 §53-55 Sherpa 25:
<i>4/25 The Will to Live</i> • pp. 307-323 §56-58 • pp. 326-350 §60-62 Sherpa 26:	<i>4/27 The Will to Live</i> • pp. 350-412 §63-71 Sherpa 27: PPR 4 due 5/1 at 5PM