

INSTRUCTOR: Colin McLear
COURSE: PHIL 971
TIME: T 1:30-3:35 p.m.
LOCATION: Oldfather Hall 1007
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OFFICE HOURS: T/R 10:30-11:30 a.m.

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KANT & EARLY GERMAN IDEALISM

[An] object can only be represented in accordance with its relations and is nothing other than the subjective representation of the subject itself, but made general, for I am the original of all objects.

R4674, *Duisburg Nachlaß* 17:646 (1773-5)
IMMANUEL KANT

Course Overview

This course will examine the work of Kant and the early German Idealists, particularly Fichte and Schelling, concerning their views on introspection, self-consciousness and self-knowledge. We will also look at how these views have been developed and modified in contemporary philosophy. Questions of interest include:

- What is self-knowledge?
- Is self-knowledge special? (e.g. is it especially epistemically secure?)
- How is self-knowledge gained? (e.g. via sensory means?)
- Does self-knowledge require consciousness?
- Is self-consciousness/knowledge in some way *prior* to other kinds of consciousness/knowledge?

Course Objectives

Upon completion of this course students should have a good grasp of central philosophical arguments in the early modern period concerning the nature and importance of self-knowledge and self-consciousness as well as the historical context in which these doctrines were articulated. This includes being able to (i) articulate some of the central metaphysical, epistemological, and scientific disputes in Europe from the late seventeenth to the early nineteenth centuries; (ii) clearly explain the different positions of the figures discussed in the course, as well as their dialectical context; (iii) articulate ways in which these issues continue to have importance in contemporary philosophy.

Course Materials

The following books are required for this course:

- Kant, Immanuel. 1998. *Critique of Pure Reason*. Edited by Paul Guyer and Allen W Wood. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

- Giovanni, George Di, and Henry Siltan Harris, eds. 2000. *Between Kant and Hegel: Texts in the Development of Post-Kantian Idealism*. Cambridge: Hackett Publishing
- Fichte, Johann Gottlieb. 1994. *Introductions to the Wissenschaftslehre and Other Writings, 1797-1800*. Edited and translated by Daniel Breazeale. Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing.

Other readings will be posted on the [course website](#) under “Readings.”

Course Requirements

- **Preparation:** You are expected to attend every class meeting fully prepared to discuss each assigned reading, to submit written work punctually, and to offer thoughtful and constructive responses to the remarks of your instructor and your classmates. Make sure that you bring the relevant readings with you to every lecture class. I further expect you to treat both the texts at hand and your classmates’ ideas with openness and respect.
- **Attendance:** Attendance is required. You are also expected to attend every section meeting. 1/2 a letter grade will be deducted from your final course grade for every absence from section after your fifth.
- **Website:** We will use a course website for all materials. The site address is: phil971.colinmclear.net. Upcoming assignments and readings will be posted there. Please let me know if you have any problems. Technical glitches, computer malfunctions and crashing hard drives are not excuses for failing to complete work in this class.
- **Format for Papers:** Please submit work as a .docx or .rtf file. All work must be typed. I will not accept any handwritten work aside from that we do in class. Your papers should be in 12-point Times New Roman font, double-spaced with margins set to one inch on all sides. Your name, my name, the date and assignment should appear in the top left hand corner of the first page. Your last name and page number must appear in the top right hand corner on each subsequent page. Please staple or paperclip hard copies of papers and drafts. You are responsible for the presentation of your papers.
- **Late Work:** Late papers and assignments will standardly be marked down by 1/3 of a letter grade for each day the work is late (for example, from A- to B+, from B+ to B, and so on).

Evaluation

Paper: 60%

- Explain and critically assess a philosophical argument. Topics will be suggested. Papers (6-8000 words) will be written in two drafts, with a first draft due by mid-semester.

Weekly reading responses: 20%

- (500 words; posted on our public course blog by 8 pm the evening before class meets + 250-word responses to a classmate’s post posted by class time): Your reading responses should detail your observations about a primary text (though one can also relate this to secondary readings). They are

not summaries. Move to delimit 1-2 major points or ideas from the reading and discuss them. What do you find interesting or compelling? What do you find logically problematic?

In addition to posting your reading response, you are also required to respond to one of your classmate's posts by the start of class the following day. Your response should engage one or more of the points raised by your classmate. It is not enough to simply say that you agree or disagree with the author of the post. You must explain how your views intersect with the ones presented. Did the post make you think about a reading in a different way? Why? How? What did you find particularly interesting or compelling about the response?

Weekly reading précis: 10%

- Write a précis addressing a particular secondary text assigned for the week (this does not include my notes). A précis is a rhetorical exercise that asks you to summarize a text, including the claim/argument, supporting evidence, purpose, and audience in 4 sentences. For a helpful example of the form, see: http://oregonstate.edu/instruct/phl201/modules/rhetorical-precis/sample/peirce_sample_precis_click.html

Participation: 10%

- The participation grade takes into account your attendance in class and section as well as the quantity and quality of your participation.

Policies

- **Academic Integrity:** All the work you turn in (including papers, drafts, and discussion board posts) must be written by you specifically for this course. It must originate with you in form and content with all contributory sources fully and specifically acknowledged. Make yourself familiar with UNL's Student Code of Conduct and Academic Integrity Code, available online. **In this course, the normal penalty for any violation of the code is an "F" for the semester.** Violations may have additional consequences including expulsion from the university. Don't plagiarize – It just isn't worth it.
- **University Policies:** This instructor respects and upholds University policies and regulations pertaining to the observation of religious holidays; assistance available to physically handicapped, visually and/or hearing impaired students; plagiarism; sexual harassment; and racial or ethnic discrimination. All students are advised to become familiar with the respective University regulations and are encouraged to bring any questions or concerns to the attention of the instructor.
- **ADA:** In compliance with University policy and equal access laws, I am available to discuss appropriate academic accommodations that may be required for students with disabilities. Students are encouraged to register with Student Disability Services to verify their eligibility for appropriate accommodations.
- **Miscellaneous:** Please turn off cell phones, beeping watches, and other gadgets that make noise before entering our classroom. Absolutely no texting is permitted during class. I will subtract up to five points from your participation grade each and every time your phone rings or I see you texting during class.

Further Resources

- **Jargon:** It's important to be on top of the technical terms used by philosophers. Please ask for clarification of terms in class. You can also consult Jim Pryor's online "Philosophical Terms and Methods."
- **Help with writing:** Papers should adhere to some consistent practice of footnoting and citation (Chicago, MLA, etc.). I don't really mind which one you use as long as you are consistent. On writing a philosophy paper, there is no better on-line guide than Jim Pryor's. Please consult it. Hacker's A Writer's Reference is also extremely helpful. Useful online writing help may be found at the Purdue Online Writing Lab at <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/>.

The University of Nebraska-Lincoln Writing Center can provide you with meaningful support as you write for this class as well as for every course in which you enroll. Trained peer consultants are available to talk with you as you plan, draft, and revise your writing. Please check the Writing Center website for locations, hours, and information about scheduling appointments.

- **Reference:** The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy at <http://plato.stanford.edu> is an excellent online resource.

Self-Knowledge in Kant & Early German Idealism

Reading List

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Week 1 - Cartesianism & Self-Knowledge

This week we look at some of the ways in which Descartes sets out self-knowledge as crucial to philosophy. We'll also set out a basic framework for discussion of the various issues concerning self-consciousness and self-knowledge as they will appear throughout the course.

The handout for this week is [here](#).

Readings

- Descartes, *Meditations* 1-3 (especially Med 2 and first half of Med 3)
- Zimmerman, "Self-knowledge" (focus in particular on §§1-4)
- (Recommended) Broughton, *Descartes on Self-Knowledge*
- (Recommended) Gertler, *SEP entry on self-knowledge*

Week 2 - Locke & Leibniz on Reflection

This we look at Locke's view concerning 'inner sense' or 'reflection' as a source of our ideas. We'll connect it to last week's discussion of Cartesian reflection and the notion of an "intuition of the mind", as well as Leibniz's appropriation of aspects of both Descartes's and Locke's views.

The handouts for this week are [here](#) (on the *Cogito*) and [here](#) (on Locke).

Readings

- Locke [on inner sense](#)
- Leibniz on inner sense
 - *New Essays*, Preface (excerpt)
 - *New Essays*, Bk. II, Ch. i
- Weinberg, "Consciousness in Locke's Philosophical Psychology"
- (Recommended) Weinberg, "Consciousness in Locke's Theory of Knowledge" (Part I)

Week 3 - Objections to Inner Sense

This week we discuss some prominent contemporary objections to an inner sense view. These include the doubts about inner sense being a genuine *sense*, and objections concerning what self-knowledge would end up looking like on an inner sense account.

The handout for this week is [here](#).

Readings

- Geach, [The notion of 'inner sense'](#)
- Shoemaker, Self-Knowledge and "Inner Sense", [Lecture 1](#) and [Lecture 2](#)

Week 4 - Inner Sense & the Pre-Critical Kant

This week we finish our discussion of Shoemaker's criticisms of inner sense views. We'll then start looking at the evolution of Kant's views concerning these issues.

The handout for this week is [here](#).

Readings

- Shoemaker, Self-Knowledge and "Inner Sense", [Lecture 2](#)
- (optional) McLear, [Kant: Philosophy of Mind](#)
- Kant, excerpts from the pre-critical writings
 - [Notes & Fragments](#) (excerpts)
 - Pölitz Metaphysics Lecture Notes, excerpts from [Cosmology](#) and [Psychology](#)
 - [On the form and principles of the sensible and the intelligible world, §§3-12](#)
 - [Collins Anthropology Lecture Notes](#) (excerpt)

Week 5 - Inner Sense & Pure Apperception

We'll discuss Kant's pre-critical views concerning self-consciousness as a form of inner intuition in the 1760s-70s and his transition to a bifurcated view of self-consciousness in the critical period.

The handout for this week is [here](#).

Readings

- See last week's readings for Kant's pre-critical views
- [B-Deduction](#) (focus especially on §§16-18 and §§24-25)
- [First Paralogism](#) (A-edition)

Week 6 - Reflection & Pure Apperception

We'll continue discussing Kant's view of self-consciousness, and particularly the relationship between his notions of "reflection" and "pure apperception".

The handout for this week is [here](#).

Readings

- Look over last week's readings
- Excerpts from the *Anthropology*
 - Part I, §§1-7, §24

Week 7 - Self-Consciousness & Regress

We've been looking at Kant's views on self-consciousness and the pressures his views were under to allow for some kind of positive content to self-consciousness that isn't to be characterized in terms of sensory content. This week we'll continue with this issue and examine a central problem for Kant's critical philosophy—viz. how Kant explains our knowledge of the basic synthetic a priori claims about the mind necessary for the critical philosophy. We'll look at the role reflective self-consciousness plays in providing such an explanation.

The handout for this week is [here](#).

Readings

- Marshall, "Does Kant Demand Explanations for All Synthetic A Priori Claims?"

Week 8 - The Fundamentality of Self-Knowledge

This week we look at Matt Boyle's view, influenced by a reading of Kant (via interpretation of Moran), that there are two kinds of self-knowledge, and that one has priority over the other. We'll also look at Patricia Kitcher's discussion of Boyle's view (see pp. 263-5) and how it fits into her alternative conception of Kant's view of self-consciousness.

The handout for this week is [here](#).

Readings

- Boyle, "Two Kinds of Self-Knowledge"
- Kitcher, "Kant Our Contemporary" (§3 "Must Rational Cognition Involve Self-consciousness?")
 - For an overview of Kitcher's position see her [précis](#)

Week 11 - The Fundamentality of Self-Knowledge (II)

This week we discuss Tyler Burge's argument concerning our entitlement to self-knowledge. We'll also look at one recent criticism of that argument by Brie Gertler.

The handout for this week is [here](#).

Readings

- Burge, [Our Entitlement to Self-Knowledge](#)
- (optional) Burge, [Perceptual Entitlement](#) (just §1)
- Gertler, [Self-Knowledge & Rational Agency](#)

Week 12 - Reinhold & Critics

This week we begin our discussion of German Idealism. We'll look at [Karl Leonhard Reinhold's](#) criticism of the incompleteness of Kant's critical philosophy and his (Reinhold's) conception of what is needed to complete it. We'll also look at criticisms of Reinhold's "principle of consciousness" by Schulze and Fichte.

The handout for this week is [here](#).

Readings

- Reinhold, [The Foundation of Philosophical Knowledge](#) (from p. 61 onward)
- Schulze, [Aenesidemus](#) (excerpt, pp. 105-12)
- Fichte, [Review of Aenesidemus](#)
- Beiser (optional), [The Fate of Reason](#), chs. [eight](#) & [nine](#)

Week 13 - Schelling on the 'I'

Today we discuss [Friedrich Wilhelm Joseph von Schelling's](#) famous early statement (1795) of the importance of subjectivity and self-consciousness for philosophy, 'Of the I as the Principle of Philosophy'. In particular, we'll look at the how Schelling considers the issue of systematicity in relation to self-consciousness, and his development of the notion that in subjectivity there is a form of 'intellectual intuition' of the sort that is denied by Kant.

The handout for this week is [here](#).

Readings

- Schelling, 'Of the I as the Principle of Philosophy' (excerpt)
- (optional) Watkins, 'The Early Schelling on the Unconditioned'
- (optional) Horstmann, 'The Early Philosophy of Fichte and Schelling'

Week 14 - Fichte's First Introduction

This week we discuss the 'First Introduction' to Fichte's 1797/8 *Attempt at a New Presentation of the Science of Knowledge*. We'll discuss, in particular, Fichte's conception of self-consciousness and its relation to Fichte's conception of the contrast between dogmatism and idealism. We'll also compare this with Schelling's similar contrast between dogmatism and criticism in the *Ich-Schrift*.

Readings

- Fichte, First Introduction
- (optional) Beiser, "Criticism vs Dogmatism" & "The Path Towards Absolute Idealism"

Week 15 - Fichte's Second Introduction

This week we discuss the 'Second Introduction' to Fichte's 1797/8 *Attempt at a New Presentation of the Science of Knowledge*. In particular, we'll look at the discussion of intellectual intuition and the sense in which self-consciousness must accompany all of our cognitive states.

The handout for this week is [here](#).

Readings

- Fichte, *Second Introduction*, especially §§5-6
- (optional) Wood, "The 'I' as principle of philosophy"

Week 16 - Fichte's Deduction of the Principle of Morality

This week we'll look at Fichte's deduction of the moral law from the first part of Fichte's 1798 *System of Ethics*. Here our primary concern is with the manner in which Fichte purports to provide us with a unified account of rational agency *as such*, one which can then be divided into theoretical and practical spheres.

The handout for this week is [here](#).

Readings

- Fichte, *System of Ethics*, Part I, especially:
 - Introduction (7-17)
 - On self-determination (bottom 37-41)
 - On self-sufficiency (bottom 52-60)
- (optional) Wood, *Moral Authority*