

Kant's Practical Philosophy
Dr. Kristi Sweet
Fall 2008
Monday 6-9pm

Required Texts:

Immanuel Kant, *Practical Philosophy*. Cambridge Edition of the Works of Immanuel Kant. Cambridge University Press, 1999.
Immanuel Kant, *Religion and Rational Theology*. Cambridge Edition of the Works of Immanuel Kant. Cambridge University Press, 2001.

Course Description:

This course will focus on several key aspects of Kant's practical philosophy that center on his notion of freedom. The influence of Kant's practical philosophy is widespread, and can be found in many contemporary debates in moral and political philosophy. The thematic focus of this course on freedom will allow us to bring Kant's moral and political writings together with his writings on history and religion. The general movement of our investigation will be from the more abstract vision of freedom presented in his *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals* and the *Critique of Practical Reason*, to its more concrete manifestation in his writings on the state in the *Metaphysics of Morals* and his essays on moral progress, such as "Perpetual Peace." We will come to see that taken as a whole, Kant's practical philosophy suggests that an individual's moral goodness is inextricably linked with a moral community founded in a civil constitution and in religion.

Course Objectives:

Students should complete the course with a deep understanding of Kant's moral, political, and historical writings. Students will also become familiar with problems and debates that emerge out of Kant's writings.

Course Requirements:

Students will be required to submit two short (5 page) text summaries during the semester. The first summary must address either Kant's *Groundwork*, or the second *Critique*, and be turned in by October 6. Students will also be required to submit a longer research style paper at the end of the semester. This paper should be between 15-20 pages in length. The topic will be of the student's own choosing, though each student must submit a one page précis with bibliography to me at least two weeks before the paper is due. I will return each précis with comments and suggestions.

Course Readings:

Students are expected to come to class each week having read the assigned materials. For each class meeting, I have also included secondary literature, listed below the primary text readings. These readings are not strictly required, though are strongly recommended. You should find each selected piece to be of great help in our efforts to understand Kant, and to orient you to a key idea in the text. Students will also be provided with an extensive list of secondary sources, many of which will be put on reserve at Evans Library.

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Policy Statement:

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you believe you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please contact the Department of Student Life, Services for Students with Disabilities, in Cain Hall or call 845-1637.

Academic Integrity Statements: Aggie Honor Code

“An Aggie does not lie, cheat, or steal, or tolerate those who do.”

Upon accepting admission to Texas A&M University, a student immediately assumes a commitment to uphold the Honor Code, to accept responsibility for learning, and to follow the philosophy and rules of the Honor System. Students will be required to state their commitment on examinations, research papers, and other academic work. Ignorance of the rules does not exclude any member of the TAMU community from the requirements or the processes of the Honor System. For additional information, please visit: <http://www.tamu.edu/aggiehonor/>

Course Assignments:

(RRT refers to readings in our *Religion and Rational Theology* collection, and PP refers to the *Practical Philosophy*. All secondary readings will be made available in the philosophy work room or online.)

Week One: Introduction- Kant's Project and the Nature of Reason	
From the <i>Critique of Pure Reason</i> : "Preface to B-edition" "The Antinomy of Pure Reason" "Third Antinomy" "Resolution of the Cosmological Ideas"	On reserve
Week Two: Freedom and Morality	
<i>Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals</i> "On the Common Saying"	PP 43-73 RRT 279-290
Barbara Herman, "On the Value of Acting from the Motive of Duty"	On reserve
Week Three: The Moral Law	
<i>Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals</i> "On a Supposed Right to Lie From Philanthropy"	PP 73-117 PP 611-615
Paul Guyer, "The Possibility of the Categorical Imperative"	On reserve
Week Four: Further Exposition of Morality	
<i>Critique of Practical Reason</i>	PP 139-173
Heiner Bielefeldt, "The Law of Freedom"	On reserve
Week Five: Determination of a Morally Good Will	
<i>Critique of Practical Reason</i>	PP 173-225
Henry Allison, "Justification and Freedom in the <i>Critique of Practical Reason</i> "	On reserve
Week Six: Highest Good	
<i>Critique of Practical Reason</i> "What Does it Mean to Orient Oneself in Thinking?" <i>Critique of Pure Reason</i> , "The Canon of Pure Reason" <i>Critique of Judgment</i> §87-88, §91	PP 226-258 RRT 7-18 On reserve
Sharon Anderson-Gold, "Kant's Ethical Commonwealth: The Highest Good as a Social Goal"	On reserve
Week Seven: Cultivating Morality: Virtue	
<i>Metaphysics of Morals: Doctrine of Virtue</i>	PP 365-385; 512-540
Stephen Engstrom, "The Inner Freedom of Virtue"	

Week Eight: Duties to Self and Others	
<i>Metaphysics of Morals: Doctrine of Virtue</i>	PP 543-588
Nancy Sherman, "The Passional Underpinnings of Kantian Virtue"	On reserve
Week Nine: Freedom and Right	
<i>Metaphysics of Morals: Doctrine of Right</i>	PP 386-432
Kenneth Westphal, "A Kantian Justification of Possession"	On reserve
Week Ten: Freedom and Right	
<i>Metaphysics of Morals: Doctrine of Right</i>	PP 450-492
Robert Pippin, "On the Moral Foundations of Kant's <i>Rechtslehre</i> "	On reserve
Week Eleven: Making Progress	
"On the Common Saying" "An Answer to the Question: What is Enlightenment?" "Toward Perpetual Peace"	PP 290-309 PP 17-22 PP 317-351
Otfried Hoeffe, "The Neglected Ideal"	On reserve
Week Twelve: Reason and Nature in History	
"Conjectural Beginning of Human History" "Idea for Universal History" "An Old Question Raised Again" "The End of All Things"	On reserve On reserve RRT 297-309 RRT 221-231
Yirmiahu Yovel, "Teleology and the Cunning of Reason"	On reserve
Week Thirteen: The Task of Religion	
<i>Religion Within the Boundaries of Mere Reason</i>	RRT 57-97
Allen Wood, "Religion, Ethical Community, and the Struggle Against Evil"	On reserve
Week Fourteen: The Unity of Morality, State and Religion in History	
<i>Religion Within the Boundaries of Mere Reason</i>	RRT 101-171
Allen Wood "Kant's Deism"	On reserve