RYERSON UNIVERSITY

Faculty of Arts
Department of Philosophy
Fall 2015

PH8102 – Metaphysics

Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason*

INSTRUCTOR: Thomas Land   **OFFICE:** 415 JOR
TELEPHONE: (416) 979-5000 ext. 3209   **OFFICE HOURS:** Tue 2-3 and Thu 1-2
                                                        or by appointment

SEMINAR MEETING TIMES: Thursdays 3-6 pm
EMAIL: tland@ryerson.ca
COURSE WEB SITE: https://www.my.ryerson.ca
LOCATION: JOR-440

COURSE DESCRIPTION
This course provides an introduction to the *Critique of Pure Reason*, one of the central texts in
the history of philosophy. Its guiding theme is Kant's attempt to vindicate the idea that meta-
physics provides us with a special kind of non-empirical knowledge. Kant is convinced (i) that
any genuinely philosophical knowledge is metaphysical knowledge; (ii) that the very possibility
of such knowledge is called into doubt by prevalent conceptions of the human mind (such as
those of Descartes, Locke, Leibniz, and Hume); and (iii) that assuaging this doubt (and thus
vindicating metaphysical knowledge) requires a careful analysis of human cognitive capacities.
In this course we study the account of our cognitive capacities that Kant proposes and ask
whether he succeeds in vindicating metaphysical knowledge. In particular, we consider Kant's
claim that the two most basic capacities, sense-perception and conceptual thought, are distinct
in nature and yet are required to cooperate in a particular way if there is to be any knowledge at
all. In considering this claim we will discuss the following topics: spatial representation; con-
cepts; the relation between empirical knowledge and a priori knowledge; self-consciousness;
causality; idealism; and free will. The focus will be on a close study of Kant's text.

COURSE FORMAT
A mix of lecture and discussion. This is a graduate seminar, and this means that class discussion
will be a vital component. I expect you to come to class prepared to discuss the assigned material
in detail. This means that you need to read the material carefully and take note of the points
where you have questions or want to raise objections etc. The reading response posts you are
required to do (see below) will facilitate this.

REQUIRED TEXTS:
- Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, transl. Paul Guyer and Allen Wood, New York:
  Cambridge UP, 1998
- James O'Shea, *Kant's Critique of Pure Reason: An Introduction and Interpretation,*
  Durham: Acumen, 2012
- In addition, recommended readings will be available via the course website

NOTE ON THE TRANSLATION:
In class we will use the Guyer/Wood translation. But students are encouraged to consult, in addition, the following other translations (as well as the German original, if possible):
- Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason,* transl. Norman Kemp Smith, revised second ed., New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003 (first edition published in 1923)
- Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason,* transl. Werner Pluhar, Indianapolis: Hackett, 1996

The German text of the *Critique* (along with the rest of Kant's corpus) is available online at
http://korpora.org/Kant/verzeichnisse-gesamt.html

COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND EVALUATION:

Assignment	Weight
Term paper The term paper should be on a topic of your choosing and should critically engage with issues and texts considered in the seminar. Papers will be evaluated in terms of demonstrated understanding of key course material, quality of argument, and originality of thought. You are not required to consult other sources for your paper, although this is permitted. There is a word limit of 4,500 words for the paper. You must get your paper topic approved by me and do so by November 24. The best way of doing this is to come to my office hours. You must also submit a draft of your paper by December 1. This can be as rough as you like, but it must be at least 900 words in length. Each draft will be discussed during our last class meeting, either by the entire class or in a small peer group.	60%
Short responses to weekly readings Posted to the Brightspace website no later than Thursday morning at 8:00am. Your task is to engage with the week's reading. You can ask a question, raise an objection, offer a reading of a difficult passage or do something else. But your piece should elaborate a bit on why the issue or question is important, how it arises etc. (e.g. don't just ask 'what does Kant mean by x?' Rather, say something like 'x seems to be an important term for Kant because … As far as I can make out, x could mean either y or z. But if it means y, then …, which would be strange. And if it means z, then …, which would seem to undermine K's argument') Length: between a paragraph and a page. You must submit at least 8 of these pieces throughout the semester.	25%
Participation This grade will be evaluated based on your thoughtful contributions to class discussions. Please bring the readings to class (either in paper or electronic form) and be prepared to discuss them.	15%

CLASS SCHEDULE (SUBJECT TO CHANGE)

WEEK	READINGS
Week 1 Sept 10	Introduction
Week 2 Sept 17	Required: • A-Preface, B-Preface, B-Introduction • O'Shea, pp. 13-49 Recommended: • Lanier Anderson, "The Introduction to the *Critique*: Framing the Question"
Week 3 Sept 24	**No class** (instructor attending Kant Congress)
Week 4 Oct 1	Required: • Transcendental Aesthetic, §1-6 • O'Shea, 78-100 Recommended: • Charles Parsons, "The Transcendental Aesthetic" • Manley Thompson, "Singular Terms and Intuitions in Kant's Epistemology"
Week 5 Oct 8	Required: • Transcendental Aesthetic, §§7 and 8 • O'Shea, 100-115 Recommended: • Henry Allison, *Kant's Transcendental Idealism*, Chps. 1&2
Oct 15	*READING WEEK – NO CLASS*
Week 6 Oct 22	Guest lecture by Nick Stang (UToronto) Reading TBA
Week 7 Oct 29	Required: • Introduction to the Transcendental Logic (A50/B74-A66/B91) • Clue to the Discovery of All Pure Concepts (A66/B91-A83/B109) • O'Shea, 126-132 Recommended: • Béatrice Longuenesse, "Kant on A Priori Concepts: The Metaphysical Deduction of the Categories" • Manley Thompson, "Philosophical Approaches to Categories"
Week 8 Nov 5	Required: • Transcendental Deduction, §§13 and 14 (A84/B116-B129) • O'Shea, 116-126

	Recommended: • Stephen Engstrom, "The Transcendental Deduction and Skepticism" • Lewis White Beck, "Did the Sage from Königsberg Have No Dreams?"
Week 9 Nov 12	Required: • Transcendental Deduction (B), §§15-21 (B129-B146) • O'Shea, 132-149, 152-157 Recommended: • Dieter Henrich, "The Proof-Structure of Kant's Transcendental Deduction"
Week 10 Nov 19	Required: • Transcendental Deduction (B), §§22-27 (B146-B169) Recommended: • Peter Strawson, "Imagination and Perception" • Wilfrid Sellars, "The Role of Imagination in Kant's Theory of Experience"
Week 11 Nov 26	Required: • Analytic of Principles: Introduction, Schematism, Highest Principle of Synthetic Judgments (A130/B169-A158/B197) • Second Analogy of Experience (A189/B232-A211/B256) • O'Shea, 158-164, 172-196 Recommended: • Michael Friedman, "Causal Laws and the Foundations of Natural Science"
Week 12 Dec 3	Required: • Third Antinomy (A444/B472-A451/B479, A490/B518-A507/B535, and A532/B560-A558/B586) • O'Shea, 50-77 Recommended: • Markus Kohl, "Kant on Determinism and the Categorical Imperative"
Make-up class Date TBD	Concluding discussion and workshopping of term paper drafts

Paper – Use of Turnitin.com

Students agree that by taking this course required papers MAY be subject to submission for textual similarity review to www.turnitin.com for the detection of plagiarism. Students should familiarize themselves with Ryerson's plagiarism policy (see below).

The **Ryerson Writing Centre** offers **free** one-on-one tutorials on all aspects of written work (e.g., grammar basics, "writer's block," and academic referencing systems) (416-979-5000 xt. 7192, LIB272B, next to the Library entrance). http://www.ryerson.ca/writingcentre. Note, however, that slots for appointments tend to get booked up early on in the semester

Brightspace (https://my.ryerson.ca)

All students will need to access a Brightspace account for this course. This will be the primary mode of disseminating all course updates (e.g., scheduling changes, handouts, relevant information). Grades will be posted here only; they will **NOT** be emailed individually.

COURSE POLICIES:

Late submissions: Unless there are legitimate, extenuating circumstances (supported by documentation from a legitimate source, such as a physician), no extensions will be granted. **A penalty of one letter grade (e.g. from A to A-) will be applied for each day an assignment is late**.

OTHER MATTERS:

1. **University Policies.** Students are responsible for being aware of university and departmental policies and procedures, especially pertaining to the **Student Code of Academic Conduct**. These policies are published in the Ryerson calendar. Please also consult the **Academic Integrity** website for a comprehensive list of policies, including guidelines about the academic code of conduct and the policy on **plagiarism** http://www.ryerson.ca/senate/policies/

2. **Special Arrangements.** Students requiring special arrangements or accommodations (e.g., sign language interpreter; Access Centre students), please discuss this with the instructor within the **first week** of the course.