

Dear Students,

While not thinking of myself as a historian of philosophy, I do prefer developing my ideas in interaction with historical figures, texts, and discourses. I tend to go for philosophers who argue and explain, as opposed to those who provoke and declare, but I do not think that this distinction corresponds in any clear sense to a distinction of philosophy as it is done on the “continent” and philosophy as it used to be done elsewhere.

My list of “most important philosophers” begins with Plato, Aristotle, and Kant, but it includes many others. My official area of expertise is ancient philosophy, that is, in particular, Plato’s epistemology and metaphysics, as well as Aristotle’s logic, physics, metaphysics, and action theory. My second main area of interest is medieval philosophy (think of St. Augustine, Peter Abelard, Avicenna, Aquinas, Ockham). Third, there is Descartes (the hero of my PhD thesis), and Kant (hopefully the hero of some future work of mine). Further figures that I might be able to say something substantive about are Hegel, Marx, Nietzsche, Freud, and Heidegger, as well as J.L. Austin, Anscombe, Sellars, Davidson, McDowell, and various other “analytic” philosophers. I also know a thing or two about modal logic.

In a more systematic perspective, I am interested in philosophical questions surrounding (1) logic, universals, and predication, (2) consciousness and self-knowledge, and (3) agency, intentionality and teleology. Regrettably, I have no thoughts to be proud of on aesthetics, political philosophy, or applied ethics.

Let me emphasize that I am, within broad limits, very flexible. If you want to write about Al-Farabi, Fichte, Searle, Foucault, or anyone I failed to mention, please ask — I will most likely be excited to work with you.

Best wishes, Boris Hennig