

# KANT'S MORAL AND AESTHETIC PHILOSOPHY

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## **Required Texts:**

Immanuel Kant, *Practical Philosophy*, ed. Mary J. Gregor (Cambridge Edition of the works of I. Kant)

Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Judgment*, tr. J. H. Bernard

Otfried Höffe, *Immanuel Kant* (SUNY Press)

Course Packet

## **Description:**

This seminar will involve a critical reading and discussion of Kant's major ethical and aesthetical works. We will, in addition, spend some time on Kant's epistemological views as background for understanding the rest of his Critical Philosophy.

Kant himself claimed, at several points, that his philosophy was organized according to an "architectonic" and constituted a complete "system of philosophy." Our considerations will aim at gaining a broad perspective on how Kant's "system" was organized and how it functioned as a total philosophical viewpoint. A leading philosophical question will thus be: What, according to Kant, are the relations among cognition, ethical action, and aesthetic appreciation (which are the themes of his three Critiques).

## **Mechanics and Grading:**

The course will be conducted as a seminar and will involve a mixture of instructor presentations as well as presentations by other participants. Grading will be based on your class presentations (which should include class hand-outs that I can use for my final evaluation) and a final paper of about 10 – 12 pages addressing some significant issue arising in the course of our discussions. For those who wish, the option of a final "take-home" exam is available. I'll confer individually with you on the final project in the course of the quarter. We might also decide that it would be a good idea to have some sort of short mid-term exercise; we can discuss this at our first class.

It probably goes without saying, but I do expect regular attendance and preparation for every meeting. My general feeling is that anyone who misses more than two meetings should probably drop the class and try again next time.

# SYLLABUS

[Note: Although I haven't made specific assignments in Höffe's book, it is an excellent introduction to Kant and I suggest that you read the appropriate sections in it as we proceed.]

**Meeting I:** Introduction to Kant's philosophical viewpoint and its place in the history of philosophy. Kant's "Architectonic" and the fundamental "theses" of his epistemological view.

**Read:** Appropriate materials in the Course Packet

**Meeting II:** From "Theoretical" to "Practical Philosophy": How do Kant's theory of cognition (the "Transcendental Analytic") and critique of metaphysics (the "Transcendental Dialectic") serve as the basis for his moral philosophy?

**Read:** Appropriate materials in the Course Packet, especially the discussion of the "T. Dialectic" and the introduction to his moral theory (esp. its first page). I highly recommend that, by this time, you will have read Höffe's discussion of *the Critique of Pure Reason*.

**Week III:** Kant's own "introduction" to his moral philosophy: *The Groundwork of the Metaphysic of Morals*.

**Read:** *Practical Philosophy*, pp. 43-93

**Week IV:** Kant's account of Practical Reason, Freedom, and the Will.

**Read:** *Practical Philosophy*, pp. 94-108 and 139-173

**Week V:** Kant's argument for his moral view and the place of "moral incentives."

**Read:** *Practical Philosophy*, pp. 173-226

**Week VI:** The "Dialectic of Practical Reason" and the "Moral Postulates."

**Read:** *Practical Philosophy*, pp. 226-271

**Week VII:** (1) A hard “applied” moral question: Kant on the permissibility of lying.

**Read:** *Practical Philosophy*, pp. 611-15

(2) An overview of Kant’s *Metaphysic of Morals*.

**Read:** *Practical Philosophy*, pp. 360-97 and 509-520

**Week VIII:** The place of the Critique of Judgment in Kant’s “System.” Kant’s crucial idea of “reflective judgment.”

**Read:** *Critique of Judgment*, pp. 3-34

**Week IX:** Aesthetical Judgment: Kant on the “Beautiful” and the “Sublime.”

**Read:** *Critique of Judgment*, pp. 82-118 and 145-75

**Week X:** Teleological Judgment: The Culmination of Kant’s Critical Philosophy. Toward a “Critique of Religion”?

**Read:** *Critique of Judgment*, pp. 205-31 and 327-39

**FINAL PAPER DUE ON SCHEDULED DAY OF FINAL EXAMINATION**