

THE PHILOSOPHY OF G. W. F. HEGEL AND CONTEMPORARY PHILOSOPHY

SYLLABUS

PART I: THE PHILOSOPHY OF G. W. F. HEGEL

Week 1: Introduction to the Philosophy of G. W. F. Hegel

Read: Introductory Materials to *The Hegel Reader* (“HR”); this offers, among other things, some biographical material on Hegel. Also begin reading my introduction to Hegel’s **Differenzschrift** and Course Packet (CP), “An Informal Introduction...”

Week 2: An Overview of Hegel’s Philosophy and Hegel’s Notions of History, “the Absolute,” and “System.”

Read: Relevant materials in the course packet: “Hegel’s Notions of History, System and ‘the Absolute’” and “Dialectical Structure of Hegel’s Main Works.”

Week 3: Hegel and his “German Idealist” Predecessors: Kant, Fichte, Schelling, and the Romantics.

Read: Hegel’s **Differenzschrift** (my translation) and CP, “Reason and Understanding: Kant to Hegel.”

Week 4: Hegel’s Jena “*Phenomenology of Spirit*” (1): Aims and Method.

Read: HR, 47-78 and review relevant materials in CP: “An Introduction to Reading Hegel’s *Phenomenology of Spirit*” and “Hegel’s *Ph. of Spirit*: Terminology...”

Week 5: Hegel’s Jena “*Phenomenology of Spirit*” (2): The Development of Consciousness from ‘Sense Certainty’ to ‘Absolute Knowing.’

Read: HR, 79-123. Also, review course packet, “Hegel’s P. of S.: A Critique of Philosophical Standpoints.”

Week 6: Hegel’s “*Science of Logic*”: Hegel’s Conception of Logic and the Problem of Beginnings.

Read: HR, 127-32, 175-211, and 228-41; also CP, “Some Notes on Hegel’s ‘Science of Logic.’”

Week 7: Hegel, the History of Philosophy, and Concluding Considerations.

Read: HR, 509-28 and 133-38; CP, “How Hegel Read the History of Philosophy,” “Some Final Thoughts,” and “Eleven Theses on Hegel and History.”

PART II: Hegel and Current Issues in Philosophy

For **Weeks 8 through 10**, as a way of assessing the current status of the interpretation of Hegel and his significance for contemporary thought, we will consider some of the essays in the recent (2011) volume from SUNY Press, **Hegel and the Infinite**, ed. S. Zizek, C. Crockett, C. Davis. Discussions will be student-led and based on student presentations of the essays. We should plan to discuss about two of the essays per class period. A schedule for readings and presentations will be developed and made available well ahead of time.

FINAL PAPERS DUE BY SCHEDULED FINAL EXAMINATION PERIOD

SEMINAR ON THE PHILOSOPHY OF G. W. F. HEGEL

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Texts:

The Difference Between the Fichtean and Schellingian Systems of Philosophy, trans. with introduction by J. Surber, Ridgeview Press 0-917930-12-6

The Hegel Reader, ed. Stephen Houlgate, Blackwell, 0-631-20347-8

Hegel and the Infinite: Religion, Politics, and Dialectic, ed. S. Zizek, C. Crockett, C. Davis, Columbia U. Press, 978-0-231-14335-6

Course Packet

Introduction

This seminar will consist of two parts. First, we will study and discuss the philosophy of G. W. F. Hegel both in light of its historical development and its major texts, themes, difficulties, and overall philosophical significance. Then we will discuss the essays contained in a recent (2011) collection of essays devoted to the interpretation and relevance of Hegel by contemporary philosophers. The overall aim will be both to arrive at an in-depth understanding of Hegel's own texts and views and then consider aspects of current ways of interpreting Hegel and assessing his relevance to issues in contemporary philosophy.

Mechanics and Grading

Your principal work for this course will involve weekly reading and preparation for class presentation and discussion. Admittedly, Hegel, for a number of reasons, is difficult to read, so you should budget plenty of time for slow and thoughtful engagement with his texts; a "quick read" the night before our meetings will simply not be possible.

As to class assignments, your grades will be based upon three factors:

- (1) Attendance and class participation. Just so you'll know where I stand on this, I regard regular attendance as an essential part of this course; anyone who must miss more than two or three classes should consider dropping the course and trying again at a later time.
- (2) Class Presentations. I will expect each student to prepare one essay in *Hegel and the Infinite* for in-class presentation. The presentations should provide an outline of the relevant text; offer a brief statement of its overall view, context, and

philosophical significance; and pose a few questions raised by the text for class discussion. It should include hand-outs to the class, a copy of which I will keep to consult for grading purposes.

- (3) A “final project,” which may be either your own discussion of some text, theme, or issue in Hegel or a discussion and critical response to one of the essays (though not the one you present) in *Hegel and the Infinite*. Essays by undergraduate should be about 10-12 pages; by graduate students, 15-20 pages.