

Kant's Transcendental Deduction



Professors James Conant & Robert Pippin

Spring 2010

*** Syllabus ***

Description of the Seminar

This seminar will be devoted to a close reading and discussion of Kant's *First Critique*, focusing on the *Transcendental Deduction of the Pure Concepts of the Understanding*. We will also carefully explore a handful of proposals for how to interpret the *First Critique* and especially the *Transcendental Deduction*, including especially those put forward by Allison, Strawson, and Strawson. We will end the course with a close look at Wilfrid Sellars's and John McDowell's respective interpretations of Kant, with special attention to how each of their own philosophies of perception inherit, modify, and explore Kant's criticisms of traditional empiricism, and how each of them rework a number of Kantian themes – most notably Kant's conception of intuition and his account of the relation between intuitions and concepts. The aim of the course is both to use certain central texts of recent Kant commentary and contemporary analytic Kantian philosophy to illuminate some of the central aspirations of Kant's theoretical philosophy and to use certain central Kantian texts in which those aspirations were first pursued to illuminate some recent developments in epistemology and the philosophy of mind.

Instructors

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Texts

All of the following textbooks have been ordered through the Seminary Co-op and are all required texts for the course:

1. Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, trans. Paul Guyer and Alan Wood.
2. Henry Allison, *Kant's Transcendental Idealism: An Interpretation and Defense, Revised and Expanded Edition* (below TI)
3. P. F. Strawson, *The Bounds of Sense* (below BS)
4. Wilfrid Sellars, *Kant's Transcendental Metaphysics: Sellars' Cassirer Lectures, Notes and Other Essays*, edited by Jeffrey Sicha (below KTM)
5. John McDowell, *Having the World in View* (below HWV)

Many but not all of the readings assigned for the course are in one of the five texts above. Other readings will be made available through the Chalk site of the course. If you ever encounter any problem obtaining an assigned reading for the course, you should immediately contact the instructors by e-mail and let them know about the problem. A note is in order about the translation of the *Critique of Pure Reason* by Paul Guyer and Alan Wood. We have ordered it because it is in print, but we will also be making extensive use of the translation by Norman Kemp Smith which is out of print. So you would be well advised to try to track down a copy of it as well.

Structure of the Course and Related Issues

Meeting Times: The course will meet on Tuesdays, except for an additional meeting on the Thursday of the 10th week if the quarter. And it will meet from 3:00 to 6:00pm, except for on April 13th and May 25th: on those two days the seminar will meet from noon to 3:00pm.

Undergraduates: This course is open only to selected undergraduates with special permission.

Graduate Students: This course is open to all graduate students in Philosophy and/or Social Thought. They are its primary intended audience. Graduate students from other departments are welcome to attend and participate, space in the seminar room permitting, on the condition that they have some prior familiarity with both Kant and analytic philosophy.

Announcements: There is a Chalk website for this course (chalk.uchicago.edu). Announcements (modifications to the syllabus, etc.) will periodically be posted there. Students are expected to keep abreast of these. Additional readings will also be assigned that are not presently on the syllabus and those readings will be made available through the Chalk site.

Format: The format will be mixed lecture and discussion.

Work for the course: All students are expected to attend class regularly, be conversant with the required readings, and be ready to participate in discussion. All students taking the course for credit will write a term paper at the end of the quarter, due on the Friday of 11th week. A hard copy and an electronic copy of your paper should be submitted to each of the professors. The final paper is the only official requirement for the course. It may be on any topic of your choice pertaining to themes covered in the seminar.

Associated Conference on Kant on Intuition: April 30 - May 2. Most of the conference papers are on the syllabus for the course below. For more information about this event, see the conference website: <http://humanities.uchicago.edu/blogs/kantonintuition/>

Schedule of Meetings, Topics and Readings

First Meeting (Tuesday, March 30): **Organizational and introductory meeting**

Introduction: Themes of the course, explanation of approach, overview of the syllabus, application process, no assigned reading

Second Meeting (Tuesday, April 6): **Sensibility & Understanding**

Required reading:

1. Stephen Engstrom, "Understanding and Sensibility"
2. Andrea Kern, "Spontaneity and Receptivity in Kant's Theory of Knowledge"
3. Thomas Land, "Kant's Spontaneity Thesis"

Recommended Reading:

1. Thomas Land, "Kantian Conceptualism"
2. Stephen Engstrom, "The Transcendental Deduction and Skepticism"
3. Stefanie Grüne, "Blind Intuition"

Third Meeting (Tuesday, April 13): **Objective Perception**

Required reading:

1. Matt Boyle, "Sortalism and Perceptual Content: Hume's Challenge and Kant's Response"
2. Sebastian Roedl, "The Rule that is Always Encountered in the Perception of what is Happening"
3. Johannes Haag, "Givenness and Imagination"

Recommended Reading:

1. Matt Boyle, "Tack-On Theories of Rationality"
2. John McDowell, *Mind and World*, Lecture One & Afterword, Part I
3. John Locke, *Essay on Human Understanding*, III, 1-3
4. Peter Geach, *Mental Acts*, Chapters 5-11

Fourth Meeting (Tuesday, April 20): Three Classic Approaches to Kant on Intuition

Required reading:

1. Manley Thompson, "Singular Terms and Intuitions in Kant's Epistemology"
2. Jaakko Hintikka, "On Kant's Notion of Intuition (Anschauung)"
3. Charles Parsons, "Kant's Philosophy of Arithmetic"

Recommended Reading:

1. Thomas Lockhart, "Prolegomena to a Proper Treatment of Mathematics in the *Critique of Pure Reason*"
2. Charles Parsons, "On Some Difficulties Concerning Intuition and Intuitive Knowledge"
3. Robert Pippin, *Kant's Theory of Form*, Chapters 1, 2, & 3
4. Michael Friedman, "Kant's Theory of Geometry"

Fifth Meeting (Tuesday, April 27): Three Approaches to the Form of Intuition

Required reading:

1. Dan Warren, "Kant on the Apriority of Space"
2. Charles Parsons, "The Transcendental Aesthetic"
3. Henry Allison, "The Non-Spatiality of Things in Themselves for Kant"

Recommended Reading:

1. Richard Aquila, "The Relation between Pure and Empirical Intuition"
2. Charles Parsons, "On Infinity and Kant's Conception of Experience"

Sixth Meeting (Tuesday, May 4): Strawson's Interpretation of Kant

Required reading:

1. P. F. Strawson, *The Bounds of Sense*, selections
2. Henry Allison, "Transcendental Idealism and Descriptive Metaphysics"

Recommended Reading:

1. P. F. Strawson, "Imagination and Perception"
2. Hannah Ginsborg, "Kant and the Problem of Experience"
3. Arata Hamawaki, "Self-Consciousness as the Form of Judgment"

Seventh Meeting (Tuesday, May 11): **Allison's Interpretation of Kant**

Required reading:

1. Henry Allison, *Kant's Transcendental Idealism, Second Edition*, selections
2. Robert Hanna, "Kant and Non-Conceptual Content"

Recommended Reading:

1. Lewis White Beck, "Did the Sage of Königsberg Have No Dreams?"
2. Henry Allison, *Kant's Transcendental Idealism, First Edition*, selections
3. Henry Allison, "Transcendental Affinity"
4. Lewis White Beck, "Kant on the Uniformity of Nature"

Eighth Meeting (Tuesday, May 18th): **Henrich on the Structure of the B-Deduction**

Required reading:

1. Dieter Henrich, "The Proof Structure of Kant's Transcendental Deduction"
2. Dieter Henrich, "Kant's Notion of a Deduction and the Methodological Background of the *First Critique*"
3. Robert Pippin, *Kant's Theory of Form*, Chapter 6

Recommended Reading:

1. Henry Allison, "Reflections on the B-Deduction"
2. Paul Guyer, "Psychology and the Transcendental Deduction"
3. P. F. Strawson, "Sensibility, Understanding, and the Doctrine of Synthesis"
4. Wolfgang Carl, "Kant's B-Deduction"

Ninth Meeting (Tuesday, May 25): **Sellars' Interpretation of Kant**

Required reading:

1. Wilfrid Sellars, *Science and Metaphysics*, Chapter 1
2. Sellars, "Some Remarks on Kant's Theory of Experience" (in KTM)
3. Sellars, "The Role of the Imagination in Kant's Theory of Experience" (in KTM)

Recommended reading:

1. Sellars, "Kant's Transcendental Idealism," (in KTM)
2. Sellars, *Kant and Pre-Kantian Themes*, chapters 7, 11 & 12
3. Sellars, "...this I or he or it (the thing) which thinks..." (in KTM)
4. Sellars, "Some Reflections on Perceptual Consciousness" (in KTM)

Tenth Meeting (Tuesday, June 3): McDowell on Sellars' Kant

Required reading:

1. McDowell, "Sellars on Perceptual Experience" (in HWV)
2. McDowell, "The Logical Form of an Intuition" (in HWV)
3. McDowell, "Sensory Consciousness in Kant and Sellars" (in HWV)

Recommended reading:

1. McDowell, "Intentionality as a Relation" (in HWV)
2. Jay Rosenberg, "Divergent Intuitions: McDowell's Kant and Sellars' Kant"
3. Willem DeVries, "McDowell, Sellars, and Sense Impressions"
4. McDowell: "Reply to DeVries"

Eleventh Meeting (Thursday, June 5): McDowell's Kant I

Required reading:

1. McDowell, "Hegel's Idealism as a Radicalization of Kant (in HWV)
2. Robert Pippin, *Hegel's Idealism*, Chapter Two
3. Robert Pippin, "Concept and Intuition: On Distinguishability and Separability"
4. McDowell, "Self-Determining Subjectivity and External Constraint" (in HWV)

Recommended reading:

1. McDowell, "Reply to Pippin"
2. Pippin, "Leaving Nature Behind" & "On McDowell's Response to 'Leaving Nature Behind'"
3. McDowell, "On Pippin's Postscript" (in HWV)
4. Pippin, "McDowell's Germans"

Twelfth Meeting (Tuesday, June 8): McDowell's Kant II

Required reading:

1. McDowell, "Conceptual Capacities in Perception" (in HWV)
2. McDowell, "Avoiding the Myth of the Given" (in HWV)
3. Pippin, "What is Conceptual Activity?"

Recommended reading:

1. Charles Travis, "The Silence of the Senses"
2. Bill Brewer, "Perception and Content"