

**Department of Philosophy**  
**PHIL 450 Major Philosophers**  
**Fall, 2019**

Prof. Emily Carson  
Office hours: M 12-1:30  
Leacock 936

**Topic for 2019:** Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason*

Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason* is a complex and difficult work in which Kant sets out to answer a number of different questions, among them: how is metaphysics possible as science, and more generally, how are synthetic a priori judgements possible? In this course, we will focus on these questions, the relations between them, and how Kant sets out to answer them. We will pay particular attention to what Kant takes the method of the *Critique* itself to be. Although we will not read the entire *Critique*, we will attempt to cover those significant portions of it most directly related to the questions above.

**Texts:** Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason* is available at The Word bookstore on Milton Street. Other readings will be made available on MyCourses.

**Requirements:** The requirements for this course are:

- (a) four short exercises (approximately 2 pages each), 12.5% each = 50%
- (b) a final paper, maximum 4000 words, 50%; mandatory peer-review component: a penalty of 10 points (out of 100) will be imposed for failure to complete the peer-review component properly and on time.

Late assignments without a medical note will be penalised half a letter grade per day.

**Likely due dates:**

- Exercise 1: September 18
- Exercise 2: October 9
- Exercise 3: October 30
- Exercise 4: November 18

- First draft of final paper: November 22
- Peer reviews of final paper: November 29
- Final paper: December 3

In accord with McGill University's Charter of Students' Rights, students in this course have the right to submit in English or in French any written work that is to be graded. This does not apply to courses in which acquiring proficiency in a language is one of the objectives.

McGill University values academic integrity. Therefore, all students must understand the meaning and consequences of cheating, plagiarism and other academic offences under the Code of Student Conduct and Disciplinary Procedures (see [www.mcgill.ca/students/srr/honest/](http://www.mcgill.ca/students/srr/honest/) for more information)

## **Tentative schedule of readings**

### **Weeks 1-2: Background**

Kant's 1772 letter to Marcus Herz (MyCourses)

A and B Prefaces to the *Critique of Pure Reason* (Avii-xxii; Bvii-xliv); Preface and Preamble of the *Prolegomena to any Future Metaphysics* (MyCourses)

A and B Introductions to *Critique of Pure Reason* (A1-16, B1-30)

### **Weeks 3-5: Space, time and Transcendental Idealism**

B-Edition Transcendental Aesthetic (A19/B33-B73)

### **Weeks 6-8: Transcendental Analytic: the conceptual nature of experience**

Transcendental Logic (A50/B74-A66/B91)

Metaphysical Deduction (A66/B91-A95/B129)

B-Deduction (B129-B169)

### **Weeks 9-11: Principles of experience**

Schematism of the pure concepts of the understanding (A130-/B169-A147/B187)

System of principles (A148/B187-A162/B202)

Analogies of experience (A176/B218-A218/B265)

Postulates of empirical thinking (A218/B265-A226/B274)

### **Week 12: Transcendental idealism revisited**

Refutation of idealism (B275-B279) and footnote at Bxxxix

B-Phenomena and noumena (A235/B294-A260/B315)

### **Week 13-14: Transcendental Dialectic: the illusions of metaphysics**

Transcendental illusion and ideas (A293/B249-A338/B396)

Antinomy of pure reason (A405/B432-A425-B453, A426/B454-A443/B471)