

## Major Philosophers II, 460 (20710)

### Topic for the 2020 Winter Term: Philosophy, *Hegel's Phenomenology of Spirit*

2 sessions per week, 90 minutes each (Tue. & Thu. 14:35 – 15:55)

Location:

Prerequisite, Phil 366 (German Idealism) or the equivalent

Professor George di Giovanni, Otto Maass Chemistry Building 328

[george.di\\_giovanni@mcgill.ca](mailto:george.di_giovanni@mcgill.ca) (office hours to be posted)

[http://george.di\\_giovanni.ca](http://george.di_giovanni.ca)

Evaluation based on two papers (50% each); late papers without excuse will be penalized by ½ mark per lecture-day delay.

Description:

An in depth reading of the Introduction, the first four chapters, and chapters six and seven of Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit* (1807). We shall conclude with a reading of the Preface. I shall first give a brief historical account, according to most recent scholarship on the subject, of how the *Phenomenology* was produced. Against this historical background I shall raise the conceptual issue—which will be our primary concern—of the nature of the *Phenomenology* as a philosophical work. Is the *Phenomenology* a misguided attempt at *a priori* history? Is it psychology? philosophical myth? what? The most obvious answer is that the *Phenomenology* is Hegel's introduction to his science of logic. But then we must understand what Hegel means by 'reason', and why he must turn to a historical account of the development of 'rationality' in order to define its nature.

This is a course that I have given regularly in the past, each time stressing a different aspect of this very complex work of Hegel. For 2020, I plan to interpret the work as essentially a theory of language. I shall read each chapter as presenting the logic governing one or more typical language (e.g., the language of naïve realism, of Newtonian Science, of religious myth, of morality), each language in turn reflecting (or being reflected in) a recognizably historical social structure.

Students will be expected to have read assigned texts for each session and to participate in class discussion.

GdiG

**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 <http://www.mcgill.ca/integrity> for more information).**

**In the event of extraordinary circumstances beyond the University's control, the content and/or evaluation scheme in this course is subject to change.**

**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.**