

PHIL 314: 19th Century Philosophy

(CRN # 22367)

CLE A203, MWTh 2:30-3:20

Instructor: Dr. Thomas Land

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Calendar Description

This course provides an introduction to the thought of a philosophical movement known as German Idealism. This movement, which took shape during the early 1800s, exerted a powerful influence over subsequent philosophical developments (the thought of Schopenhauer, Marx and Kierkegaard, for example, is developed largely in reaction to it), and so forms something like a foundation for 19th-century philosophy. A number of extremely powerful ideas were articulated by the German Idealists, but presented in texts that are highly obscure and esoteric. The goal of this course is to unlock some of these texts, primarily those of Johann Gottlieb Fichte and Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, arguably the most influential Idealists. To do so, we will take our starting point from Kant. Kant's highly innovative doctrines and modes of argumentation more than anything else shaped the philosophical problematic the Idealists took themselves to be responding to, and we will survey those features of his thought that were particularly salient for them. We will then consider how various objections to Kant by some less well-known early Idealists led Fichte to develop the position he set out in his so-called Doctrine of Science (*Wissenschaftslehre*). In the final part of the course we will study Hegel's attempt to achieve a set of goals very similar to Fichte's, but in a radically different way. Questions to be discussed include the following: What does the thesis of idealism amount to in the hands of the various German Idealists and how is it supported? That is, to what extent, and why, does the world depend on the mind, according to them? Can finite beings like us have knowledge of the fundamental nature of reality and do so without reliance on any sort of divine guarantee (in the manner of Descartes or Leibniz)? What is the nature of rationality? Why think that to be rational is to be, in a certain sense, the author of one's own thoughts and actions and therefore to be capable of a special form of agency? What is the relation between rationality and self-knowledge? In particular, why should self-knowledge be fundamental to all our knowledge, as many Idealists maintain?

Course Objectives

This course has four main objectives. By successfully completing this course you will

- (i) acquire knowledge of some of the main metaphysical and epistemological views defended by the German Idealists;
- (ii) come to understand some of the considerations motivating these views;
- (iii) be in a position to approach other German Idealist works, as well as later 19th-century figures, on your own; and
- (iv) hone important philosophical skills. These include reading and analyzing highly difficult philosophical texts; composing and assessing arguments; articulating and communicating complex ideas; and composing philosophical essays.

Course Website

This course has an associated website on Uvic's *CourseSpaces* tool. This will be used for assignments, communication, and to make available additional materials. To access your customized *CourseSpaces* page, sign in to UVic and click on *Online Tools*. You should see *CourseSpaces* as an option. If you are unable to access *CourseSpaces*, please contact me.

Texts

The following three books are required for this course and available at the UVic Bookstore:

Between Kant and Hegel, transl., with Introductions, by George d Giovanni and H.S. Harris. Revised ed. Indianapolis: Hackett, 2000 (= *BKH*)

Johann Gottlieb Fichte, *Introductions to the Wissenschaftslehre and Other Writings*, transl. and ed. by Daniel Breazeale. Indianapolis: Hackett, 1994 (= *IWL*)

GWF Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, transl. Terry Pinkard. Cambridge/New York: Cambridge UP, 2019.

You will also need a copy of Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason*. If you already own one, you may use that (any translation). If you don't, the recommended edition is available at the UVic Bookstore (as part of the order for this course):

Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, transl. Paul Guyer and Allen Wood, New York: Cambridge UP, 1998

Additional readings will be made available via *CourseSpaces*.

Course Format

This course will be a combination of lecture and discussion. Students are expected to come to class prepared to discuss the material and to participate actively in class discussion.

Evaluation

a. Requirements

There are five requirements for this course, which are as follows:

<i>Assignment</i>	<i>Due Date</i>	<i>Weight</i>
Attendance and Class Participation	N/A	10%
Weekly Question (see below)	Every Sunday at 11:00pm	18%
Four papers	Feb 11, Feb 28, Mar 18, Apr 8	18% each

To receive a passing grade for the course, students must receive a passing grade on **each** of the three requirements.

Attendance and Class participation

This component of the overall grades measures attendance and participation in equal parts. As regards attendance, you are permitted two unexcused absences. Any additional absence will require documentation or count against your grade. As regards participation, you are encouraged to participate actively in class discussion. This includes asking questions. Both quantity and quality of participation will be taken into consideration.

Weekly Question

Based on your reading, you are required to formulate a question that you would like to discuss in class. Your question may be anywhere from a single sentence to a short paragraph in length. You must submit your question to the course website by 11:00pm each Sunday.

Individual questions will be graded on a pass/fail basis and not receive written feedback. No questions are due the first week of the semester. You may miss two weeks before your grade is affected. Thus, you

must submit at least 9 questions over the course of the semester to receive full marks for this requirement. For every additional week missed your grade will be reduced by ten percentage points.

Papers

You need to write four papers on assigned topics. Each paper will have an upper limit of 1200 words.

b. Late Penalties

Weekly Questions: Questions submitted after the deadline count as missed and receive no marks.

Papers: The penalty for submitting a paper late is 10 percentage points per day.

There are no exceptions to these deadlines unless there are documented medical or compassionate grounds for an extension (see ‘Course Policies’ below).

c. Bonus Work

There is no make-up or bonus work for this course.

Course Schedule

Week	Date	Reading
1	Jan 7, 9, 10	Kant, <i>Critique of Pure Reason</i> , Preface (B), Introduction (B), §1, §3 (including “Conclusion from the Above Concepts”), §6, §8
2	Jan 14, 16, 17	Kant, <i>Critique of Pure Reason</i> , A50/B74-A52/B76, A80/B106, A235-260, A293/B349-A309/B366, A321/B377-A338/B396, A420/B448-A451/B479
3	Jan 21, 23, 24	Kant, <i>Critique of Practical Reason</i> , Ak. 5:3-14, 30-57 Kant, <i>Critique of the Power of Judgment</i> , §76-77
4	Jan 28, 30, 31	Jacobi, <i>David Hume on Faith</i> (excerpt) Reinhold, <i>The Foundation of Philosophical Knowledge</i> (BKH, 53-103)
5	Feb 4, 6, 7	Schulze, <i>Aenesidemus</i> (BKH, pp. 104-135)
6	Feb 11, 13, 14	Fichte, “Review of Aenesidemus” (BKH, pp. 136-157) Fichte, “Concerning the Concept of the <i>Wissenschaftslehre</i> ”
Reading Week – no class on Feb 18, 20, 21		
7	Feb 25, 27, 28	Fichte, <i>Attempt at a New Presentation of the Wissenschaftslehre</i> (in IWL), pp. 1-51

8	Mar 4, 6, 7	Fichte, <i>Attempt at a New Presentation of the <u>Wissenschaftslehre</u></i> , (in <i>IWL</i>), pp. 52-105
9	Mar 11, 13, 14	Hegel, <i>Phenomenology of Spirit</i> , Introduction and Sense-Certainty
10	Mar 18, 20, 21	Hegel, <i>Phenomenology of Spirit</i> , Self-Consciousness
11	Mar 25, 27, 28	Hegel, <i>Phenomenology of Spirit</i> , Reason (selections)
12	Apr 1, 3, 4	Hegel, <i>Phenomenology of Spirit</i> , Spirit (selections) and Absolute Knowing

Attendance and Notes

Students are expected to attend class and come prepared to discuss the assigned readings. I do not take attendance, but I expect you to attend. Experience shows that students who attend class perform better in the course.

Handouts I use for lecturing will be made available on the course website. However, these will be elaborated upon in class, so downloading the handouts is no substitute for coming to class. They do, however, give you a sense of what was discussed if you have to miss class. You do not generally need to inform me if you have to miss class.

The use of handouts is for your own learning only. You are not permitted to distribute them to others or make them available on the internet (e.g. by posting them to a social media). Doing so constitutes a violation of copyright.

It is crucial to your success in this course that you take good lecture notes. Research shows that taking good notes helps your learning. By taking your own notes (and this does *not* mean copying the lecture word for word) you process the material more thoroughly than you otherwise would and you make later reviewing easier for yourself. A good way of taking notes is to annotate handouts (when there is a handout).

Office Hours

I hold regular office hours so that students may drop in and ask questions about the course material. I encourage you to make use of these. I especially encourage you to come to office hours if there is something you don't understand or if you are struggling in the course. The function of office hours is not, however, for me to repeat to you a lecture you have missed. If you ask me to do this, I will tell you to obtain a set of lecture notes from another student. If after doing so you have specific questions about the material, I will be happy to answer them during office hours.

Technology (Computers, Phones etc.)

The use of laptops in class is permitted, but you are strongly encouraged *not* to use a laptop and instead take notes by hand (this does not apply to students for whom the use of a laptop or other electronic device is part of their learning strategy). There is extensive research documenting that the use of a laptop (or other electronic device) is distracting not only for yourself, but also for

those sitting near you (see e.g. [here](#) and [here](#)). In order to minimize distraction to other students, those requiring the use of a laptop or other electronic device will be asked to sit in a designated section of the classroom.

Texting, social media, internet surfing, and the use of cell phones generally, is prohibited. If you engage in any of these activities in class, I will ask you to leave. Repeated failure to comply with this policy may lead to disciplinary action.

Email

I will sometimes communicate important information about assignments, readings, or other matters to you via email. Emails will be sent to the address listed in UVic's system as your contact information. It is your responsibility to check this email address once a day.

If you contact me via email, I will make every effort to respond in a timely manner, which generally will be within 48 hours (longer on weekends). To make sure your email does not end up in my spam folder, I encourage you to put the course number in the subject line and/or use your UVic email address.

If you have a question about assignments, due dates, or other course policies, the syllabus should be your first resource. *I will not respond to any emails that ask questions which are answered in the syllabus.* Your second resource should be the course's student discussion board, which is accessible through the course website. Students are encouraged to use this feature to discuss questions about course mechanics as well as course content. I periodically monitor the discussion board, to make sure that all information is correct.

Academic Integrity (Plagiarism etc.)

Violations of academic integrity, such as plagiarism, cheating on exams etc., constitute breaches of university policy and carry serious penalties (e.g. failing the class, being put on disciplinary probation). Note that it is *your responsibility* to be aware of what constitutes plagiarism and other violations of academic integrity, and that *ignorance of this is not an acceptable excuse*. For information, please consult [UVic's Policy on Academic Integrity](#).

Significant Dates (<https://web.uvic.ca/calendar2018-05/general/dates.html>)

- Sun, Jan 20: last day for 100% reduction of fees
- Wed, Jan 23: last day to for adding second-term courses
- Sun, Feb 10: last day for 50% reduction of tuition fees. 100% of tuition fees will be assessed for courses dropped after this date.
- Thu, Feb 28: last day for withdrawing from second-term courses without penalty of failure

Accessibility

Students with diverse learning styles and needs are welcome in this course. If you need an academic accommodation you will need to register with the Centre for Accessible Learning (<https://www.uvic.ca/services/cal>). Please do so as early as possible. Please feel free to go directly to the Centre for Accessible Learning or to approach me.

Grading Scheme

Percentage	Letter Grade	Grade Point	Grade Definition
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90-100	A+	9	An A+, A, or A- is earned by work which is technically superior , shows mastery of the subject matter, and in the case of an A+ offers original insight and/or goes beyond course expectations. Normally achieved by a minority of students.
85-89	A	8	
80-84	A-	7	
77-79	B+	6	A B+, B, or B- is earned by work that indicates a good comprehension of the course material, a good command of the skills needed to work with the course material, and the student's full engagement with the course requirements and activities. A B+ represents a more complex understanding and/or application of the course material. Normally achieved by the largest number of students.
73-76	B	5	
70-72	B-	4	
65-69	C+	3	A C+ or C is earned by work that indicates an adequate comprehension of the course material and the skills needed to work with the course material and that indicates the student has met the basic requirements for completing assigned work and/or participating in class activities
60-64	C	2	
50-59	D	1	A D is earned by work that indicates minimal command of the course materials and/or minimal participation in class activities that is worthy of course credit toward the degree.
0-49	F	0	F is earned by work which, after the completion of course requirements, is inadequate and unworthy of course credit towards the degree.

Interpretation of these grade definitions is at the discretion of the instructor. If you receive a grade that you believe is unfair, please begin by discussing the matter with the instructor (or TA) in a respectful, open-minded manner. If you still believe the grade you received is unfair you can appeal the matter to the chair of the department.

For additional information regarding grades, please see pp. 51-53 of the most recent ([September 2018](#)) edition of the Uvic Undergraduate Calendar.

All evaluations of tests and assignments will be calculated according to percentage scores. Letter grades and grade point scores are listed purely for reference.

Counselling Services

Your mental health is as important as your physical health. During the semester, you might feel overwhelmed, lonely, or stressed about your academic performance. You might experience a personal or family tragedy. The University provides FREE counselling services. (Check www.uvic.ca/services/counselling/ for more information).

Course Experience Surveys (CES)

I value your feedback on this course. Towards the end of term, as in all other courses at UVic, you will have the opportunity to complete an anonymous survey regarding your learning experience (CES). The survey is vital to providing feedback to me regarding the course and my teaching, as well as to help the department improve the overall program for students in the future. The survey is accessed via MyPage and can be done on your laptop, tablet, or mobile device. I will remind you and provide you with more detailed information nearer the time but please be thinking about this important activity during the course.