Hegel’s Phenomenology of Spirit

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Office Hours: R 2-3:50
SCH 242

PHIL 453/553
MW 4-5:50
123 MCK

Course Description:
This course will serve as an introduction to Hegel’s idealism through a reading of his 1807 Phenomenology of Spirit. We will discuss Hegel’s views on knowledge, concepts, action, morality, politics, and history. We will pay particular attention to the role of negativity and dialectics in Hegel’s text. As we advance in our reading, we will compare and contrast various interpretive perspectives on the text—epistemological, historicist, ethical, and feminist. Knowledge of Kant, while not required, will be most helpful.

Required Text:

Secondary Texts:
Sources marked * are on reserve at Knight.

General Commentaries on Hegel’s life and thought include:
*1. Frederick Beiser, Hegel
*2. Terry Pinkard, Hegel: A Biography
3. Stephen Houlgate, Freedom, Truth, and History: An Introduction to Hegel’s Philosophy
4. Frederick Beiser, The Cambridge Companion to Hegel
5. Jon Stewart, The Hegel Myths and Legends

Commentaries on Hegel’s Phenomenology or relevant to the Phenomenology include:
Introductory:
*1. Robert Stern, Hegel and the Phenomenology of Spirit
*2. Jon Stewart, The Phenomenology of Spirit Reader
*4. Stephen Houlgate, Hegel’s Phenomenology of Spirit: A Reader’s Guide
*5. Ludwig Siep, Hegel’s Phenomenology of Spirit
6. John Russon, Reading Hegel’s Phenomenology
7. D.P. Verene, Hegel’s Absolute: An Introduction to Reading the Phenomenology of Spirit
8. Philip Kain, Hegel and the Other: A Study of the Phenomenology of Spirit
9. Werner Marx, Hegel's Phenomenology of Spirit: A Commentary Based on the Preface and Introduction

Advanced:
1. H.S. Harris, Hegel’s Ladder, 2 volumes
*2. Jean Hyppolite, Genesis and Structure of Hegel's Phenomenology of Spirit
*3. Robert Pippin, Hegel’s Idealism: The Satisfactions of Self-Consciousness; Hegel’s Practical Philosophy
*4. Terry Pinkard, Hegel's Phenomenology: The Sociality of Reason
Throughout the course, I will recommend and, whenever possible, add secondary sources on Blackboard that address class discussion. Also, please come see me if you would like me to suggest secondary literature on a specific theme or topic not represented in this list.

Course Structure and Requirements:

Attendance:
You are expected to attend classes regularly and promptly. More than 3 absences will result in a failing final grade, unless proof of illness or emergency is provided. If you are absent, please email me to inquire about readings for the next class and assignments.

Participation:
The lecture will presuppose familiarity with the assigned readings for the class session. Having read the assigned text and coming prepared to participate in class discussion are requirements.

Commentaries:
You will hand in 3 3-page commentaries on specific sections of the text. You must merely explain the section of Hegel’s text that you have chosen. You should not respond to the argument critically or constructively – the commentary should be merely exegetical. See schedule of readings for due dates.
Prospectus:
You will submit a one-page prospectus stating the topic of your paper and the argument that you intend to pursue. Graduate students must include an annotated bibliography with at least 3 secondary sources that you intend to use. The prospectus is due on Wednesday of Week 8.

Final Paper:
Undergraduate Students: This 2,000 wd. paper should develop further—both exegetically and critically—one of your commentaries. The essay is due on Wednesday of finals week.

Graduate Students: This 3,000 wd. paper should develop a thesis about a section or problem in Hegel’s Phenomenology. You must situate your thesis within relevant secondary literature. Engaging secondary sources is a requirement.

Guidelines for papers:
- clarity: the paper should have a clearly defined topic and focus.
- accuracy: the paper should present an author’s position in a fair way.
- assessment: the paper should evaluate the author’s position, and bring to bear on the text or issue your own view; you must defend your view.

Please see schedule of readings for due dates. All papers are due by 2pm at the Philosophy Department (box at the counter). Undergraduate students must also submit the paper electronically via SafeAssign. No late papers will be accepted, unless accompanied by proof of illness or emergency.

All of your work must be typewritten (12 pt. font, Times New Roman, double-spaced). You will be expected to cite philosophical texts that you are quoting, paraphrasing, or using as reference appropriately, including secondary literature and online resources.

Statement on Plagiarism:
Plagiarism is the intentional or unintentional unacknowledged use of someone else’s work as one’s own in all forms of academic endeavor (such as essays, theses, examinations, research data, creative projects, and so on). Plagiarized material may be derived from books, journals, Internet postings, student or faculty papers, and so on including the purchase or “outsourcing” of written assignments for a course. Plagiarism is grounds for failing the course. For more information, see http://www.libweb.uoregon.edu/guides/plagiarism/students/.

Grading Standard:
A = excellent. No mistakes, well-written, and distinctive in some way or other.
B = good. No significant mistakes, well-written, but not distinctive in any way.
C = OK. Some errors, but basic grasp of the material.
D = poor. Several errors. A tenuous grasp of the material.
F = failing. Problematic on all fronts indicating either no real grasp of the material or complete lack of effort.

Grading:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class participation</th>
<th>10%</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Commentaries (3)</td>
<td>30% (10% each)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prospectus</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final paper</td>
<td>50%</td>
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Accommodation for a Disability:
If you have a documented disability and anticipate needing accommodations in this course, please make arrangements to meet with me soon.

Note on Recording Sessions:
You must request permission to record any session. The recording is for personal use and cannot not be disseminated – e.g.: posted online, sent as an email attachment to others, etc.

Senate Task Force to Address Sexual Violence and Survivor Support:
The UO is committed to providing an environment free of all forms of discrimination and sexual harassment, including sexual assault, domestic and dating violence and gender-based stalking. If you (or someone you know) has experienced or experiences gender-based violence (intimate partner violence, attempted or completed sexual assault, harassment, coercion, stalking, etc.), know that you are not alone. UO has staff members trained to support survivors in navigating campus life, accessing health and counseling services, providing academic and housing accommodations, helping with legal protective orders, and more.

Please be aware that all UO employees are required reporters. This means that if you tell me about a situation, I may have to report the information to my supervisor or the Office of Affirmative Action and Equal Opportunity. Although I have to report the situation, you will still have options about how your case will be handled, including whether or not you wish to pursue a formal complaint. Our goal is to make sure you are aware of the range of options available to you and have access to the resources you need.

If you wish to speak to someone confidentially, you can call 541-346-SAFE, UO’s 24-hour hotline, to be connected to a confidential counselor to discuss your options. You can also visit the SAFE website at safe.uoregon.edu.

Schedule of Classes and Readings:
The schedule of readings is subject to change during the quarter. All changes will be announced in advance via email.

Wk. 1  Introduction to the Course
M  Modernity and Metaphysics: Hegel’s Idealism
    Preface ¶¶ 1-72
W  Introduction ¶¶ 73-89

Wk. 2  Consciousness ¶¶ 90–131, 132-165
M  I. Sense-certainty or the “this” and what is meant
    II. Perception; or the thing and illusion
W  III. Force and the understanding

Wk. 3  Self-Consciousness ¶¶ 178–230
M  IV. The Truth of Self-Certainty ¶¶ 166-178
W  A: Self-Sufficiency and Non-Self-Sufficiency of Self-Consciousness:
    Lordship and Bondage
    Commentary 1 due
Wk. 4  
**Self-Consciousness continued**

M  
B: Freedom of Self-Consciousness:  
Stoicism, Skepticism

W  
Unhappy Consciousness

Wk. 5  
**Reason ¶¶ 231-346**

M  
V: The certainty and truth of reason  
A: Observing reason

b: Observation of self-consciousness in its purity and in its relation to external actuality: logical and psychological laws

c: Observation of the relation of self-consciousness to its immediate actuality: physiognomy and phrenology

W  
Continuation

Wk. 6  
**Reason continued ¶¶ 347-437**

M  
B: The actualization of rational self-consciousness by way of itself

C: Individuality, which in its own eyes is real in and for itself

W  
Continuation  
**Commentary 2 due**

Wk. 7  
**Spirit ¶¶ 444–483**

M  
(BB) Spirit VI: Spirit  
A: True spirit, ethical life

a: The ethical world, the human and divine law, man and woman

b: Ethical action, human and divine knowledge, guilt and fate

W  
Continuation

Wk. 8  
**Spirit continued ¶¶ 484–537**

M  
II: The Enlightenment

a: The Struggle of the Enlightenment with Superstition

b: The Truth of the Enlightenment

W  
III: Absolute Freedom and Terror  
**Prospectus Due**

Wk. 9  
**Spirit continued ¶¶ 596–671**

M  
Memorial Day – No class

W  
C: Spirit certain of itself: morality

a: The moral worldview

b: Dissemblance

**Commentary 3 due**

Wk. 10  
**Absolute Knowing ¶¶ 788–808**

M  
c: Conscience. The beautiful soul, evil and its forgiveness

W  
Absolute Knowing