

## *Hegel's Phenomenology of Spirit*

Dr. Rocío Zambrana  
zambrana@uoregon.edu  
Office Hours: R 10-12

PHIL 453/553  
Time: T 10-1:50  
Venue: CON 360

### **Course Description:**

This course will serve as an introduction to Hegel's idealism and some strands of its reception history through a reading of his 1807 *Phenomenology of Spirit*. We will discuss Hegel's views on knowledge, action, politics, history, and philosophy, paying particular attention to the role of negativity and dialectics in Hegel's text. Recommended readings present contemporary engagements that build on or counter Hegel's text. In so doing, they will help us problematize Hegel's views from multiple perspectives.

### **Required Text:**

G.W.F. Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, trans. Terry Pinkard (Cambridge, 2019). The book is available for purchase at the Duckstore.

### **Secondary Texts:**

#### Some Commentaries on Hegel's life and thought:

1. Terry Pinkard, *Hegel: A Biography*
2. Frederick Beiser, *Hegel*
3. Stephen Houlgate, *Freedom, Truth, and History: An Introduction to Hegel's Philosophy*
4. *The Hegel Myths and Legends*, ed. Jon Stewart
5. *The Oxford Handbook of Hegel*, ed. Dean Moyar

#### Some Commentaries on Hegel's *Phenomenology*:

1. Robert Stern, *Hegel and the Phenomenology of Spirit* (Routledge Guidebook)
2. *Blackwell Guide to Hegel's Phenomenology of Spirit*, ed. Kenneth Westphal
3. *The Phenomenology of Spirit Reader*, ed. Jon Stewart
4. Stephen Houlgate, *Hegel's Phenomenology of Spirit: A Reader's Guide*
5. *Hegel's Phenomenology of Spirit: A Critical Guide*, ed. Dean Moyar and Michael Quante
6. Merold Westphal, *History and Truth in Hegel's Phenomenology of Spirit*
7. H.S. Harris, *Hegel's Ladder*, 2 volumes
8. Terry Pinkard, *Hegel's Phenomenology: The Sociality of Reason*
9. Ludwig Siep, *Hegel's Phenomenology of Spirit*
10. Ramón Valls-Plana, *Del Yo al Nosotros, Lectura de la Fenomenología del Espíritu de Hegel*
11. Jean Hyppolite, *Genesis and Structure of Hegel's Phenomenology of Spirit*
12. Alexandre Kojève, *Introduction to the Reading of Hegel*
13. John Russon, *The Self and Its Body in Hegel's Phenomenology of Spirit*
14. Frederic Jameson, *The Hegel Variations: On the Phenomenology of Spirit*

#### Texts of interest to the course:

1. *Feminist Interpretations of Hegel*, ed. Kimberly Hutchins
2. Angelica Nuzzo, *Memory, History, Justice in Hegel*
3. Rebecca Comay, *Mourning Sickness: Hegel and the French Revolution* and with Frank Ruda, *The Dash—The Other Side of Absolute Knowing*
4. Karin De Boer, *On Hegel: The Sway of the Negative*

5. Robyn Marasco, *The Highway of Despair: Critical Theory After Hegel*
6. George Cicarello-Maher, *Decolonizing Dialectics*
7. Susan Buck-Morss, *Hegel, Haiti, and Universal History*
8. Allen Speight, *Hegel, Literature and the Problem of Agency*
9. Robert Williams, *Recognition: Fichte and Hegel on the Other*
10. Judith Butler, *Subjects of Desire: Hegelian Reflections in Twentieth-Century France*
11. Katrin Pahl, *Tropes of Transport: Hegel and Emotion*
12. Jay Bernstein, "Confession and Forgiveness: Hegel's Poetics of Action," and "'the celestial Antigone: the most resplendent figure ever to have appeared on earth': Hegel's Feminism"
13. Jean-Luc Nancy, *The Restlessness of the Negative*
14. Gillian Rose, *Hegel Contra Sociology*
15. Catherine Malabou, *The Future of Hegel: Plasticity, Temporality and Dialectic*
16. Evangelia Sembou, *Hegel's Phenomenology and Foucault's Genealogy*
17. Robert Pippin, *Hegel's Idealism: The Satisfactions of Self-Consciousness and Hegel's Practical Philosophy*
18. Robert Brandom, "Some Pragmatist Themes in Hegel's Idealism" and "Holism and Idealism in Hegel's Phenomenology," in *Tales of the Mighty Dead*

Throughout, I will recommend secondary sources relevant to the discussion. Come see me if you would like recommendations on a specific theme or topic not represented on this list.

#### **Learning Outcomes:**

1. You will identify, differentiate, compare, and critically assess key debates, terms, and methods distinctive of Hegel's thought and its reception history.
2. You will engage in philosophical inquiry that examines a broad range of topics such as conceptions of self, society, knowledge, rationality, power, gender, and race. You will explain these as relevant to sub-disciplines within the field of philosophy, such as ethics, politics, metaphysics, and epistemology.
3. You will present and assess views that differ from your own within an inclusive classroom environment.
4. You will demonstrate critical thinking, reading, and writing skills through collaborative discussion and writing projects.

#### **Estimated Student Workload:**

##### **Active Reading:**

Lecture and discussion will draw from your initial engagement with the text. To that end, practice active reading before class. Underline or highlight key words and phrases as you read. Summarize points, raise questions, challenge what you have read, note examples in the margins. Read critically by asking who wrote this text? When? Who is the intended audience? How does it relate to other readings within this class? Why do you think it was written? Look for signposts that help you understand the text, phrases such as "most importantly," "in contrast," "on the other hand." Explain what you've read to someone. (Source: OU) ~20 pages, ~5 hours a week

***Lecture:***

Class time combines lecture, discussion, and group work. Productively and respectfully engage your peers, the text, and the instructor. To that end, practice active listening in class. Repeat and restate what you have heard orally or in notes. Seek clarification, pose questions, elaborate on a point, argument, concept, or interpretation. 3 hours a week

***Writing:******Commentaries:***

Write a 2-page exposition of a specific section of the text. Explain the section by focusing on its central concept or problem. The commentary should be merely exegetical, supporting reading comprehension.

***Papers:***

Pick a topic and a thesis to pursue. Your *topic* should be narrow, for example, pick one concept or problem developed in the text that you would like to examine. Your *thesis* is the position that you will develop throughout your paper using arguments, textual evidence, and examples. The thesis states what you want to say about your topic. Identify and evaluate the author's *motivation*, and state your own motivation. Identify key *concepts* and assess the relationship and distinction between them. Imagine a possible counter-position and assess your own views on the matter. Evaluate the overall quality of the argument or concept you have focused on given your own position. Anchor your discussion in the text. Quotes should be no longer than two lines each. As a general rule, for each line that you quote, you should write two lines explaining the quote (what it means, how it helps you establish your thesis).

*Undergraduate Students:* this 2,000 wd. paper should develop further—both exegetically and critically—one of your commentaries.

*Graduate Students:* this 3,000 wd. paper should develop a thesis about a section or problem in Hegel's text. Situate your thesis within relevant secondary literature. Engaging secondary sources is a requirement.

***Prospectus:***

Write 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.

Combined: ~40 hours per term

**Grades:**

Class participation	10%
Commentaries (2)	30% (15% each)
Prospectus	10%
Final paper	50%

**General Criteria for Evaluating Papers:**

- clarity: state a clearly defined topic and thesis
- accuracy: present an author's position adequately

- assessment: evaluate the author's position, and bring to bear on the text or issue your own view
- craft: write coherently, thoughtfully, clearly; edit your work for grammatical and spelling mistakes

#### **Grading Standard:**

A+ = superb. No mistakes, well-written, well-researched, and pursues an original thesis.

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.

#### **Course Policies:**

##### **Etiquette:**

This course offers language and tools for inquiring into lived experiences and social realities. Respectful listening and dialogue across multiple perspectives structures class discussion.

##### **Attendance:**

Attend classes regularly and promptly, ready to participate in constructive dialogue about the assigned text with your peers. *More than 2 absences may result in a failing final grade, unless proof of illness or emergency is provided.*

##### **Deadlines and Submission:**

Commentaries: by 4pm, Tuesday of weeks 3 and 6 in the Department of Philosophy (SCH 211)

Prospectus: by 4pm, Tuesday of week 8 in the Department of Philosophy (SCH 211)

Final Paper: by 4pm, Tuesday of finals week via email (zambrana@uoregon.edu)

*No late papers will be accepted, unless accompanied by proof of illness or emergency.*

##### **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/>.

##### **Recording Sessions:**

Request permission to record any session. The recording is for personal use and cannot not be disseminated (e.g.: posted online, etc.) unless I have provided written consent.

##### **Device Policy:**

If you are taking notes on a device, please be mindful of your neighbor by maintaining your activity relevant to class discussion.

**Accommodation for Disability:**

If you have a documented disability and anticipate needing accommodations in this course, please work with the Accessible Education Center (<https://aec.uoregon.edu/>).

**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 have experienced or experience 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. Visit <https://safe.uoregon.edu> or call 541-346-SAFE.

**Schedule of Readings:**

The schedule of readings is subject to change with advance notice via email.

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|--------------|--|
| <b>Wk. 1</b> | <b>Modernity, Metaphysics, Negativity</b><br>Preface ¶¶ 1-72   |
| <b>Wk. 2</b> | <b>Method</b><br>Introduction ¶¶ 73-89   |
| <b>Wk. 3</b> | <b>Self-Consciousness I</b><br>IV. The Truth of Self-Certainty<br>A: Self-Sufficiency and Non-Self-Sufficiency of Self-Consciousness:<br>Mastery and Servitude ¶¶ 166-196<br>Recommended: Fanon, <i>Black Skin, White Masks</i> , chaps. 5 and 7 |
| <b>Wk. 4</b> | <b>Self-Consciousness II</b><br>B: Freedom of Self-Consciousness<br>Stoicism, Skepticism, and the Unhappy Consciousness<br>¶¶ 197-230<br>Recommended: Judith Butler, "Stubborn Attachment, Bodily Subjection," <i>The Psychic Life of Power</i>  |
| <b>Wk. 5</b> | <b>Reason</b><br>C: Individuality, which, to Itself, is Real in and for Itself<br>¶¶ 394-436<br>Recommended: Pippin, "Freedom of the Will: Social Dimensions," <i>Hegel's Practical Philosophy</i>   |
| <b>Wk. 6</b> | Class cancelled – Zambrana at Berkeley   |

- Wk. 7**                      **Spirit I**  
A: True Spirit, Ethical Life  
a: The Ethical World, the Human and Divine Law, Man and Woman  
b: Ethical Action, Human and Divine Knowing, Guilt and Fate  
¶¶ 437-475  
                                Recommended: Bernstein, “the celestial Antigone, the most resplendent figure ever to have appeared on earth’: Hegel’s Feminism”
- Wk. 8**                      **Spirit II**  
III: Absolute Freedom and Terror  
¶¶ 582-595  
                                Recommended: Achille Mbembe, “Necropolitics”
- Wk. 9**                      **Spirit III**  
c: Conscience, the Beautiful Soul, Evil, and its Forgiveness  
¶¶ 632-671  
                                Recommended: Comay, “Terrors of the Tabula Rasa,”  
   *Mourning Sickness*
- Wk. 10**                    **Absolute Knowing**  
¶¶ 788-808  
                                Recommended: Zambrana, “Hegel’s Legacy”