

PHIL 335  
Instructor: Dr. Kurt Brandhorst

Office: Robinson B 458

Office Hours: Mon: 1:00-2:30  
Tue: 2:00-3:30  
Wed: 1:00-2:30

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**Where to find information about this course:** all course information including the syllabus, assignments, and any additional announcements or changes to the schedule will be posted on the Blackboard site for this course.

**You should also check your GMU email regularly for class announcements.**

**Department webpage:** <http://philosophy.gmu.edu/>

**Guide for Writing in Philosophy:** <http://philosophy.gmu.edu/undergraduate/writing-standards>

## COURSE SYLLABUS

This course examines the metaphysical work of three of the most influential thinkers of the 19<sup>th</sup> century: Hegel, Schopenhauer and Kierkegaard. Most 20<sup>th</sup> century continental philosophy would be impossible without the transformational thinking of these three 19<sup>th</sup> century figures. We will start with Hegel's development of Cartesian Modern Philosophy and of Kant's Critical Turn to illustrate what is at stake in the identification of epistemology and ontology. In particular, Hegel's Logic insists of the mediation of knowledge in order for the truth of human being as consciousness to be revealed/achieved. In Schopenhauer and Kierkegaard we will find two responses to Hegel's program: Schopenhauer will deny the identification of epistemology and ontology and insist that the sort of knowledge that Hegel relies on does not touch the truth of being; Kierkegaard offers a critique of mediation and insists that human being is bound in both immediacy and paradox. The course will involve a close reading of key texts both to situate the work in historico-philosophical context and to bring these texts into dialogue with each other.

## REQUIRED TEXTS

There are THREE texts you should acquire for the course:

Hegel, G. W. F., *Phenomenology of Spirit*, trans. A.V. Miller, Oxford University Press, 1977.  
ISBN-13: 978-0198245971

Kierkegaard, S. *Philosophical Fragments/Johannes Climacus*, trans. E. Hong and H Hong, Princeton University Press, 1985.  
ISBN-13: 978-0691020365

Schopenhauer, A. *The World as Will and Representation*, vol. 1, trans. E. F. J. Payne, Dover, 1966.  
ISBN-13: 978-0486217611

Texts to be posted on Blackboard as pdf:

- Hegel, *The Encyclopaedia Logic*, selections
- Kierkegaard, *The Concept of Anxiety*, selections
- Kierkegaard, *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*, selections

I may post additional short texts to Blackboard as the semester progresses.

**Readings on BB:** Beginning in Week Two we will be making use of texts printed from Blackboard. Unless you have copies of the original source material (i.e. books in the proper translation), **you will be responsible for printing off each of the readings listed above so that you have a paper copy to work with in class.**

**Please note: this is a course requirement.** We will be doing close work with the texts both in class and for assignments. In addition, **all laptops, phones and other electronic devices (e.g. coffee makers) must be turned off during class time**, so you must have a paper copy of each class reading with you.

Printing costs should not exceed \$10 (in total), based on the JC print costs of 10c per page. A proportion of your participation grade will be attached to producing your own portfolio of readings (see section on participation below). Checklists for the portfolio will be distributed at the first class.

### Course Reading Expectations

The schedule of readings is given below. I will expect you to have done the set reading before the relevant class. This means reading through the set text or texts *at least* once; going back and re-reading either the whole text, or the passages that seem especially important/difficult/puzzling/interesting to you; and writing down your thoughts and questions on the text (I recommend keeping a notebook just for your reading notes for this course that you can bring to class as a reminder of what you want to ask or comment on).

If you don't have questions, you're not reading properly! If you do the reading in advance, you will get a lot more out of classes, because you will have a lot more to put in.

### **Questions and Problems:**

If you have a question about the course, or a problem with a class or assignment, please do one or more of the following:

- ask in class (often others will have the same question/concern, so this will help everyone)
- email me with a question or query: [kbrandho@gmu.edu](mailto:kbrandho@gmu.edu)
- come and see me in my open office hours or email me for an appointment

I will respond to emails as soon as I reasonably can, though as a general rule I will not answer emails in the late evening or between Saturday morning and Sunday evening. This means you need to plan ahead – *please don't leave questions about assignments or reading until the last minute!*

### COURSEWORK AND GRADING

Basic breakdown:

1. Attendance:	0%
2. Participation:	5%
3. 2 Worksheets	10% each
4. 2 Essays	15% each
5. Final Paper	25%
6. Final Exam	20%

#### 1) Attendance:

There are no points for showing up. However, showing up has value for all other aspects of assessment and you should not expect to do well on the course if you miss classes. **In addition, points can be lost for not showing up:** we only have 28 class meetings on the material of the course; every absence after the second will result in a 10% penalty in the participation grade. Hence, 12 absences would result in a 100% reduction of the participation grade. Regarding the penalty, extenuating circumstances will be considered in line with University policies but cannot

make up for the effect that an absence has in understanding the material.

Also, this is not a distance learning course and so, in order to pass the course, **you must attend at least 15 classes**

## 2) Participation:

Class discussion is an essential feature of the course and I will regularly invite participation. Please come prepared to discuss the material as assigned and be ready to take part in classroom activities. This means both reading and thinking about the texts in advance of the class meeting. Participation is distinct from both presence and mere talk. Additional tasks such as quizzes or Discussion Board fora may be assigned.

**Portfolio of readings:** as noted above, from Week 2 onwards you are responsible for printing off the set readings for each class as required (all readings will be available on BB). A checklist of the required readings will be provided in class 1. As having a paper copy of the text to work with in class is essential, 20% of your of your participation grade will be dependent on producing your own portfolio of course readings. Once you have printed off the readings for the course, you should ask another member of the class to check your portfolio is complete, sign off the check list for you, and hand it to me. **This must be completed by the start of class on Monday January 27<sup>th</sup> (week 2).**

## 3) Worksheets:

There will be two comprehension worksheets assigned during the semester: one on Hegel's *Logic* and the second on Kierkegaard. These worksheets will involve 5-6 short answer questions to be completed outside class. Answers are expected to be text-based and explicative.

## 4) Essays:

There will be two Essays assigned during the semester. The first will be on the work of Hegel and the second on Schopenhauer. The papers should be 5-6 pages in length and address the specifics of assigned prompts.

## 5) Final Paper

For the final paper you will be asked to develop your own topic within set parameters. The final paper will be approximately 9 pages and develop the thought of one or more of our philosophers

**NB: I will answer content and formal questions about papers in advance of the due date but under normal circumstances I will not read drafts of papers --- this is a matter of volume and fairness; I may, however, propose to you as an individual that you should submit a draft. My office hours (see above) are a good time to meet to discuss your ideas and pose questions.**

## 6) Final Exam

There will be a partially seen comprehensive final exam on **Wednesday May 6<sup>th</sup>**. Information about the form and details of the exam will be announced later in the term.

## \*) Plagiarism

This is a major violation of trust and academic integrity. Do not present others' work as your own. Passive Plagiarism (failing to cite sources) is as bad as Active Plagiarism (downloading an essay off the internet). Also, work submitted for this course must be uniquely created for this course. If I suspect plagiarism I will inform you and the university administration in writing. **NB: I reserve the right to conduct an oral examination on any piece of work.**

The Honor Code: "All George Mason University students have agreed to abide by the letter and the spirit of the Honor Code. You can find a copy of the Honor Code at [academicintegrity.gmu.edu](http://academicintegrity.gmu.edu). All violations of the Honor Code will be reported to the Honor Committee for review."

## Submitting Written Work

All written assignments must be submitted on the Blackboard site for this course by the relevant deadline (see course schedule below). There will be a clearly marked section on Blackboard for each assignment.

**Unless otherwise noted**, one paper copy must also be handed in at class or to the Philosophy Office (Robinson B 465) during office hours (9am-4pm, weekdays). The paper copy should normally be handed in by 4pm on the day of the deadline.

Please note:

- The **date of submission** will be taken from when you upload the work on Blackboard. If there is a system problem that means you can't upload the work, email me and let me know.
- Once a paper copy is submitted, you can expect feedback/comments and notice of your grade. For paper copies submitted on the due date, I make every effort to mark and return this work within 2 weeks. Paper copies submitted after the due date but before the end of the semester go to the end of the grading queue (note that I have multiple classes this semester) and will be returned as soon as possible. If no paper copy is submitted by the end of the semester a grade will still be entered but you will not get feedback/comments on your work.

Extensions can be arranged in exceptional circumstances if you have a good reason for submitting work late but you must let me know (by email is fine). Extensions cannot be given beyond the last day of the exam period. **Whenever possible it is much better to try to arrange an extension with me in advance.** This will make things less stressful for all concerned: you will be able to plan your assignments more effectively; I will be able to plan my grading and give better (less rushed) feedback.

## Commitment to Diversity

In keeping with the general ethos of the University, this class seeks to create a learning environment that fosters respect for people across differences. We welcome and value individuals and their differences, including gender expression and identity, race, economic status, sex, sexuality, ethnicity, national origin, first language, religion, age and ability. We encourage all members of the learning environment to engage with the material personally, but to also be open to exploring and learning from experiences different than their own.

NB This does not mean not being critical: respecting others' views means taking them seriously, and taking them seriously means thinking about their strengths and weaknesses, asking questions, and offering constructive criticisms or alternative viewpoints where appropriate. It also means thinking about where the views of others challenge our own, and being open to what they have to teach us. Valuing diversity is not just an attitude – it is a matter of developing an active practice. Amongst other things, this practice involves:

- learning to listen to other perspectives;
- being open to criticism of one's own views;
- being willing to evaluate different positions while being unsure where one stands;
- having good reasons for one's views, but being willing to change one's mind;
- not rushing to judgment;
- basing critical comments or questions on as good an understanding of another person (or text or theory) as one can manage;
- *and* being willing to accept that there will always be things one cannot see or understand;
- learning to express criticisms and differences of opinion in ways that are not personal or hurtful and that leave space for other voices.

Never be afraid to ask a question or to risk saying something that might be wrong – that is how we learn. But equally, never be afraid to listen to the questions and answers of others, and to let their views challenge and change how you think.

## **Sexual Misconduct and Interpersonal Violence**

George Mason University is committed to providing a learning, living and working environment that is free from discrimination, and we are committed to a campus that is free of sexual misconduct and other acts of interpersonal violence in order to promote community well-being and student success. We encourage students who believe that they have been sexually harassed, assaulted or subjected to sexual misconduct to seek assistance and support.

University Policy 1202 Sexual Harassment and Misconduct (<http://universitypolicy.gmu.edu/policies/sexual-harassment-policy/>) speaks to the specifics of our process, our resources, and the options available to you.

**Confidential** student resources are available on campus at the Student Support and Advocacy Center <http://ssac.gmu.edu/> Counseling and Psychological Services <http://caps.gmu.edu/> and Student Health Services <http://shs.gmu.edu/>

**All other members of the University community (including me, as your instructor for this course) are not considered confidential resources and are required to report all disclosures of sexual assault, interpersonal violence, and stalking to Mason's Title IX Coordinator according to university policy 1412. For further information, see 'Title IX at George Mason': <https://diversity.gmu.edu/sexual-misconduct>**

*If you wish to speak with someone confidentially, please contact the Student Support and Advocacy Center (703-380-1434) or Counseling and Psychological Services (703-993-2380). You may also seek assistance from Mason's Title IX Coordinator (703-993-8730; [titleix@gmu.edu](mailto:titleix@gmu.edu)).*

### **Student Support & Further Resources**

For a general list of student support resources on campus, see the following webpage:

<https://stearnscenter.gmu.edu/knowledge-center/knowning-mason-students/student-support-resources-on-campus/>

**Counselling and Psychological Services (CAPS):** (703) 993-2380; <https://caps.gmu.edu>

**Mason Student Services Center** (for registration and academic records; enrollment; financial aid, billing and student accounts): SUB 1, ground floor.

**Office of Disability Services:** If you are a student with a disability and you need academic accommodations, please see me within the first 2 weeks of the semester and contact the Office of Disability Services (ODS) to ensure you receive the required support: (703) 993-2472; [ods@gmu.edu](mailto:ods@gmu.edu) All academic accommodations must be arranged through ODS: <https://ds.gmu.edu>

**Student Support and Advocacy Center** (provides advice on financial difficulties, personal crisis, interpersonal violence, sexual health and much more): <https://ssac.gmu.edu>

**University Careers Service:** <https://careers.gmu.edu>

**University Libraries:** <http://library.gmu.edu/>

**Writing Center:** <http://writingcenter.gmu.edu/>

## COURSE OUTLINE

NB: The reading schedule is subject to change

### WEEK ONE

Reading: Course Syllabus

Jan 22: INTRODUCTION

### WEEK TWO

Reading: Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, Preface §§ 1-25  
Hegel's *Encyclopaedia Logic*, §§ 1-18 & 19-25 (pdf)

Jan 27: Hegel's Project

Jan 29: Philosophy, Metaphysics and Logic

### WEEK THREE

Reading: Hegel's *Encyclopaedia Logic*, §§ 79-83 & 84-98 (pdf)

Feb 3: The Logic

Feb 5: The Doctrine of Being  
**Worksheet 1 Assigned**

### WEEK FOUR

Reading: Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, pp. 58-66

Feb 10: This and Now

Feb 12: Sense Certainty  
**Worksheet 1 Due**

### WEEK FIVE

Reading: Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, pp. 67-79

Feb 17: Perception

Feb 19: Understanding

### WEEK SIX

Reading: Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, pp. 104-119

Feb 24: Life and Self-Consciousness

Feb 26: Lordship & Bondage  
**Paper 1 Assigned**

WEEK SEVEN

Reading: Schopenhauer, *World as Will and Representation*, §§ 1-7

Mar 2: Representation

Mar 4: Subject and Object  
**Paper 1 Due**

SPRING BREAK

WEEK EIGHT

Reading: Schopenhauer, *World as Will and Representation*, §§ 8-16

Mar 16: Concepts

Mar 18: Reason

WEEK NINE

Reading: Schopenhauer, *World as Will and Representation*, §§ 17-29

Mar 23: The Body

Mar 25: Will

WEEK TEN

Reading: Schopenhauer, *World as Will and Representation*, §§ 30-37  
Kierkegaard, *Philosophical Fragments*, pp. 5-22  
Kierkegaard, *The Concept of Anxiety*, pp. 81-90 (pdf)

Mar 30: The Thing in Itself  
**Paper 2 Assigned**

Apr 1: Kierkegaard, *Fragments and the Moment*

WEEK ELEVEN

Reading: Kierkegaard, *Philosophical Fragments*, pp. 23-54

Apr 6: Socrates and 'Going Beyond'

Apr 8: Paradox  
**Paper 2 Due**  
**Worksheet 2 Assigned**

WEEK TWELVE

Reading: Kierkegaard, *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*, pp. 107-117 & 132-143 (pdf)

Apr 13: Becoming Subjective

Apr 15: Subjectivity  
**Worksheet 2 Due**

WEEK THIRTEEN

Reading: Kierkegaard, *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*, pp. 159-179 & 184-187 (pdf)

Apr 20: Absolute Paradox

Apr 22: Truth is Subjectivity

WEEK FOURTEEN

Reading: Kierkegaard, *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*, pp. 252-266 & 287-302 (pdf)

Apr 27: Existence

Apr 29: Actuality

WEEK FIFTEEN

Reading: Everything

May 4: Review

**FINAL PAPER DUE: MONDAY MAY 4<sup>TH</sup>**

**FINAL EXAM: WEDNESDAY MAY 6<sup>TH</sup>**