

Theocrit 9614Y: Idealism and the Margins of Philosophy: (Inter)Disciplinarity in Kant, Hegel, Schelling

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Time: Tues. 2 pm. Half course over both terms. Classes should be concluded in the first semester

Method of delivery: Guiding notes will be precirculated by e mail prior to each class. I will generally talk from these notes, which provide a preview of what I will cover. But given the zoom medium and my unfamiliarity with using it, as well as “zoom fatigue,” I may sometimes need to make these guiding notes quite detailed, so as not to have to go through the material “in person.” So please read these notes, occasional background readings as well as the assigned sections of texts before each class. We will not be using the full three hours on zoom, given that I will precirculate course content. Also you must attend zoom classes with video.

Contact: This will have to be by zoom or by phone. I will be available on zoom immediately after class. Otherwise, please e mail for an appointment or to arrange a phone conversation.

Course Description

This course takes up German Idealism’s attempt to elevate philosophy to a metadiscipline that provides the organizing principle for all other “philosophical sciences” (as Hegel calls them). It explores the ways in which this imperialism of philosophy ends by exposing it to what Derrida calls “the margins of philosophy,” reconfiguring the very identity of philosophy and its writing, and thus bringing philosophy much closer to “theory.” Two organizing premises of the course are Derrida’s notion of “autoimmunity,” wherein systems have a tendency to compromise themselves by destroying their “own immunitary protections”; and Foucault’s idea of “countersciences,” which lead in the opposite direction from established sciences (or forms of knowledge) and expose the latter to their unthought. In structuring the course around organizations of knowledge and their dis-intergration, and around (inter)disciplinarity, we will try to bring out both the critical and creative potentials of this interdisciplinarity.

The course begins with Kant’s view of the relation between faculties and disciplines, and his attempts to delimit the place of philosophy in the organization of knowledge. Though Kant may want to establish the grounds of reason and the boundaries between faculties, the problems of the empirical vs. the transcendental that Foucault sees as surfacing in his work place Kant at the disturbed edge of “Theory.” We will similarly study Hegel in terms of an interdisciplinarity that constantly exposes the philosophical cogito to its unthought. We will thus look at how Hegel’s philosophical project is disrupted by his work in the life sciences and aesthetics: how his work on bodies and organisms unsettles the self-identity of philosophy; how the history of art is the history of the subject’s failing to become a classically bounded ego; and how the increasingly powerful discipline of “history” impacts philosophy. Finally we will take up these and similar issues in the work of Schelling, focusing on the relations between his transcendental idealism and philosophy of nature; his concepts of absolute and unconditional knowledge; his radical theorization of “freedom”; and the various forms of his writing and thinking, particularly in *First Outline of a System of the Philosophy of Nature* and *Ages of the World (1815)*, as experimental texts that resemble what Deleuze calls the “great work” that we can enter from different points and develop in different directions through relations of “explication, implication, and complication.”

Texts

I will provide pdfs of all texts and selections, via e mail or OWL. Where I provide only selections for copyright reasons, you can usually download the full text from Library Genesis or Aarg (for the latter

you need to be invited to join, which I can do). However, you are urged to buy the following texts, especially if you intend to work on them, as reading a long pdf is not conducive to retention and assimilation. I have not ordered texts at the bookstore since I didn't know the class size early enough to do so.

Hegel, *Philosophy of Nature*, trans. AV Miller. Oxford.

FWJ Schelling, *First Outline of a System of the Philosophy of Nature*, trans. Keith Peterson., State University of New York Press.

Schelling. *Philosophical Investigations into the Essence of Human Freedom*, trans. Jeff Love and Johannes Schmidt, SUNY Press.

Schelling, *Ages of the World (1815)*, trans. Jason Wirth, SUNY Press. (Note: there are two other versions of this text, the 1811 and 1813 versions, both very different from the 1815 version. Do not substitute these).

Readings

Immanuel Kant: 1. Selections from *Critique of Pure Reason*, including the first 3 pp. of the section on "Architectonic." 2. Selections from *Critique of Judgment*, including determinant vs. reflective judgment (Introduction IV), organisms as natural purposes (#65-#68). 3. Selections from *The Conflict of Faculties*: "The Philosophy Faculty vs. the Theology Faculty" (43-5), the French Revolution (153-7) 4. "To Perpetual Peace" (this is FYI; I will not be covering it except in passing)

GWF Hegel: 1. Introduction to the *Encyclopedia*. 2. Preface to the *Phenomenology of Spirit* 3. *Aesthetics*: Introduction, Section 5; further selections on symbolic vs classical art. 3. From *The History of Philosophy*: Boehme. 4. *Philosophy of Nature* (Introduction and "Organics," especially #343, #345 + remark, #348, #350, #351 [not including Remarks], #354 skim Remark, #356, #357 + Remark, #363-5 including Remarks; #370- #376 including Remarks; other brief selections) .

FWJ Schelling: 1. *On University Studies*, (Chapters , 7, further selections). 2. "On the Nature of Philosophy as Science" (210-30). 3. *First Outline of a System of the Philosophy of Nature*, selections (pp. 5-54, 106-13, 126-7; 141-9, 158-67). 4. Introduction to the *Outline*. 5. *Ages of the World (1815)*, pp. 3-49, 101-8

Background Readings from Foucault (*The Order of Things*), Derrida, Nancy, Malabou.

Timetable

1. SEPT 15 Introduction: Issues of the course. Kant's construction of philosophy as a *Fachwissenschaft*. Kant's critical toolbox and key terms. Philosophy constituted by its role as critique. Philosophy as a science rather than aggregate. Science as system and architectonic. The place of philosophy in the university. READINGS: All selections from 1st Critique in PDF; *Critique of Judgment*, section IV of Intro (Determinant vs reflective judgment); from the *Conflict of Faculties*, 43-5 (and wider context).
2. SEPT 22 Previous continued. READINGS: *Critique of Judgment*, selections on the sublime; from *The Conflict of Faculties*, "Is the Human Race Constantly Progressing?," with focus on the section on the French Revolution.
3. SEPT 29 Hegel: the concept of, and the breaking open of, the encyclopedia; levels and spheres; the temporal and experiential structure of Hegel's texts; lecture format; the *Zusätze* (please glance at the layout of *Philosophy of Nature* for this; cf. also Nancy, *The Speculative Remark*). READINGS: Introduction to the *Encyclopedia*; Preface to the *Phenomenology of Spirit*. Background Reading: from Nancy, *The Speculative Remark*.
4. OCT. 6 The identity of philosophy as symbolic, classical, or Romantic. READINGS: *Aesthetics*, all

selections; from the *History of Philosophy*, Boehme.

5. OCT.13 *The Philosophy of Nature*; traditional reading of the text in terms of the graduated stages of nature, as nature evolves towards the animal body; planets, plants, animal organism; the graduated ascent of disciplines; Kant's notions of architectonic and organisms as natural purposes as background for Hegel's desired system and conception of the animal organism; the ruination of this project by the subaltern behaviour of the empirical in relation to the transcendental. READINGS: Kant, *Critique of Judgment*, #65-#68; Hegel, *Philosophy of Nature*, Introduction and "Organics" section of the *Philosophy of Nature* (#343, #345 + remark, #348, #350, #351 [not including Remarks], #354 skim Remark, #356, #357 + Remark, #363-5 including Remarks; #370- #376 including Remarks) .
6. OCT 20: Omission of PN from the corpus; the problems that nature causes for philosophy; digestion, illness, negativity, excrement, abjection; irritability and sensibility; what is "spirit"?; reading Hegel otherwise. READINGS: as above, PN #370-#376, including Remarks, Background Reading: Rajan, "(In)Digestible Material: Illness and Dialectic in Hegel's *Philosophy of Nature*."
7. OCT 27: Above continued. Background Reading: Malabou, "The Wounds of Spirit"
- Reading Week
8. NOV 10: Introduction to Schelling. His attempt to unify idealism and realism in one system. *On University Studies*: his "encyclopedia," the relation between ideal and real sciences, positive and absolute knowledge. Knowledge as Leibnizian pre-established harmony or Spinozist modes of one substance. By contrast, the multiple, discrepant "series" in his philosophy.
Readings: *Introduction to the First Outline* (at back of the *First Outline*; for current purposes, 193-9); *On University Studies* (Chapters 1, 7, further selections). Leibniz, *Monadology*. Background reading: Derrida, "Theology of Translation."
9. NOV 17 *The First Outline* and the autoimmunity of knowledge. Structure of the text; relation to "Introduction to the Outline"; multiple systems in the text; the chemistry and atomism of thought, spheres, in-composable and in-decomposable elements; natural history and the history of nature (cf. Foucault on these topics); "inhibition": role of disciplines evoked in the text: speculative physics, biology, medicine/physiology. READINGS: *First Outline*, pp. 5-54, 106-13, 126-7; 141-9.
10. NOV 24 Above contd, Appendix on disease. Schelling's later traversal of the nature of philosophy in "On the Nature of Philosophy as Science," READINGS: *First Outline*, previous, and 158-67. "On the Nature of Philosophy as Science," 210-30.
- 11 DEC 1. Schelling, *Freedom Essay*.
- 12 DEC 8 *Ages of the World* (1815). Relationship of the 1815 version to the 1811 and 1813 versions. The non-structure of the 1815 version. History and the problem of beginning. The expansive and contracting forces, realism and idealism. The deconstruction of Idealism. The rotary motion vs the Hegelian dialectic. The mesmeric crisis. READINGS: *Ages*, Introduction, 3-49, 101-8; Background Reading: Rajan, "The Abyss of the Past: Psychoanalysis in Schelling's *Ages of the World*."

Assignments and Evaluation:

All students will do an in-class presentation, a short paper developing from the presentation, and a response to a student presentation. Students will also write a book review and a research paper (paper outline and bibliography to be handed in in advance).

Mode of delivery of written work: Anything sent to me electronically must be in Word 97-2003, otherwise I will not be able to read it. I will not be using OWL except as a place to put readings, so please *don't submit your essay on OWL*; please send it as an e mail. I would also like to receive a hard copy of your final paper, which you can leave for me at the English Dept. Office in UC by the due date (pandemic permitting), or drop off at my house, or mail to me.

The distribution of grades is as follows.

Class Presentation (25%)- written version due 2 weeks after delivery

Seminars will begin with the Preface to Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit*. Where a topic is not specified, you should present the text (or section of the text in the case of a longer text), focusing on a key issue or problem that you consider worth raising. See list of seminars to be supplied. Seminars should take 20 minutes, and where you are focusing on a section of a longer text, you are responsible for reading the longer text and demonstrating a sense of the relevance of your segment to the whole. Given the zoom medium you will probably want to write a paper that you will read out, and you are advised not to try and speak impromptu. By the Sunday before the class, please send this paper or a version of it to me and to your respondent. The presentation should then be shaped into a short paper (8-10 pages), with an argument and focus, as well as references, notes and a Works Cited. This paper should be handed in no more than two weeks after your presentation. The oral presentation is worth 10% and the resulting paper is worth 15% for a total of 25%.

BOOK REVIEW: Due Nov. 16th (10%) To develop your skill with handling important secondary material and critiquing arguments, you will be required to submit to me and to post in OWL (under Resources) a *review* of a book or crucial part thereof (two and a half to three single-spaced pages). This assignment will be graded but will receive only very brief comments due to its brevity. The book reviews are also a resource for the class, and so will be shared with the class. Please look at academic book reviews for models. The review should provide an analytic summary of the book's main argument as well as a critique (ie what is important about the book, what you see as its limitations, where it stands in relation to other readings of the philosopher in question, how it is relevant to this course etc; bear in mind that a review is written for people who have *not* read the book). No more than two students should review any one book, so choices must be cleared with me. Reviews are due by Nov. 16th. If you have a seminar around that time, you may negotiate another deadline with me, but consider submitting the review earlier.

RESEARCH ESSAY (55%)- Due Feb 22nd 2021

BIBLIOGRAPHY and OUTLINE OF ESSAY (Due Jan. 5, 2021): - 5%

A brief outline of your essay, similar to a conference proposal, and a bibliography of relevant secondary work (ie not a Works Cited, but a planned reading list with a reasonable number of items). The Bibliography and Outline are meant to ensure that you don't write your essay at the last minute and that they do involve research. I will not be grading them per se, but failure to hand them in will result in your losing the 5%.

ESSAY: (5% + 50%). Due Feb. 22nd 2021

The paper should be at least 5000 words, excluding the Bibliography. It should show evidence of secondary reading, original thinking, and breadth (ie don't write an exegesis of a passage). You may deal with the same philosopher as in the shorter paper, but the two papers should not overlap significantly. The paper should follow either the MLA or Chicago Style format for references.

PARTICIPATION: (10%)

This grade will be based on your seminar response, general participation, and attendance. *Response*: Students must respond to a seminar paper. The response should be 5-8 minutes, and should take up the argument of the seminar/paper, but may critique it (constructively), offer another point of view, or take up an aspect of the topic not covered in the seminar. It should offer something substantive, and raise discussion points (5-8 minutes). The respondent should coordinate with the student presenting the seminar about seeing the seminar in advance. It follows that the respondent is also responsible for reading the whole text being covered in the seminar, and not just a selection (or in the case of a formidable text such as the *Philosophy of Nature* or the *First Outline*, responsible for glancing at the whole text and reading the assigned section thoroughly). *Attendance* is a required part of this course, and

you must attend classes with video. Please inform me if you are unable to attend a class. If you miss more than two classes without good reason (limited to medical or compassionate reasons) you will lose up to 5% out of the total participation grade.

Late Penalties and Incompletes

*Failure to deliver a seminar creates a problem for the entire class and its scheduling. Anyone who fails to deliver a seminar on the assigned date will have to submit it in writing within a week in order to receive a grade no higher than 70%.

*Late essays will be penalised at the rate of 2% per day.

*Attendance in class is part of the participation mark. A student who misses more than two classes without a good reason will forfeit part of the participation mark.

*Incompletes must be approved by the Centre Director (or by the student's home department) in consultation with the instructor. Academic accommodation for reasons of illness will be granted, following the university's policy, which requires documentation to be submitted to the Dean of the Faculty in a timely fashion. The policy can be obtained from the Centre Office. Accommodation on compassionate grounds (defined as death or serious illness in the family) will be granted by the Director and instructor in consultation. In very unusual circumstances (e.g. the student is taking more than the normal number of courses), extensions or an INCOMPLETE on written (not oral) work may be granted, or penalties reduced, if a request is made to the Director and instructor *two weeks* in advance of the due date. As stated in the Centre's policies "an incomplete should not be a way of avoiding a late penalty or getting a higher grade than someone who respects the deadlines." If an incomplete is granted, a date will be determined for submission of outstanding work, after which the full penalty will apply.

Academic Offences

As part of university policy we are required to stress that Scholastic offences, including but not limited to plagiarism (whether of direct wording or arguments), are taken seriously. Students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, at the following Website: http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/handbook/appeals/scholastic_discipline_grad.pdf

In addition, please note (with apologies for saying this if it is unnecessary) that a graduate course that draws on the professor's published and unpublished research is not like an on-line undergraduate course which organises existing information that is "in the public domain." Any arguments that you take from this course, which are not common knowledge, and which you use outside this class (e.g. in a thesis, conference paper or article) must be duly acknowledged.