

Philosophy 486: Kant's Moral and Political Philosophy

University of Maryland, Baltimore County

Fall 2017

TTh 11:30am-12:45pm, PAHB 456

Instructor: Dr. Michael Nance

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Office Hours: Wednesdays 10-12 or by appointment (email to set up an appointment)

Functional Competency Satisfied by this Course: Critical Analysis and Reasoning

Course Description

A close study of Kant's moral, political, and legal thought as it develops across major writings, focusing on Kant's views about freedom and practical reason in morality, rational religion, and politics. Topics include: Kant's theory of moral autonomy and free will; the 'moral' arguments for freedom of the will and the existence of God; Kant's theory of property, the social contract, and international justice; and his arguments for the rationality of hope for historical progress in political life.

Course Goals

Goals for student learning in this course include:

- Familiarity with key philosophical doctrines of Immanuel Kant and their continuing influence
- Understanding of the evolution of aspects of Kant's thought across multiple texts
- Greater understanding of core issues and concepts in ethics and political philosophy, including theories of freedom, autonomy, practical reason, and moral progress
- Improved critical reading, writing, and speaking skills

Course Policies

- **Course Requirements**
 - Attendance, preparation, and participation: 15%
 - Peer reviews 15%
 - Mid-term Paper: 25%
 - Final Paper: 45%
- **Attendance and Participation:** Your attendance is required at all class meetings. Our meetings are primarily discussion-based and therefore depend on your participation. You are expected to read the assignments carefully before the class for which they are assigned, and to come to class prepared to discuss them (preferably with questions and/or notes written out). Always bring the reading for the day to class, as I will refer to specific passages. **Part of your participation grade will be based on how prepared you are to contribute to class discussions.**
- **Classroom Policies:** In order to promote our goals for the course, I ask that you respect the following class rules:

1. Always bring your book or article to class, as I will frequently refer to specific passages from our texts.
 2. Be respectful of me and others and refrain from texting, conversing, etc., during class. If you are texting or engaging in private conversation during class, I will ask you to leave, and you will be marked “absent” for the day.
 3. Wait to be recognized before speaking.
- Papers: Suggested topics for the papers will be assigned in advance. For the final paper, you are also allowed to write on a topic of your own choosing. However, if you design your own topic, you must have it approved by me at least two weeks in advance of the second paper workshop (Dec. 7th). I will discuss paper writing more when I distribute the topics. Please feel free to discuss a draft of your paper with me in advance of the due date. You can come to office hours or make an appointment. Late papers will lose a partial letter grade per day of lateness (i.e., A- to B+, B+ to B, and so forth).
 - The first paper will be due Tuesday, October 17th, and will be ~5 pages in length. A rough draft is due in class for the paper workshop, Tuesday, October 10th.
 - The second paper will be 8-10 pages in length. A rough draft is due on the last day of class for the second paper workshop. The final draft is due during final exam period.
 - Peer Reviews/Paper Workshops: Our class schedule designates two days as “paper workshops.” During these workshops, you will be required to read and comment on another student’s paper draft. The idea is that the process of giving and receiving paper feedback will help you improve your final drafts, and help you reflect on the writing process. I will provide more specific guidelines for peer reviews when I distribute the first paper assignment.
 - Grades: I will use the following scale to grade your assignments and calculate your final grade for the course:

A = 90 – 100%

B = 80 – 89%

C = 70 – 79%

D = 60 – 69%

F = below 60%

- Email: I will do my best to respond to your emails within 24 hours. That means that if you have a question about an assignment, you may not get a response if you write me the night before the assignment is due. In other words, ask questions well in advance of deadlines! If you send me an email and have not gotten a response within one or two days, feel free to re-send the message to bring it to my attention.
- Disabilities: If you have a documented disability and need special accommodations for this course, please contact Student Support Services at 410-455-3248. I will work

with you and SSS to make sure you receive the accommodations you need for success in the course.

- Academic Integrity:
 - As a member of UMBC's academic community, it is **your responsibility** to understand and abide by the following statement concerning Academic Integrity. Ignorance is not an excuse!
 - **UMBC Statement of Values for Academic Integrity**
By enrolling in this course, each student assumes the responsibilities of an active participant in UMBC's scholarly community in which everyone's academic work and behavior are held to the highest standards of honesty. Cheating, fabrication, plagiarism, and helping others to commit these acts are all forms of academic dishonesty, and they are wrong. Academic misconduct could result in disciplinary action that may include, but is not limited to, suspension or dismissal. To read the full Student Academic Conduct Policy, consult the [UMBC Student Handbook](#), or the [Office of Undergraduate Education](#).
- Required Texts: The following texts are available for purchase at the campus book store:
 - Immanuel Kant, *Practical Philosophy*, Mary Gregor, ed., Cambridge University Press, 1996
- In addition to this book, I will put a number of articles and selections from Kant's other works on the library's E-Reserve system in .pdf format.

Schedule of Readings (Tentative! subject to revision as necessary)

August 31(Th): Course Introduction: Kant's Transcendental Idealism

Part 1: Freedom and Morality

 31 (T): *Critique of Practical Reason* (5: 1-15)
September 2 (Th): *Critique of Practical Reason* (5: 17-29)

 7 (T): *Critique of Practical Reason* (5: 29-41)
 9 (Th): *Critique of Practical Reason* (5: 42-57)

 14 (T): *Religion* (6:19-32)
 16 (Th): *Metaphysics of Morals* (6: 211-219)

Part II: The Postulates: God, Freedom, Immortality of the Soul

 21 (T): *Critique of Practical Reason* (5: 110-121)
 23 (Th): *Critique of Practical Reason* (5: 122-131)

 28 (T): *Critique of Practical Reason* (5: 132-141)
 30 (Th): Paper #1 Workshop; bring your drafts!

October 5 (T): *Critique of the Power of Judgment*, "Introduction" (5:171-186) (E-

Reserve)
7 (Th): *Critique of the Power of Judgment*, “Introduction” (5:186-195) (E-Reserve)

Part III: Political and Legal Philosophy

12 (T): Reidar Maliks, *Kant’s Politics in Context*, Introduction (E-Reserve)

14 (Th): On the common saying, Parts I and II

19 (T): On the common saying, Parts III

21 (Th): *Metaphysics of Morals* (6:229-242)

26 (T): *Metaphysics of Morals* (6: 243-255)

28 (Th): *Metaphysics of Morals* (6: 255-270)

November 2 (T): *Metaphysics of Morals* (6:311-322)

4 (Th): *Metaphysics of Morals* (6:343-355)

Part IV: International Right, History, and Progress

9 (T): Idea for a universal history (E-reserve)

11 (Th): *Perpetual Peace* (8: 341-348)

16 (T): *Perpetual Peace* (8: 348-360)

18 (Th): *Perpetual Peace* (8: 361-369)

23 (T): *Perpetual Peace* (8: 370-385)

25 (Th): Lea Ypi, “Commerce and Colonialism in Kant’s Philosophy of History” (E-Reserve)

30 (T): Pauline Kleingeld, “Kant’s Second Thoughts on Colonialism” (E-reserve)

December 2 (Th): Catch-up day and/or Course retrospective

7 (T): Paper Workshop #2

Final Exam Period: Paper #2 Due