

PHIL5150/7150
Topics in Western Philosophy: Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit*
Course Outline

Time : Mon 13:30-16:15

Location : UCC 205

Office: 426 Fung King Hey Building

Office Hours: TBD

Course overview

In this course we will engage in a close reading and study of Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit*, the foundational work of Hegel's own corpus, as well as a foundational text in the history of phenomenology. Immensely influential in the history of Western philosophy, the *Phenomenology of Spirit* charts the education of consciousness from sensory awareness all the way to Absolute knowing. Indeed—long before Husserl embarked upon a pre-suppositionless phenomenology, in the early 19th century Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit* paved the way for a science free of foundations—a science that still has relevance and import for philosophy today in the 21st century.

Learning outcomes

1. To understand the historical context of Hegel's thought, in addition to the systematic development and trajectory of Hegel's thought.
2. To enhance one's ability to conduct independent research on Hegel's philosophy.
3. To connect Hegel's ideas to philosophical (historical and contemporary) problems in epistemology, ethics, aesthetics, philosophy of religion, philosophy of culture, and beyond.
4. To be able to *reconstruct* the arguments and dialectical movements of the *Phenomenology of Spirit*.
5. To understand and appreciate the historical impact and influence of a variety of Hegel's ideas in the *Phenomenology*.
6. To develop an understanding of the concept of *Geist* in Hegel's philosophy, and the relation of Hegel's *Phenomenology* to the other texts in Hegel's corpus.
7. To learn to think dialectically.

Topics

Sensation

Perception

Consciousness

Self-consciousness

Reason

Spirit

Ethics

Enlightenment

Culture

Art

Religion

Knowledge

Learning activities

Attend seminars and participate in discussions. Each seminar is approximately **2 hours and 45 minutes** (with a *15-minute pause* in the middle of the seminar).

Assessment scheme

<i>Task nature</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Weight</i>
Seminar Presentations (2x)	See Remarks.	50%
Seminar Paper	See Remarks.	50%

Grade Scale:

A: 87-100

A-: 80-86

B+: 77-79

B: 71-77

B-: 68-70

C+: 65-67%

C: 59-64%

C-: 56-58%

D+: 53-55%

D: 50-52%

F: < 5

Grade Criterion for Seminar Paper

A:

The student knows the authors positions, and proves this knowledge by knowing the argument(s) supporting the theses in the text. Student evidences self-initiated thinking and understanding of the arguments through his/her ability to present her own counter-arguments and possible replies to counter-arguments. The student exhibits thorough understanding of the relations of the themes presented in the various texts.

B:

The student knows the authors positions, and generally understands the arguments supporting them. Student has difficulty developing her own criticisms and rebuttals to criticism. The student exhibits relatively complete understanding of the relations of the themes presented in the various texts.

C:

The student shows the ability to properly relay information about the text and the positions contained therein, but has difficulty re-constructing the arguments, presenting counter-arguments, and criticism. Student has a difficulty understanding arguments. The student shows an incomplete understanding of the relations of the themes presented in the various texts.

D:

The student cannot explicate the positions or the arguments for such positions in the text. The student exhibits seriously incomplete understanding.

F:

The student exhibits all the failures mentioned under 'D'. The student earns an F by failing to complete the assignment.

Remarks:

Class Participation:

Attendance is mandatory and absence will damage your grades. **Two** unexcused absences are permitted. For each unexcused absence beyond two, one-half a letter grade will be deducted from your final grade. In case of emergencies, either notify me of your absence ahead of time, or plan to bring some formal documentation of your absence. Without documentation, I will not accept absences as excused.

Seminar Paper:

The term paper will require students to uncover a philosopher problem in one of the texts that we have read together and clearly explicate that problem. Following the explication of the problem, students should work through various solutions to the problem and clearly formulate their own thesis concerning that problem. I highly recommend that students use one of their seminar presentations as a possible groundwork for their seminar paper. The term paper requires students to consult and cite **at least two additional works of secondary literature** in addition to the required readings. The seminar paper should be **at least 12-15** double spaced pages.

Tutorial Presentation:

Each student will be assigned a portion of the text, and will present the content of the argument to the class. Each presentation should be **at least 20 minutes**, and should not only reconstruct the argument in the passage, but should also raise important philosophical questions and issues raised by the text. Students will be required to participate in the ensuing discussion.

Late Work/Make-Ups:

Late assignments will be penalized one-half a letter grade for each day the paper is tardy. If you would like a grade changed, you must provide me with a detailed written argument for why you think it should be changed, otherwise I will not consider it.

Required Texts

Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*

(Translated by A.V. Miller, Oxford UP)

Recommended learning resources

Richard Dien Winfield, *Hegel's Phenomenology of Spirit: A Critical Re-thinking in Seventeen Lectures*

Course schedule

<i>Week</i>	<i>Readings</i>	<i>Assignments</i>
1	Introduction (Preface/Introduction)	
2	Sense-Certainty	
3	Perception	
4	Force and Understanding	<i>Seminar Presentations</i>

5	Master and Slave (Lordship and Bondage)	<i>Seminar Presentations</i>
6	Freedom of Self-Consciousness	<i>Seminar Presentations</i>
7	Observing Reason	<i>Seminar Presentations</i>
8	Actualization of Self-Consciousness	<i>Seminar Presentations</i>
9	Reason as Individuality	<i>Seminar Presentations</i>
10	Spirit, Ethics, and Culture	<i>Seminar Presentations</i>
11	Enlightenment, Freedom and Terror	<i>Seminar Presentations</i>
12	Morality	<i>Seminar Presentations</i>
13	Religion	<i>Seminar Presentations</i>
14	Absolute Knowing	

Seminar Paper: Due Date **TBD**

Details of course website

We will use Blackboard for this course. Lecture notes and information on assignments and examinations will be posted on the website.

Contact details for teacher(s) or TA(s)

Teacher	
Name:	Moss, Gregory
Office location:	Room 426, Fung King Hey Building
Telephone:	3943 9875
Email:	gsmoss@cuhk.edu.hk

TA	
Name:	
Office location:	
Telephone:	
Email:	

Academic honesty and plagiarism

Attention is drawn to University policy and regulations on honesty in academic work, and to the disciplinary guidelines and procedures applicable to breaches of such policy and regulations. Details may be found at <http://www.cuhk.edu.hk/policy/academichonesty/>

With each assignment, students will be required to submit a signed declaration that they are aware of these policies, regulations, guidelines and procedures. For group projects, all students of the same group should be asked to sign the declaration.

For assignments in the form of a computer-generated document that is principally text-based and submitted via VeriGuide, the statement, in the form of a receipt, will be issued by the system upon students' uploading of the soft copy of the assignment. Assignments without the receipt will not be graded by teachers. Only the final version of the assignment should be submitted via VeriGuide.