

Bounds of Hope: Kant's Philosophy of Religion (original in Hebrew)

Section (0618.2864), Sunday 6-8PM, Gilman 307

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Course Description

In a famous passage in the *Critique of Pure Reason* Kant enumerates the three ultimate questions of Philosophy: 'What can I know? What should I do? What may I hope?' (B833). While Kant's contribution to the first two questions in Epistemology and Ethics is unquestionable, the lasting value of his account of the third question related to the justification of religious belief is more controversial. Yet this question was highly important for Kant and in a sense it unites the first two and the Kantian system as a whole. In light of the impossibility of knowledge of supersensible reality and the unconditioned duty of morality, how may we rationally hope to fulfill our moral vocation? The course will explore Kant's answer to the question of hope. After establishing the relevant background in Kant's epistemology and ethics, we will study and assess Kant's views on the critique of traditional rational theology; the moral 'proofs' for the existence of God and the immortality of the soul; the intricate interrelations between ethics, aesthetics and religion; the role and interpretation of revealed religion and the relation between religion and the historical purpose of humanity.

Required texts

Selections from the *Critique of Pure Reason*, *Groundwork To The Metaphysics Of Morals*, *Critique of Practical Reason*, *Critique of the Power of Judgment*, *Religion Within The Boundaries Of Mere Reason*, and others short essays by Kant and excerpts from early modern philosophers. Scans will be available on the VirtualTAU course site.

Course requirements

Reading of required texts

Attendance

4 response papers during the semester (10% each)

5-6 page Final paper due according to departmental deadlines (60%)

Schedule of Classes

Week 1, 11/3

Class introduction, the concept of hope

Week 2, 11/10

Critique of Pure Reason: The transcendental analytic and the conditions of the possibility of experience

Week 3, 11/17

Critique of Pure Reason: The transcendental dialectic and the critique of the theoretical proofs for

Week 4, 11/24

Critique of Pure Reason: The regulative use of the ideas of reason, theoretical and practical reason

Week 5, 12/1

Groundwork To The Metaphysics Of Morals: Freedom and the Moral law

Week 6, 12/8

Critique of Practical Reason: The highest good

Week 7, 12/15

Critique of Practical Reason: The postulates of practical reason, the moral proofs for the existence of God and the immortality of the soul

Week 8, 12/22

The Critique of the Power of Judgment: Reflective judgment and the purposiveness of nature

Week 9, 12/29

The Critique of the Power of Judgment: Aesthetic judgment, the beautiful and the sublime

Week 10, 1/5

The Critique of the Power of Judgment: Ethics and aesthetics

Week 11, 1/12

The Critique of the Power of Judgment: Teleology in nature and history, the moral end of creation and belief in God

Week 12, 1/19

Religion Within The Boundaries Of Mere Reason: Radical evil and moral transformation

Week 13, 1/26

Religion Within The Boundaries Of Mere Reason: Historical and rational religion, the ethical community and the final end of humanity