

Kant's Metaphysics



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Turn editing on

Instructor: Douglas Marshall (dmarshall@carleton.edu)







Meeting Times: Spring 2021, T TH 10:20 a.m. - 12:05 p.m.

Meeting Location: [Kant Zoom Classroom](#) (passcode: 517284)

Office Hours: Tuesdays, 2:30 - 3:50 p.m., Wednesdays, 5:00 - 6:00 p.m., and by appointment. Please book office hours meetings in [My Google Calendar Appointment Page](#). Office Hours take place in my [Office Hours Zoom Room](#) (passcode: 766127).

 [Some Major Questions Animating Early Modern Philosophy](#) Uploaded 16/03/21, 14:53

Hidden from students

-  [Kant Zoom Classroom](#)
-  [Office Hours Zoom Room](#)
-  [My Google Calendar Appointment Page](#)
-  [Course Syllabus](#) Uploaded 30/03/21, 09:28
-  [Announcements](#)
-  [Discussion Groups](#)
-  [Guidelines for Small Group Discussions](#)

Submit Papers Here

-  [First Essay](#) ☒
-  [\(Optional\) Rewritten First Essay](#)
-  [Seniors' Term Papers](#) ☒
-  [Term Papers from Non-Seniors](#) ☒

Take Quizzes Here

-  [Kant Quiz 1](#) ☒
-  [Kant Quiz 2](#) ☒

Resources for Writing Your Papers

-  [Term Paper Topic Forum](#) ☒
-  [Topics for the Term Paper](#) Uploaded 2/04/21, 14:41
-  [Topics for the First Essay](#) Uploaded 2/04/21, 16:35
-  [Tips on Writing Your Kant Papers](#) Uploaded 2/04/21, 16:27

 [Video on the Tips for Writing Your Kant Papers](#)

whoops: at 1:09, what I meant to say was "what Kant's philosophical system is"

 [What Grades Mean \(so far as your papers are concerned\)](#). Uploaded 2/04/21, 15:19

 [Allen Wood "What Dead Philosophers Mean"](#)

Course Notes for Early Modern and Kant

 [Course Notes for Early Modern Philosophy 2019](#) Uploaded 13/04/19, 10:46

 [Course Notes for Kant's Critique of Pure Reason 2016](#)

Launchpad for Further Reading and Research

 [Selected Secondary Literature on the First Critique](#)

 [Carleton College Philosophy Department](#)

 [Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy](#)

 [PhilPapers](#)

One of the two major databases of philosophy papers (and books).

 [Philosopher's Index \(Carleton Access\)](#)

The other major database of philosophy papers (and books).

 [Project Gutenberg \(Kant\)](#)

Great source for free e-texts, including by Kant and other philosophers. Probably the easiest way to do string search in the Critique of Pure Reason in English, though you have to know a bit about the translator's choices.

 [Librivox \(Kant\)](#)

Free open source audio versions of Kant and other authors.

 [Kant's Collected Works \(in German\)](#)

 [Do Searches over Kant's Collected Works \(German\)](#)

 [String Searchable Collection of Works by David Hume](#)

[Week 1]

Readings and Activities for Tuesday:

1. Read Kant's Letter to Marcus Herz of February 1772, from the words "I had long ago outlined, to my tolerable satisfaction" on p. 71 to the words "I should be in a position to publish it within three months" on p. 73 (3 pages).

Questions for the reader: What question does Kant identify as the key to the secret of metaphysics? What possible answers to that question does Kant entertain? What answers does Kant explicitly reject?

2. Read The Preface to the A Edition of Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason* (pp. 99 – 105; 7 pages).

Questions for the reader: How does Kant portray the history of philosophy leading up to him? What does Kant think metaphysics is? What does Kant tell us "critique of pure reason" means?

3. Read Chapter 1 of Gardner's *Guidebook to Kant and the Critique of Pure Reason* (26 pages). If you're short on time, prioritize Kant over Gardner.

4. Please fill out an [Interest Sheet](#) letting me know about you and your interest in this course. This information will help me create groups for small group discussions.

Readings and Activities for Thursday:

1. Read The Preface to the B Edition of Kant's Critique until the words "Concerning this second edition" (pp. 106 - 120; 15 pages)

Questions for the Reader: How does Kant propose to revolutionize metaphysics (on analogy with the way he thinks the Greeks revolutionized mathematics, and various natural scientists, such as Copernicus, revolutionized their fields)? Why does Kant propose that we distinguish between things considered as they appear to us and things as they are in themselves? What---at least in outline---is Kant's solution to the problem of free will?

2. Read Chapter 2 of Gardner (23 pages).

See below for PDFs of all the readings for this week.

 [Kant's Letter to Marcus Herz, February 1772](#)

 [Kant's Critique of Pure Reason -- Prefaces and Introduction](#)

 [Gardner Chapters 1 and 2](#)

 [Course Notes 1](#) Uploaded 10/04/19, 13:47

 [Course Notes 2](#) Uploaded 10/04/19, 13:48

 [Interest Sheet](#)



Dive Deeper // Optional Extras

 [Video: Kant on Metaphysical Knowledge](#)

Recordings from Class Meetings

 [Video of the First Meeting](#)

 [Video of the Second Meeting](#)

 [Chat Logs from Thursday's Meeting](#)

[Week 2]

Readings for Tuesday and Thursday:

1. Read the End of the Preface of the Critique starting with the words "Concerning this Second Edition" (pp. 120-124; 4 pages)

Questions for the Reader: How does Kant describe the difference between the first (1781) and second (1787) editions of his book? What exactly does it mean to leave the propositions argued for, and the arguments for them, unchanged, while changing the presentation? Which parts of the book does Kant inform us he has changed?

Note: There is a long and difficult footnote on pp. 121 to 122. Really this footnote is a change and supplement to the part of the work Kant calls "The Refutation of Idealism". It does make sense to read it quickly now, but we will come back to the content of the footnote when we are actually reading the part of the *Critique* to which it belongs. Don't get hung up on it now.

2. Read the Introduction of the Critique (pp. 136 - 152; 17 pages).

Questions for the Reader: How does Kant draw the distinction between the *a priori* and the *a posteriori*? What assures Kant that there is *a priori* knowledge? How does Kant draw the distinction between *analytic* and *synthetic* judgments? Why does Kant identify the problem of pure reason as being the problem of how synthetic *a priori* judgments are possible? What is the connection between Kant's metaphysics and synthetic *a priori* judgments?

3. Read Chapter 3 of Gardner (13 pages)

 [Course Notes 3](#) Uploaded 10/04/19, 13:49

 [Course Notes 4](#) Uploaded 12/04/19, 14:39

Dive Deeper // Optional Extras

 [Kant's Stepladder Passage](#)

 [Stephenson Critique of Pure Reason Diagram](#)

 [Video: Kant on Metaphysical Knowledge](#)

Recordings from Class Meetings

 [Video of the Third Meeting](#)

 [Chat Logs from Tuesday's Meeting](#)

 [Video of the Fourth Meeting](#)

 [Chat Logs from Thursday's Meeting](#)

[Week 3]

Readings and Activities for Tuesday:

1. Read Kant, "Transcendental Aesthetic" , pp. 172-176, 178-180, and "Doctrine of the Method", pp. 628-643. (Kant page count = 24)

Questions for the Reader: What does Kant think space and time are? What is Kant's account of mathematical knowledge? What is Kant's account of the way philosophical method contrasts with mathematical method?

2. Read Gardner, Chapter 4, "The Sensible Conditions of Objects (The Aesthetic)", pp. 65-85. (Gardner page count = 21)

3. Please come to Tuesday's meeting with some response to the Kant readings you can contribute to your group discussions (such as a question, an objection, or a thought stimulated in a clear way by Kant's text). I'm imagining you can start your discussions by each member making some contribution and pasting it into the chat log.

Readings for Activities for Thursday:

1. There is no new reading for Thursday. If you have extra time to read, you may just want to finish up the Transcendental Aesthetic. Either way, please come to Thursday's meeting with some response to the Kant readings you can contribute to your group discussions (such as a question, an objection, or a thought stimulated in a clear way by Kant's text).

2. By the end of the day on Friday, you'll need to take the First Kant Quiz. The quiz will cover all the readings in Kant up to and including the reading for Tuesday. No reason to procrastinate: you might as well take the quiz on Thursday.

 [Course Notes 5](#) Uploaded 16/04/19, 08:04

 [Course Notes 6](#) Uploaded 24/04/19, 21:17

Dive Deeper // Optional Extras

 [Charles Parsons "The Transcendental Aesthetic"](#)

This is another very good commentary on Kant's "Transcendental Aesthetic". I especially recommend those parts where Parsons discusses the arguments of the Metaphysical Expositions of Space and Time and considers objections to Kant's arguments.

Recordings from Class Meetings

 [Video of the Fifth Meeting](#)

 [Chat Logs from Tuesday's Meeting](#)

 [Video of the Sixth Meeting](#)

 [Chat Logs from Thursday's Meeting](#)

[Week 4]

Readings and Activities for Tuesday:

1. By today, please be sure you've chosen a topic for your [first essay](#), read the [Tips on Writing Your Kant Papers](#), and watched the [Video on the Tips for Writing Your Kant Papers](#). You should also have at least a sketch or outline of your essay.
2. Read Kant "Transcendental Aesthetic" , pp. 176 -192. In other words, by today you should have read the entirety of the B edition "Transcendental Aesthetic".

Questions for the Reader: What exactly does Kant mean by calling space and time "empirically real" yet "transcendentally ideal"? How does Kant use our geometrical knowledge to argue for the transcendental ideality of space? What other arguments is he offering in order to establish his transcendental idealism with respect to space and time? Is Kant saying that things in themselves aren't spatial, or just that we don't know whether they are spatial? Why do Kant's readers find it so much easier to accept that space is transcendently ideal than to accept that time is transcendently ideal?

3. Read Gardner, Chapter 5, pp. 87 - 113. (Gardner page count = 26.)
4. It's always good to come to class with some question, statement of understanding, objection, or thought that you've formulated in response to your reading of Kant's text. In the offline course, students often come to class with little scraps of paper where they've written something down they can add to our discussion. In this online course, I'm imagining that students start off their group discussions by going in a circle and sharing individual responses before diving deeper into some topic(s). I won't keep reminding you about this, however.

Readings and Activities for Thursday:

1. Read Gardner, Chapter 8, pp. 269-305. (Gardner page count = 37).
2. Remember that your first essays are due by the end of this week. Be sure to look at the submission module for submission instructions.

 [Course Notes 7](#) Uploaded 24/04/19, 21:18

 [Course Notes 8](#) Uploaded 24/04/19, 22:01

Dive Deeper // Optional Extras

 [Wi-Phi.com Video Series on Kant's Argument from Geometry](#)

These videos give a good, though somewhat simplified, account of Kant's argument from geometry. If that sounds interesting, then have a look. The videos do presuppose you watched the earlier video on synthetic a priori knowledge.

Recordings from Class Meetings

 [Video of the Seventh Meeting](#)

 [Chat Logs from Tuesday's Meeting](#)

 [Video of the Eighth Meeting](#)

 [Chat Logs from Thursday's Meeting](#)

[Week 5]

Readings and Activities for Tuesday:

1. Read Kant's Critique [Transcendental Logic and the Categories], pp. 193–218 (Kant page count =25)
2. Read Gardner, From Chapter 6, pp. 115–135. (Gardner page count = 21)

There are no new readings or activities for Thursday.

Update: In class we did a [Midterm Evaluation](#). If you didn't finish an evaluation in class, please do submit one by the end of the day Thursday.

Questions for the reader: The big question driving this week really is “What is Kant’s account of how we possess pure concepts?” Here again, I think it is useful to keep in mind an empiricist opponent of Kant who believes that all concepts must be derived from human experience. We want to understand how Kant might reply to this empiricist opponent.

In trying to answer the big question, it is useful to consider the following questions: “What is Kant’s conception of general logic, and how does he contrast it with transcendental logic? What are the different logical forms of the judgments Kant recognizes? How exactly do the logical forms of judgment correspond to pure concepts of the understanding? What does the mind do to the manifold of intuition in order to achieve pure concepts? What exactly are the pure concepts of the understanding according to Kant?”



[Course Notes 9](#) Uploaded 1/05/19, 09:06



[Course Notes 10](#) Uploaded 3/05/19, 12:59



[Midterm Evaluation](#)



Please use this module to submit a midterm evaluation for our course. The evaluations are anonymous (so please don't include your name in your answers).

Dive Deeper // Optional Extras**Recordings from Class Meetings**

[Video of the Ninth Meeting](#)



[Chat Logs from Tuesday's Meeting](#)



[Video of the Tenth Meeting](#)



[Chat Logs from Thursday's meeting](#)

[Week 6]**Readings and Activities for Tuesday:**

1. Read Kant's Critique [Transcendental Deduction <A>] , pp. 219–244. Kant page count = 26
2. Read sections from Gardner, Chapter 6 (pp. 135–165). Gardner page count = 31.

Reader beware: Reading all the way through Kant's Transcendental Deduction has been likened (by H.J. Paton) to crossing the Great Arabian Desert on foot. These 26 pages are very, very dense.

Questions for the reader: What does Kant mean by a “transcendental deduction” of the categories (a.k.a. the pure concepts of the understanding)? What is Kant trying to prove about the categories that he hasn’t already proved in previous parts of the *Critique*? What are the various roles in Kant’s argument being played by the cognitive faculties of sense, imagination, understanding, and self-consciousness (apperception)? Why did Kant feel the need to delete this part of the *Critique* and rewrite it for the B Edition?

Readings and Activities for Thursday

1. There are no new readings for Thursday.
2. By the end of the day on Thursday, please use the moodle forum below to submit your term paper topic. If you're working on one of the topics I wrote up, it's enough just to mention that topic by name and number (see [Topics for the Term Paper](#)). If you're working on your own topic, please just explain that topic in a few sentences. If you're working on your own topic, I also encourage you to meet with me to discuss it.

 [Course Notes 11](#) Uploaded 7/05/19, 16:46

 [Course Notes 12](#) Uploaded 10/05/19, 11:03

Recordings from Class Meetings

 [Video of the Eleventh Meeting](#)

 [Video of the Twelfth Meeting](#)

 [Chat Logs from Tuesday's and Thursday's Meetings](#)

[Week 7]

Readings and Activities for Tuesday:

1. Read Kant's Critique [Transcendental Deduction], pp. 245-266. Kant page count = 21.

Questions for the Reader: What are the differences between the A Edition and B Edition Transcendental Deductions? Are they making fundamentally the same argument with just some differences in presentation, or has Kant's argument changed in substantive ways? Is Kant's B Edition argument safer from the objection that he is merely presenting a hypothesis about cognition such that the reader is free to hold a different hypothesis? Is it safer from the objection that Kant is an extreme idealist who views the objects of our experience as mere representations?

Readings and Activities for Thursday:

1. Read [Paul Guyer "Space, Time, and the Categories"](#). Guyer page count = 25.

As a reminder, if you'd like to hand in an [\(Optional\) Rewritten First Essay](#), it is due on Friday, May 14, but you have until the end of the weekend to submit your paper with no penalty for lateness.

 [Paul Guyer "Space, Time, and the Categories"](#)

 [Course Notes 13](#) Uploaded 16/05/19, 17:02

 [Course Notes 14](#) Uploaded 16/05/19, 17:03

Recordings from Class Meetings

 [Video of the Thirteenth Meeting](#)

 [Chat Logs from Tuesday's Meeting](#)

 [Video of the Fourteenth Meeting](#)

 [Chat Logs from Thursday's Meeting](#)

[Week 8]

Readings and Activities for Tuesday:

1. Read Kant's *Critique* [The Schematism, Axioms of Intuition, and Anticipations of Perception], pp. 267-295 (Kant page count = 29).
2. Read Gardner pp. 165-171 and 196-197 (Gardner page count = 9).

Questions for the reader about the Schematism: What are schemata? Why does Kant think it is necessary to introduce them? What is the difference between the schematized and unschematized categories? For each of the schematized categories, what is the condition of its application?

Questions for the reader about the System of Principles: What are the principles that make up the system? What is Kant's manner of trying to establish the principles?

Questions for the reader about the Axioms of Intuition and Anticipations of Perception: What sort of account of the applicability of mathematics is Kant trying to establish in these sections? What is Kant's account of the representation of space / spatial magnitudes? How are the arguments of these sections supposed to establish their principles?

Readings and Activities for Thursday:

1. There are no new readings for Thursday.
2. By the end of the day on Friday, you'll need to take the Second Kant Quiz. The quiz will cover all the readings in Kant up to and including the reading for Tuesday. No reason to procrastinate: you might as well take the quiz on Thursday.



[Course Notes 15](#) Uploaded 20/05/19, 16:32



[Course Notes 16](#) Uploaded 24/05/19, 11:31

Dive Deeper // Optional Extras



[Daniel Sutherland "The Point of Kant's Axioms of Intuition"](#)

This is an optional reading that offers a lot of insight into Kant's "Axioms of Intuition"; it is also relevant to those of you working on Kant's account of the representation of space.

Recordings from Class Meetings



[Video of the Fifteenth Meeting](#)



[Chat Logs from Tuesday's Meeting](#)



[Video of the Sixteenth Meeting](#)



[Chat Logs from Thursday's Meeting](#)

[Week 9]

Readings and Activities for Tuesday and Thursday:

1. Read Kant's *Critique* [The Analogies of Experience] pp. 295-321 (Kant page count = 26).
2. Read Gardner, pp. 171-179. (Gardner page count = 9.)

My best guess is that we'll end up discussing the general problem of time determinations and the First Analogy on Tuesday, the Second and Third Analogies on Thursday. But the Analogies of Experience are all very closely related, so I think it makes sense to read them together.

Questions for the Reader: How does Kant understand the problem of determining the order of events in time? What is the difference between the order of apprehension and the order of the appearances? How does my cognition of either of those temporal orders contribute to my cognition of the other order? Why do empirical time determinations need to be subjected to a priori rules of time determination? Does Kant manage to prove *a priori* that every event has a cause? Does Kant manage to establish the legitimacy of representing necessary connections among causes and their effects?

Readings and Activities for Thursday

There are no new readings or activities for Thursday. I imagine we'll be discussing the Second and Third Analogies in class.

 [Course Notes 17](#) Uploaded 31/05/19, 14:17

 [Course Notes 18](#) Uploaded 31/05/19, 14:17

Dive Deeper // Optional Extras

 [Van Cleve Problems From Kant Analogies of Experience](#)

This is highly recommended reading for anyone working on Kant's theory of time determinations, also for anyone working on Kant's reply to Hume on causation.

Recordings from Class Meetings

 [Video of the Seventeenth Meeting](#)

 [Chat Logs from Tuesday's Meeting](#)

 [Video of the Eighteenth Meeting](#)

 [Chat Logs from Thursday's Meeting](#)

[Week 10]**Reading and Activities for Tuesday:**

1. Read Kant's Critique [Refutation of Idealism, Fourth Paralogism <A>, Phenomena and Noumena] pp. 321-337, 425-431, 354-365. (Kant page count = 36)

Questions for the Reader about the Postulates: How does Kant define possibility, actuality, and necessity? Kant makes a lot of claims in the *Critique* about conditions of the possibility of experience: are those claims consistent with his definitions here? In light of Kant's definitions of possibility and necessity, what inferences involving those notions should Kant consider to be logically valid?

Questions for the Reader about the remaining readings: Which varieties of idealism is Kant attempting to refute? (Hint: it better not include transcendental idealism, since that is Kant's own view!) How does Kant connect my experience of myself in time with the existence of objects outside me? What does Kant's argument show about the relationship between inner and outer sense? What exactly are these objects outside me in space, the existence of which Kant is proving? How is Kant's proof in the Refutation different from, or better than, his argument in the Fourth Paralogism?

2. Read Gardner pp. 188-196, 198-208. (Gardner page count = 20)

3. Fill out an End of Term Evaluation.

Reminder: Final Papers are due Saturday, June 5, though in light of my extensions policy you have until the end of final exam period to hand in the final paper with no penalty for lateness. The assignment modules to hand in your papers are near the top of this page. Seniors, please use the module for seniors, and everyone else, please use the module for non-seniors.

 [Course Notes 19](#) Uploaded 6/06/19, 13:31

 [End-of-Term Evaluation](#)

**Dive Deeper // Optional Extras**

 [René Descartes First and Second Meditations](#) Uploaded 1/06/21, 09:49

In the Refutation of Idealism, Kant is addressing the situation of the Meditator especially during the Second Meditation (though other parts of the Meditations, including the Sixth Meditation, are relevant to get a fuller picture).



[Dina Emundts "The Refutation of Idealism"](#)

This is a very helpful secondary reading, especially for those of you working on Kant's Refutation of Idealism and the Fourth Paralogism.

Recordings from Class Meetings



[Video of the Nineteenth Meeting](#)



[Chat Logs from Tuesday's Meeting](#)

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