

Major Philosophers II, 460, 3 credits; CRN 3068

Topic for the 2012 Winter Term: Philosophy, *Hegel's Phenomenology of Spirit*

2 sessions per week, 90 minutes each (Tue. & Thu. 2:35–3:55)

Location: Lea 31

Prerequisite, 107-366 (German Idealism) or the equivalent

Professor George di Giovanni, Leacock 930, 514-398-6062

george.di_giovanni@mcgill.ca (office hours to be posted on my door)

Evaluation based on two papers (50% each); late papers without excuse will be penalized by ½ mark per lecture-day delay.

Description:

An in depth reading of the Introduction, the first four chapters, and chapters six and seven of Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit* (1807). I shall first give a brief historical account, according to most recent scholarship on the subject, of how the *Phenomenology* was produced. Against this historical background I shall raise the conceptual issue—which will be our primary concern—of the nature of the *Phenomenology* as a philosophical work. Is the *Phenomenology* a misguided attempt at *a priori* history? Is it psychology? philosophical myth? what? The most obvious answer is that the *Phenomenology* is Hegel's introduction to his science of logic. But then we must understand what Hegel means by 'reason', and why he must turn to a historical account of the development of 'rationality' in order to define its nature.

This is a course that I give regularly, but each year I stress a different aspect of this very complex work of Hegel. For 2012, I plan to concentrate on the *Phenomenology* as a critique of Romantic subjectivism. Crucial to this criticism is Hegel's concept of Religion which he develops throughout the work but takes up formally only in Chapter VII.

Students will be expected to have read assigned texts for each session and to participate in class discussion.

Syllabus

The following is a tentative list of readings to be done in preparation for each class. References are to the paragraph numbers of the *Phenomenology of Spirit* as indicated in the translation by A.V. Miller (Oxford: Clarendon, 1977). Students will be marked on two papers, of about 2,000 word each. Each paper should consist of a **detailed** and **intelligent** exposition of any of the portions of text listed below. Students must demonstrate comprehension. The dates on which

the papers are due are indicated below.

Students should devote their time primarily to the reading of Hegel's text. There are many commentaries available, the best known of which I have listed below. They are all valuable in some respect, but they all also fail by giving too much of a one-sided reading of Hegel's text. They should be used with a critical mind. H.S. Harris's two-volume commentary (over 2,000 pages strong) of Hegel's *Phenomenology* (*Hegel's Ladder*, Hackett 1997) is by far the best commentary to date and I shall rely heavily on it. I was not however able to order copies at the bookstore because of its cost. Students interested in acquiring a copy should place an order for it individually at the bookstore as soon as possible. I also strongly recommend Harris's earlier short introduction to the *Phenomenology* (118 pages), *Hegel: Phenomenology and System* (Hackett, 1995). The *Blackwell Guide to Hegel's Phenomenology of Spirit* contains an impressive list of articles on every aspect of Hegel's work. A paper-back edition is available. H. S. Harris's Commentary as well as the Blackwell Guide will be on the reserve shelf in the library. Another recent book that would be of help is *The Cambridge Companion to Hegel and Nineteenth Century Philosophy*.

January:

10, introductory lecture

12, introductory lecture

17, introductory lecture

19, §§ 73-110

24, §§ 11-148

26, §§ 149-165

31, §§ 166-167

February

2, §§ 178-196

7, §§ 197-230

9, lecture on Chapter 5

14, §§ 438-463

16, §§ 464-476

28, §§ 477-485 — **First paper due**

March

1, §§ 486-526

6, §§ 527-537

8, §§ 538-561
 13, §§ 562-581
 15, §§ 582-615
 20, §§ 616-631
 22, §§ 632-651
 27, §§ 652-664
 29, §§ 665-671

April

3, §§ 672-683
 5, §§ 684-747
 10, §§ 748-787
 12, Concluding lecture — **Second paper due**

Some commentaries:

Frederick Beiser, *Hegel* (200) – paper-back; very readable (not always reliable)

Emil Fackenheim, *The Religious Dimension of Hegel's Thought* (1967)

Joseph C. Flay, *Hegel's Quest for Certainty* (SUNY, 1984).

H.S. Harris, *Hegel's Development, Night Thoughts (Jena 1801-1806)*, (the years leading up to the Phenomenology) (Oxford, 1983). See also the reference in the course description above.

Rudolph Haym, *Hegel und seine Zeit* (Berlin, 1857) (an old standard commentary).

Theodor Häring, *Hegel: Sein Wollen und sein Werk* (Leipzig, 1929).

Stephen Houlgate, *An Introduction to Hegel: Freedom, Truth, and History* (2005).

Jean Hyppolite, *Genèse et structure de la Phénoménologie de l'esprit* (Paris, 1946). (There is an English translation).

Howard Kainz, *Hegel's Phenomenology: Analysis and Commentary* (Alabama, 1976).

Alexandre Kojève, *Introduction a la lecture de Hegel* (Paris, 1947). (Parts have been translated into English).

Otto Pöggeler, *Hegels Idee einer Phänomenologie des Geistes* (München, 1973)

Karl Rosenkranz, *Kritische Erläuterungen des Hegel'schen Systems* (Königsbergn 1840) (old standard commentary).

Rober C. Solomon, *In the Spirit of Hegel* (Oxford, 1983) (not very reliable—very much Nietzschean in spirit).

Jon Stewart, *The Hegel Myth and Legends* (Evanston, Ill.: Northwestern, 1996)

Jon Stewart, *The Phenomenology of Spirit Reader: Critical and Interpretative Essays* (Albany: SUNY, 1996).

Charles Taylor, *Hegel* (Cambridge, 1975).

Merold Westphal, *History and Truth in Hegel's Phenomenology* (Humanities, 1979).

Merold Westphal, *Method and Speculation in Hegel's Phenomenology* (Humanities, 1982).

GENERAL HISTORY:

G. di Giovanni and H. S. Harris, *Between Kant and Hegel* (SUNY, 1985): The introductory essay, "The Facts of Consciousness."

G. di Giovanni, "The First Twenty Years of Critique: The Spinoza Connection" in *The Cambridge Companion to Kant* (Cambridge, 1992).

G. di Giovanni, *Freedom and Religion in Kant and His Early Successors: The Vocation of Humankind, 1775–1800* (Cambridge: University Press, 2005)

There are good English translations of the early works of Fichte and Schelling.

McGill University values academic integrity. Therefore all students must understand the

meaning and consequences of cheating, plagiarism and other academic offences under the Code of Student Conduct and Disciplinary Procedures (see <http://www.mcgill.ca/integrity> for more information).

In accord with McGill University Charter of Students Rights, students in this course have the right to submit in English or in French any written work that is to be graded.