Major Philosophers II, 460, 3 credits

Topic for the 2017 Fall Term: Philosophy, Hegel’s *Phenomenology of Spirit*

2 sessions per week, 90 minutes each (Tue. & Thu. 14:35-15:55)
Location: Leacock 210
Prerequisite, 107-366 (German Idealism) or the equivalent
Professor George di Giovanni, Leacock 930
    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.

Students will be expected to have read assigned texts for each session and to participate in class discussion. The main text is G.W.F. Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, tr. A.V. Miller (Oxford: Clarendon, 1977). Course marks will be based on two papers of about 2,000 words each due respectively on October 26 and December 7. Each paper should consist of a detailed and intelligent exposition of a text in the *Phenomenology* chosen in consultation with the instructor.

Students should concentrate their reading on Hegel’s own text. However, below is a list of selected reading sources. I shall discuss them in class. The literature of the *Phenomenology* is enormous but uneven in quality.

Di Giovanni, George. “How Necessary Is the Phenomenology for Hegel’s Logic.” Accessed October 11, 2016:
http://george.digiovanni.ca/Papers/How%20Necessary%20is%20the%20Phenomenology%20for%20Hegel’s%20Logic.pdf.


I shall post texts on MyCourses as indicated by the various topics.

Below is a tentative list of topics based on the assumption of thirteen full teaching weeks.

Week 1. General Introduction: How to read the Phenomenology.

Week 2. General Introduction: How to read the Phenomenology, continued.

Week 3. Schemata of consciousness: sense-certainty; perception; understanding.

Week 4. Schemata of consciousness: sense-certainty; perception; understanding, continued.

Week 5. Schemata of self-consciousness.


Week 7. A summary of Section V: Reason.

Week 8. The ethical order.

Week 9. Culture.

Week 10. The enlightenment.

Week 11. Morality.

Week 12. Hegel and Religion.

Week 13. The meaning of “absolute knowledge”: back to the Preface.

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 the event of extraordinary circumstances beyond the University’s control, the content and/or evaluation scheme in this course is subject to change.

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.