

## Hegel's Phenomenology of Spirit

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**Office Hours: M 3-5**  
**and by appointment**  
**PLC 331**

**PHIL 453/553 CRN 35556**  
**MW 10-11:50**  
**FEN 105**

### **Course Description:**

In this course, we will read Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit* as an introduction to his theory of determinacy (his 'metaphysics'), which we will see relies on a theory of modernity. In the *Phenomenology*, Hegel sets out to transform what he took to be the most compelling insights of Kant's critical philosophy. He does so by showing that the norms that provide determinacy to our experience in the world are socio-historical institutions, and that the fact that such norms have a grip on us has to do with normative authority. We will therefore track Hegel's views on the relation between normativity and authority in his theory of concepts, action, morality, and history. More than providing an account of authoritative norms, however, Hegel is interested in tracking the way in which norms lose their authority over us. We will thus pay particular attention to the prevalent role of negativity, loss, and diremption in Hegel's theory of determinacy. As we advance in our reading, we shall compare and contrast various interpretive perspectives on the text, such as epistemological, historicist, ethical, and feminist readings of the *Phenomenology*. Knowledge of Kant, while not required, will be most helpful.

### **Required Text:**

1. G.W.F. Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, trans. A.V. Miller (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press). The text has been ordered and is available at the Duckstore.

Graduate students with reading knowledge of German are encouraged to refer to the original *Phänomenologie des Geistes*, ed. E. Moldenhauer and K.M. Michel, *Werke in zwanzig Bänden*, vol. 3. Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp Verlag, 1969. You may order the text on amazon.de.

Terry Pinkard's unpublished translation of the *Phenomenology* – including the German text – is available online: [http://web.mac.com/titpaul/Site/Phenomenology\\_of\\_Spirit\\_page.html](http://web.mac.com/titpaul/Site/Phenomenology_of_Spirit_page.html). It is also a helpful resource.

### **Secondary Texts:**

Students are required to read at least one commentary alongside Hegel's text. See below for list. Recommended secondary sources marked \* are on reserve at Knight. Recommended secondary sources marked \*\* are on Blackboard.

### **Course Structure and Requirements:**

#### **Attendance:**

You are expected to attend classes regularly and promptly. More than 3 absences will result in a failing final grade, unless proof of illness or emergency is provided. If you are absent, please email me to inquire about readings for the next class and assignments.

#### **Participation:**

The lecture will presuppose familiarity with the assigned readings for the class session. Having read the assigned text and coming prepared to participate in class discussion are requirements.

**Commentaries:**

You will hand in 3 3-page commentaries on specific sections of the text. You must merely *explain* the section of Hegel's text that you have chosen. You should *not* respond to the argument critically or constructively – the commentary should be merely *exegetical*.

**Prospectus:**

You will submit a one-page prospectus stating the topic of your paper and the argument that you intend to pursue. Graduate students must include an annotated bibliography with at least 3 secondary sources that you intend to use.

**Final Paper:**

*Undergraduate Students:* This 2,000 wd. paper should develop further—both exegetically and critically—one of your commentaries.

*Graduate Students:* This 3,000 wd. paper should develop a thesis about a section or problem in Hegel's *Phenomenology*. You must situate your thesis within relevant secondary literature. Engaging secondary sources is a *requirement*.

**Guidelines for papers:**

- clarity: the paper should have a clearly defined topic and focus.
- accuracy: the paper should present an author's position in a fair way.
- assessment: the paper should evaluate the author's position, and bring to bear on the text or issue your own view; you must defend your view.

Please see schedule of readings for due dates. All papers are due by 2pm at the Philosophy Department (box at the counter). Undergraduate students must also submit the paper electronically via SafeAssign. No late papers will be accepted, unless accompanied by proof of illness or emergency.

All of your work must be typewritten (12 pt. font, Times New Roman, double-spaced). You will be expected to cite philosophical texts that you are quoting, paraphrasing, or using as reference appropriately, including secondary literature and online resources.

**Statement on Plagiarism:**

Plagiarism is the intentional or unintentional unacknowledged use of someone else's work as one's own in all forms of academic endeavor (such as essays, theses, examinations, research data, creative projects, and so on). Plagiarized material may be derived from books, journals, Internet postings, student or faculty papers, and so on including the purchase or "outsourcing" of written assignments for a course. *Plagiarism is grounds for failing the course.* For more information, see <http://www.libweb.uoregon.edu/guides/plagiarism/students/>.

**Grading Standard:**

- A = excellent. No mistakes, well-written, and distinctive in some way or other.
- B = good. No significant mistakes, well-written, but not distinctive in any way.
- C = OK. Some errors, but basic grasp of the material.
- D = poor. Several errors. A tenuous grasp of the material.
- F = failing. Problematic on all fronts indicating either no real grasp of the material or complete lack of effort.

**Grading:**

Class participation	10%
Commentaries (3)	30% (10% each)
Prospectus	10%
Final paper	50%

**Accommodation for a Disability:**

If you have a documented disability and anticipate needing accommodations in this course, please make arrangements to meet with me soon.

**Note on Recording Sessions:**

You must request permission to record any session in writing – via email. I will only allow you to record if you agree that the recording is for personal use and will not be disseminated – e.g.: posted online, sent as an email attachment to others, etc.

**Classroom Etiquette:**

Students must turn off cellular telephones for the duration of the class. Facebook, Twitter, texting, etc. are not permitted.

**Schedule of Classes and Readings:**

The schedule of readings is subject to change during the quarter. All changes will be announced in advance via email. If you have questions about the assignments, requirements, or subject matter, please email me.

**Wk. 1 Introduction to the Course**

Mon., 4/1 *Modernity and Metaphysics: Hegel's Theory of Determinacy*, lecture  
Wed., 4/3 Introduction ¶¶ 73-89

**Wk. 2 Consciousness ¶¶ 90-131, 132-165**

Mon., 4/8 I. Sense-certainty or the “this” and what is meant  
II. Perception; or the thing and illusion  
Wed., 4/10 Guest: María del Rosario Acosta, Universidad de los Andes, Bogotá/Cluster for Normative Orders, Goethe Universität, Frankfurt  
Reading: Acosta, “Fractures: Hegel on Community and Forgiveness in the *Phenomenology of Spirit*” (draft – not to be quoted or disseminated)

**Wk. 3**

Mon., 4/15 III. Force and the understanding  
Wed., 4/17 **Self-Consciousness** ¶¶ 178-230  
IV. The Truth of Self-Certainty ¶¶ 166-178  
**Commentary 1 due**

**Wk. 4 Self-Consciousness continued**

Mon., 4/22 A: Self-Sufficiency and Non-Self-Sufficiency of Self-Consciousness:  
Lordship and Bondage  
Wed., 4/24 B: Freedom of Self-Consciousness:  
Stoicism, Skepticism, and the Unhappy Consciousness

<b>Wk. 5</b>	<b>Reason ¶¶ 231-346</b>
Mon., 4/29	V: The certainty and truth of reason A: Observing reason b: Observation of self-consciousness in its purity and in its relation to external actuality: logical and psychological laws c: Observation of the relation of self-consciousness to its immediate actuality: physiognomy and phrenology
Wed., 5/1	Continuation
<b>Wk. 6</b>	<b>Reason continued ¶¶ 347-437</b>
Mon., 5/6	B: The actualization of rational self-consciousness by way of itself C: Individuality, which in its own eyes is real in and for itself
Wed., 5/8	Continuation <b>Commentary 2 due</b>
<b>Wk. 7</b>	<b>Spirit ¶¶ 444-483</b>
Mon., 5/13	(BB) Spirit VI: Spirit A: True spirit, ethical life a: The ethical world, the human and divine law, man and woman b: Ethical action, human and divine knowledge, guilt and fate
Wed., 5/15	Continuation <b>Prospectus Due</b>
<b>Wk. 8</b>	<b>Spirit continued ¶¶ 484-537</b>
Mon., 5/20	II: The Enlightenment a: The Struggle of the Enlightenment with Superstition b: The Truth of the Enlightenment
Wed., 5/22	III: Absolute Freedom and Terror
<b>Wk. 9</b>	<b>Spirit continued ¶¶ 596-671</b>
Mon., 5/27	C: Spirit certain of itself: morality a: The moral worldview b: Dissemblance
Wed., 5/29	c: Conscience. The beautiful soul, evil and its forgiveness <b>Commentary 3 due</b>
<b>Wk. 10</b>	<b>Absolute Knowing ¶¶ 788-808</b>
Mon., 6/3	Absolute Knowing
Wed., 6/5	<b>Preface ¶¶ 1-72</b>

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General Commentaries on Hegel's life and thought include:

- \*1. Frederick Beiser, *Hegel*
- \*2. Terry Pinkard, *Hegel: A Biography*
3. Stephen Houlgate, *Freedom, Truth, and History: An Introduction to Hegel's Philosophy*
4. Frederick Beiser, *The Cambridge Companion to Hegel*
5. Jon Stewart, *The Hegel Myths and Legends*

Commentaries on Hegel's *Phenomenology* or relevant to the *Phenomenology* include:

Introductory:

- \*1. Robert Stern, *Hegel and the Phenomenology of Spirit*
- \*2. Jon Stewart, *The Phenomenology of Spirit Reader*
- \*3. Kenneth Westphal, *Blackwell Guide to Hegel's Phenomenology of Spirit*
4. John Russon, *Reading Hegel's Phenomenology*
5. D.P. Verene, *Hegel's Absolute: An Introduction to Reading the Phenomenology of Spirit*
6. Philip Kain, *Hegel and the Other: A Study of the Phenomenology of Spirit*
7. Werner Marx, *Hegel's Phenomenology of Spirit: A Commentary Based on the Preface and Introduction*

Advanced:

1. H.S. Harris, *Hegel's Ladder*, 2 volumes
- \*2. Jean Hyppolite, *Genesis and Structure of Hegel's Phenomenology of Spirit*
- \*3. Robert Pippin, *Hegel's Idealism: The Satisfactions of Self-Consciousness; Hegel's Practical Philosophy*; \*\*\*"Hegelianism as Modernism" and "Hegel on Historical Meaning – For example, the Enlightenment"
- \*4. Terry Pinkard, *Hegel's Phenomenology: The Sociality of Reason*
- \*5. Merold Westphal, *History and Truth in Hegel's Phenomenology*, 3rd ed.
- \*6. Dean Moyar and Michael Quante, *Hegel's Phenomenology of Spirit: A Critical Guide*
- \*\*7. Robert Brandom, "Some Pragmatist Themes in Hegel's Idealism," in *Tales of the Mighty Dead* and "The Structure of Desire and Recognition"
- \*\*8. Jay Bernstein, "'the celestial Antigone, the most resplendent figure ever to have appeared on earth': Hegel's Feminism"; "Confession and Forgiveness: Hegel's Poetics of Action"
- \*\*9. Rocío Zambrana, "Hegel's Legacy"
10. Rebecca Comay, *Mourning Sickness: Hegel and the French Revolution*
11. Angelica Nuzzo, *Memory, History, Justice in Hegel*
12. Allen Speight, *Hegel, Literature and the Problem of Agency*
13. Robert Williams, *Recognition: Fichte and Hegel on the Other*
14. John Russon, *The Self and Its Body in Hegel's Phenomenology of Spirit*
15. William Bristow, *Hegel and the Transformation of Philosophical Critique*
16. Susan Buck-Morss, *Hegel, Haiti, and Universal History*
17. Donald Verene, *Hegel's Recollection*
18. Judith Butler, *Subjects of Desire: Hegelian Reflections in Twentieth-Century France*
19. Kimberly Hutchins, *Feminist Interpretations of Hegel*
20. Karin De Boer, *On Hegel: The Sway of the Negative*
21. Alexandre Kojève, *Introduction to the Reading of Hegel*
22. Michael Forster, *Hegel's Idea of a Phenomenology of Spirit*
23. Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Hegel's Dialectic: Five Hermeneutical Studies*
24. Charles Taylor, *Hegel*
25. Judith Shklar, *Freedom and Independence: A Study of The Political Ideas in Hegel's Phenomenology of Mind*
26. Kenneth Westphal, *Hegel's Epistemological Realism: A Study of the Aim and Method of Hegel's Phenomenology of Spirit*
27. Quentin Lauer, *A Reading of Hegel's Phenomenology of Spirit*

Throughout the course, I will recommend and, whenever possible, add secondary sources on Blackboard that address class discussion. Also, please come see me if you would like me to suggest secondary literature on a specific theme or topic not represented in this list.