

Syllabus

1. Course Description

a) Course Title

Transcendental Philosophy: From German Idealism to Phenomenology

Lecturer: Georgy Chernavin, PhD

b) Pre-requisites

A general knowledge of the main trends of classical German Idealism, classical German phenomenology and contemporary French phenomenology is required.

c) Course Type (compulsory, elective, optional)

Compulsory (for HSE Bachelor-Students); elective (for international BA and MA Students).

d) Abstract

This course presents the historical development of the motive behind transcendental philosophy as it takes place from classical German Idealism to contemporary phenomenology. It starts by treating some of the central topics of classical German idealism (in the work of Immanuel Kant, J. G. Fichte and F. J. W. Schelling) such as the problem of the conditions of the possibility of experience, the relation between the manifold of appearance and the unity of human mind, and the relation between natural necessity and human freedom. It will then be shown how this transcendental motive took hold in phenomenology because of the influence of German Idealism. In the process, students will be exposed to the key problems of both classical German phenomenology (Edmund Husserl, Martin Heidegger, Eugen Fink) and contemporary French phenomenology (Maurice Merleau-Ponty, Emmanuel Levinas, Marc Richir). In particular, special attention will be paid to the transformation of the transcendental approach in philosophy as expressed in the idea of “transcendental experience” (which is a *contradictio in adjecto* in terms of Kant’s transcendentalism). In this context, it will also be demonstrated how the anonymous process of sense-formation (*Sinnbildung*) progressively takes the place of the transcendental capacities of the subject. The course will conclude with a survey of two of the newest forms of transcendentalism in

phenomenology: methodological transcendentalism (László Tengelyi) and speculative transcendentalism (Alexander Schnell).

2. Learning Objectives

The course provides an introduction to the principal questions explored by both classical and contemporary transcendental philosophy. In particular, it aims to give students a critical awareness of the different forms of transcendental argument in philosophy. The content of the course is relevant to contemporary philosophical debates.

3. Learning Outcomes

Upon successful completion of the course, students should be able to analyse and judge the validity of transcendental arguments in philosophy; construct extended, coherent arguments that engage critically with the existing philosophical literature; apply and connect philosophical arguments to pertinent issues in the sciences; and use the conceptual resources they have learned from the course in order to think logically, critically and independently.

4. Course Plan

Lecture 1. An Outline of the Transcendental Philosophy of Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason*

Lecture 2. The Transcendental Motive Behind Fichte's *Lectures on the Wissenschaftslehre* 1804 (II)

Lecture 3. Schelling's *System of Transcendental Idealism*

Lecture 4. The Husserlian Project of Transcendental Phenomenology

Lecture 5. The Transcendental Motive Behind Heidegger's *Fundamental Ontology*

Lecture 6. Fink's Transcendental Doctrine of Phenomenological Method

Lecture 7. The Merleau-Pontian Ontology of Flesh and Levinasian Ethics as Unconventional Forms of Transcendentalism

Lecture 8. Marc Richir's Transcendental Philosophy of Spontaneous Sense-formation

Lecture 9. László Tengelyi's Project of Methodological Transcendentalism

Lecture 10. Alexander Schnell's Outline of Speculative Transcendentalism

5. Reading List

a) Required

- Kant, I. *Critique of Pure Reason*, tr. P. Guyer, Cambridge University Press, 1998.
- Husserl, E. *Psychological and Transcendental Phenomenology and the Confrontation with Heidegger (1927-1931)*, tr. Th. Sheehan & R. E. Palmer, 1997.
- Merleau-Ponty, M. *The Visible and the Invisible*, tr. A. Lingis, Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1969.
- Schnell, A. "Speculative foundations of phenomenology," tr. M. B. Mader, in: *Continental Philosophy Review* 45 (3), 2012, pp. 461-479.
- Tengelyi, L. "Categories of Experience and the Transcendental," in: *Phenomenology and the Transcendental*, S. Heinämaa, M. Hartimo, T. Miettinen (eds.), Routledge, 2014, pp. 49-60.

b) Optional

- Fichte, J. G. *The Science of Knowing: J. G. Fichte's 1804 Lectures on the Wissenschaftslehre*, tr. W. W. Wright, Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2005.
- Schelling, F. W. J. *System of Transcendental Idealism (1800)*, tr. P. Heath, Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 1993.
- Heidegger, M. *Being and Time*, tr. J. Stambaugh, ed. D. J. Schmidt, Albany: State University of New York Press, 2010.
- Fink, E. "What Does the Phenomenology of Edmund Husserl Want to Accomplish?" tr. A. Grugan, in: *Research in Phenomenology*, №2, 1972, pp. 5-27.
- Levinas, E. *Totality and Infinity. An Essay on Exteriority*, Den Haag: M Nijhoff, 1979.

6. Grading System

Grading scale: 8, 9, 10 = excellent

6, 7 = good

4, 5 = satisfactory

1, 2, 3 = not-satisfactory

Credit weighting: 3 ECTS-credits

7. Guidelines for Knowledge Assessment

Students' progress in the course will be assessed by a two thousand-word essay, a five-minute presentation, their participation in the seminar, and a final exam (a three-hour written exam in which students must answer four exam essay questions).

The final grade consists of the following four components:

Exam 50%

Essay 30%

Presentation 10%

Seminar participation 10%

8. Methods of Instruction

The course will consist of lectures and seminars (with an emphasis on the close reading of texts). Students are also encouraged to meet individually with the lecturer. But it should also be noted that progress in the course will also depend greatly the student's own independent study of the materials. There is one weekly lecture and one weekly seminar. Seminar discussions are for students to actively engage with the ideas presented in the lectures, a process that should clarify and deepen their understanding of the fundamental issues of the course. Students are required to have already done the weekly readings before the seminar
Contact hours: 40 hours (10 lectures, 10 seminars). According to the Russian system, 1 lecture/seminar class lasts 2 academic hours (40 minutes each).

9. Special Equipment and Software Support

Not required