Rationale and Objectives

Kant, one of the single most influential philosophers in the Western tradition, was, like others in his league, a comprehensive, holistic thinker. And yet, his work is often read as though this were not so. Instead, it is assumed that one may pick out single bits of interest – the idea of the categorical imperative, say - and consider them in isolation from the rest. This assumption, combined with the realities of academic specialization, has resulted in a huge but arguably fragmented contemporary Kantian literature. The course of study for this semester is designed to be a counter to such artificial divisions.

The course has several objectives: (1) to introduce you to Kant’s oeuvre in such a way that you will be able to appreciate its architectonic character; (2) to introduce you to various strains of contemporary Kantian thinking, (3) to have you be able to recognize, as appropriate, the partial nature of different appropriations of Kant. The second-order objective is to develop your ability to approach the work of other canonical thinkers in a similar way. We will spend the first half of the course reading Kant, the second half reading contemporary authors who are writing, in one way or another, against the backdrop of Kant. Due to the enormity of the literature, we will read only a very small sampling of relevant material.

NOTE: This is an upper-level course in political theory/philosophy, and we will be immersed in abstractions. If you prefer courses with an applied focus, you should not take this one. Moreover, it’s a course on Kant. If you know from past experience that you will find the complexity and obscurity of the material to be prohibitively frustrating, do not stay in the course -- even if it satisfies a requirement. I say this only in the interest of truth in advertising. I love to talk about ideas, and I look forward to providing any help that you may need in mastering the material, but the drive and commitment have to come from you.

The course will be conducted as a seminar, not a lecture, which means that you will have to come to class having done the reading very carefully. The reading is extremely interesting, but it is difficult and dense. You may well have to read materials several times before – and perhaps after – class meetings, in order to understand them. Again: if this sort of thing is not your cup of tea, you should take a different course. But if it is (your cup of tea) - if you want to study Kant and are interested in the history of ideas - I can promise a richly rewarding, intellectually enjoyable undertaking.
General Expectations and Policies

The bottom-line, non-negotiable requirement is that you do the reading as many times as you need to in order to understand it, and that you attend class prepared to check and deepen this understanding through conversation with others. If, for whatever reason, you are not in a position to take on a high level of intellectual responsibility, you should think hard about whether or not you will be able to meet this expectation.

Attendance is mandatory unless you are sick or face an emergency situation. Irregular participation will result in a significant reduction of the final grade or in failure. Cell phones, laptops and other electronic devices must be turned off during class. In keeping with the 5 principles of Jesuit education at SLU, I take it for granted that comportment in the classroom will be good-natured, considerate and intellectually disciplined; failure to meet this expectation will result in a student being required to leave the room, and will constitute an unexcused absence. I also expect that you will come to class on time.

All written and oral work must be either (a) your own ideas, expressed in your own words, or (b) properly referenced. Plagiarism will result in a failure for the course, at a minimum. Please ask me, if you have any questions about academic integrity; not knowing that you have plagiarized does not make it acceptable to have done so. I encourage you to review the official University policy governing matters of integrity: http://www.slu.edu/x12657.xml.

Students with disabilities that may impact their classroom performance must contact the Disabilities Services office, located in the Student Center, to arrange for appropriate accommodations. E-mail: meyerah@slu.edu.

The easiest way to contact me is through e-mail, which I check regularly. In most cases I will be able to get back to you within 24 hours; if you haven’t heard back, send me another e-mail. I’m also happy to talk to you in person during office hours.

Grading Scheme

Your final grade will be based on your performance in the following areas:

- Preparation for and participation in class (30%) – includes submission of reading notes
- Mid-semester test (15%)
- Paper #1 (10%)  
- Paper #2 (20%)
- Final exam (25%).

I do not grade on a distributional curve; your grade is based solely on the quality of your own performance. I am a very transparent grader, and I am happy to talk with you about how to do your best in the course and to develop intellectually. Please note the College of Arts and Sciences’ common grading scheme: A=93-100; A-=90-92; B+=87-89; B=83-86; B-=80-82; C+=77-79; C=73-76; C-=70-72; D=60-70; F=below 60.

I don’t accept late papers, unless you have contacted me ahead of time concerning an absolute emergency. Papers are due at the beginning of class on the date that they are due, unless otherwise stipulated.
**Required and Recommended Texts**

The following books have been ordered at the SLU book store:

Immanuel Kant,
- *Critique of Pure Reason*
- *Groundwork to the Metaphysics of Morals*
- *Political Writings*
- *Critique of the Power of Judgment*

Collins, *The Possibility of Experience*
Burnham, *An Introduction to Kant’s Critique of Judgement*
Beiner and Booth (eds.), *Kant and Political Philosophy: The Contemporary Legacy*
Bohman and Lutz-Bachmann (eds.), *Perpetual Peace*
Approximate Schedule of Reading

Jan 13 - General introduction to course
Jan 15 – Intro to Kant

Jan 20, 22, 27, 29 – Knowledge of Objects

Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason* (selections)
Recommended: Collins, *The Possibility of Experience* (chs. 1 and 3 especially)

Feb 3, 5, 10, 12, 17, 19 – Knowledge of Moral Law

Kant, *Groundwork to the Metaphysics of Morals*
Henry Allison, “Morality and Freedom: Kant’s Reciprocity Thesis”
Onora O’Neill, “Universal Laws and Ends in Themselves”
“Reason and Politics in the Kantian Enterprise”
Patrick Riley, “Good Will”
Allen Wood, “The Final Form of Kant’s Practical Philosophy”

Feb 24, 26, March 3, 5 – Ethical Motivation

Kant, *Critique of the Power of Judgment* (selections)
Ted Cohen, “Why Beauty is a Symbol of Morality”
Iris Murdoch, “The Sublime and the Good”
Patrick Riley, “Hannah Arendt on Kant, Truth and Politics”
Recommended: Burnham, *An Introduction to Kant’s Critique of Judgement*

March 10, 12 – discussion continued; test

SPRING BREAK

March 24, 26 – Kantian Politics (1) - Art, Purpose, Politics

Marcuse, *Eros and Civilization* (selections)
Patrick Riley, “Persons as Ends in Themselves: A Content for Morality, a Limiting Condition of Politics”
“Civic Culture and the Legal Realization of Moral Ends in the *Critique of Judgment*”
“Conclusion: Estimate of Kant’s Political Philosophy”
March 31, April 2, 7, 9 - Kantian Politics (2): Reason, Autonomy, Justice

(a) Rawls
- Rawls (selections)
- Robert Paul Wolff, *Understanding Rawls* (selections)
- Patrick Neal, “In the Shadow of the General Will”
  - “Justice as Fairness: Political or Metaphysical?”
- Hill Jr., “Kantian Constructivism in Ethics”

(b) Kantian Considerations
- Christine Korsgaard, “Morality as Freedom”
- Thomas Hill Jr., “Basic Respect and Cultural Diversity”
  - “Must Respect be Earned?”
  - “The Kantian Conception of Autonomy”

April 14, 16 - Kantian Politics (3) - Cosmopolitanism

- Kant, *Political Writings* (selections)
- Bohman and Lutz-Bachmann (eds.), *Perpetual Peace*
  - Martha Nussbaum, “Kant and Cosmopolitanism”
  - Axel Honeth, “Is Universalism a Moral Trap?”
  - James Bohman, “The Public Spheres of the World Citizen”

April 21, 23, 28, 30: Kantian Reflections/Reflections on Kant

- Beiner and Booth (eds.) *Kant and Political Philosophy: The Contemporary Legacy* (selections)