

Course title:	German Philosophy: From Kant to Habermas
Instructor:	Dr. Frieder Otto Wolf
Email address:	fow@snafu.de
Course days:	Monday, Wednesday, Friday
Language of instruction:	English
Contact hours:	The coursework corresponds to an on-site course amounting to 48 contact hours.
ECTS credits:	4
Prerequisites:	Students should be able to speak and read English at the upper intermediate level (B2), preferably even higher. Prior experience with reading philosophical texts will be helpful.
General requirements:	Please make sure to be online approximately from 8 am CET to 12:30 pm CET on the respective course days! Therefore, please check the possible time difference between Germany and your country of residence. We also recommend that you make sure to have a quiet and appropriate working space. To ensure a comfortable learning environment for all, please adhere to general netiquette rules.
Technical requirements:	- stable internet connection - fully functional device, such as computer, laptop or tablet (use of smart phones not recommended), headset recommended - recommended operating systems: Windows 7 or higher or Mac OS X 10,13 or higher, avoid using a VPN

Course description

Philosophy has constituted a central element in the emergence of modern German culture. In the late 18th century, German philosophy participated in the broader European Enlightenment culture, which was in turn connected to the development of modern empirical science. Under the impression of the historical changes brought about by the French Revolution and by the 'Industrial Revolution' in Great Britain, a special constellation of German philosophy emerged at the end of the 18th century, which has deeply left its mark on subsequent philosophical thinking far beyond Germany.

This philosophy course addresses the historical reality of this 'German moment of philosophy' in two subsequent phases: In the first part, we follow the emergence and full deployment of German philosophy from its Kantian beginnings to Hegel's grand but fragile synthesis, trying to understand its richness as well as its fragility. In a second part, we discuss the later renewal of German philosophy in the late 19th century and its historical tragedy in the 20th century. This will include a discussion of the new beginnings of philosophy since the mid-19th century, from Marx, and Nietzsche, via Frege to Husserl and Wittgenstein, who have been reacting to the scientific and political revolutions of the late 19th and early 20th

century. Martin Heidegger as an established pro-Nazi philosopher and Max Horkheimer as the leading philosopher of the “Frankfurt School” driven into exile are studied as philosophers immersed into the Night of the 20th century.

Finally, post-World War II developments in philosophy (as exemplified by Jürgen Habermas) will be looked at as pathways out of the self-destructive turn the ‘German moment of philosophy’ in Germany had taken in the first decades of the 20th century, and as passages into an emerging world philosophy.

The course will be based upon contemporary attempts at rethinking a global philosophical perspective. The focus is on the tension between the Enlightenment heritage of a universalizing human philosophy and a national culture project, as well as on the tension between classicist rationalism and romantic emotionalism in its construction as a series of philosophical projects. From the perspective of a German version of the dialectics of the Enlightenment, the German philosophers of the 19th and 20th centuries will be studied in context - combining the reading of key texts with a reconstruction of their historical contexts and their interaction.

Student profile

This course is open for students from all disciplines having a deep interest in Philosophy. Prior exposure to the field of philosophy will be helpful.

Required language skills

The language of instruction is English. Language proficiency on an advanced Intermediate level (Mittelstufe II) is a prerequisite for participation. For orientation purposes, you can assess your language skills here (Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR):

<https://rm.coe.int/CoERMPublicCommonSearchServices/DisplayDCTMContent?documentId=090000168045bb52>

Course requirements

Active participation, course presentation, electronic paper exam, essay paper

Grading

Active participation 20%
 Course presentation 25%
 Electronic paper exam 25%
 Essay paper 30%

Reading

A course reader will be provided online as PDF file.

Course schedule

Date	Program*	
Friday, January 8, 2021	Session 1	Orientation meeting: Technical issues/ Introduction of instructor and participants/ Reading philosophy philosophically Class discussion with inputs from the instructor
	Session 2	The double “moment of German philosophy” Lecture, with debate
	Session 3	Kant’s Transcendental Turn:

		<p>Reading: Immanuel Kant: “Prefaces,” from: <i>The Critique of Pure Reason</i> (both editions, 1781 and 1787)</p> <p>Class reading, with introduction</p>
Monday, January 11, 2021	Session 1	<p>Fichte’s Radicalization of Kant Reading: Johann Gottlieb Fichte: <i>The Science of Knowing</i> (1804) (<i>Selections</i>)</p> <p>Class reading, with introduction</p>
	Session 2	<p>Hegel’s Theoretical Synthesis: Reading: Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel: “Preface,” in: <i>Id., The Phenomenology of Spirit</i> (1806)</p> <p>Class reading, with introduction</p>
	Session 3	<p>Hegel’s Practical Synthesis: Reading: Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel: “Preface,” in: <i>Id., The Philosophy of Right</i> (1820)</p> <p>Class reading, with introduction</p>
Wednesday, January 13, 2021	Session 1	<p>Philosophy after Hegel: The ‘Young Hegelians’</p> <p>Lecture, with debate</p>
	Session 2	<p>Philosophy ‘after Philosophy’: The historical break of 1848 in continental Europe’s politics and the emergence of the ‘positive sciences’</p> <p>Lecture, with debate</p>
	Session 3	<p>Digital excursion to the DHM (German Historical Museum) or to one of its special exhibitions</p>
Friday, January 15, 2021	Session 1	<p>New Beginnings, 1: A New Materialism Reading: Karl Marx, [<i>Notes on</i>] <i>Feuerbach</i> (1845)</p> <p>Class reading, with introduction by students</p>
	Session 2	<p>New Beginnings, 2: An Existentialist Perspective Reading: Friedrich Nietzsche, <i>Prejudices of the Philosophers</i> (Ch. 1 of “Beyond Good and Evil, 1885)</p> <p>Class reading, with introduction by students</p>
	Session 3	<p>New Beginnings, 3: The Revolution in Logic Readings: Gottlob Frege, <i>On Sense and Reference</i> (1892), ‘Diverse Quotations’</p> <p>Class reading, with introduction by students</p>
Monday, January 18, 2021	Session 1	<p>New Beginnings, 4: Phenomenology Reading: Edmund Husserl, <i>Philosophy as a rigorous science</i> (1910-11)</p>

		Class reading, with introduction by students
	Session 2	New Beginnings, 5: Logical positivism Reading: Ludwig Wittgenstein, <i>Tractatus Logico-philosophicus</i> (1918)
		Class reading, with introduction by students
	Session 3	The ‘Night of the 20th century’ and its significance for philosophy
		Lecture, with debate
Wednesday, January 20, 2021	Session 1	German philosophy in the night of the 20th century, 1: The ‘Conservative Revolution’ Reading: Martin Heidegger, <i>What is Metaphysics?</i> (1929)
		Class reading, with introduction by students
	Session 2	German philosophy in the Night of the 20th century, 2: The Frankfurt School Reading: Max Horkheimer, <i>On the Problem of Truth</i> (1935)
		Class reading, with introduction by students ¹
	Session 3	German Philosophy in the Night of the 20th century, 3: Perspectives on the ‘dialectics of enlightenment’ (Horkheimer/Adorno)
		Lecture, with debate
Friday, January 22, 2021	Session 1	A renewal of ‘critical theory’ Reading: Jürgen Habermas, <i>The Idea of the Theory of Knowledge as Social Theory</i> (1968)
		Class reading, with introduction by students
	Session 2	A feminist retrospective on German philosophy Reading: Elisabeth List, <i>Reason, Gender, and the Paradox of Rationalization</i> (2000)
		Class reading, with introduction by students
	Session 3	The German moments of philosophy and the transition to global philosophy
		Lecture with debate
Monday, January 25, 2021	Session 1	Concluding debate: What did I learn here?
		Class discussion, with introduction by students
	Session 2 + 3	“My own take” - looking back on the course: exchange of personal impressions

¹ At the end of this day’s presentations students will receive the electronic questions for the electronic paper exam to be answered until the following Tuesday.

	Class discussion, with round of impressions from everyone
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