

Kant Tutorial

Carl Hildebrand

University of Oxford, 2018

This tutorial focuses on Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason (CPR)*. You're probably familiar with how this works but we will meet eight times over the course of the term to go over the material for that week. The focus of each meeting will be a piece of writing you will have sent me in advance that covers the material for that week (no strict rule yet as to how far in advance you need to get it to me but please do so within a reasonable timeframe). The bulk of the material we'll cover can be found on the Faculty's undergraduate reading list. Below I've included the eight topics that we'll be looking at over the course of the term along with some comments you will find helpful concerning how to go about the reading. As a rule of thumb, it will be most important that you read (and write on) the primary source material (or key texts) for each week and then look at secondary sources insofar as they're helpful for understanding the main ideas in the primary sources (key texts). The length of the paper you write each week can vary but should be somewhere around 1,500 to 2,000 words.

As far as structure and content, the idea will be to spend about one week looking at Kant's general project of transcendental idealism, one week on the transcendental aesthetic (space and time), three weeks on the Analytic, two on the Dialectic, and one on his ethics. I assume, of course, that you have access to the Faculty reading list. For each week I suggest some particular readings from the list and include a brief list of those readings; it's not essential that you read everything on the list but do skim most of them and read at least a couple carefully (do read all of the primary texts/passages, found at the top of each list).

For general books on Kant, from the reading list, Ralph Walker's book *Kant* is quite helpful and Henry Allison's *Kant's Transcendental Idealism* is good and widely read. Jonathan Bennett's books are also classic commentaries. Strawson's book *The Bounds of Sense* is good to be familiar with, so do look at that along the way, though it may be true that others may provide more direct elucidation of the text (Strawson has his own philosophical project which does shape his reading of Kant). In addition to the commentaries on the reading list, you might find *Accessing Kant* by Jay Rosenberg to be helpful as a general introduction to the *CPR*.

Again, as a general approach, focus on the set primary texts, then use those commentaries and papers I suggest as most helpful in illuminating the main text. After that, you can move to some of the other papers. Try not to get too bogged down by the minutia of scholarly debate in the secondary literature. Though, on the other hand, it will help to be familiar with the secondary literature, particularly the bigger questions it raises, as it can be suggestive of further topics or areas of study that draw from Kant to address broader philosophical questions and concerns.

Week 1: Transcendental Idealism

We'll start with a look at transcendental idealism and Kant's general project in the *CPR*. This is most directly related to section 1 of the reading list, but also involves material from sections 3, 4, and 15. I suggest starting with the relevant parts of the *CPR* recommended in section 1 and then moving on to what's recommended in section 3 and maybe 4 after that. Here, the most helpful things to look at will be the introductory texts by Allison, Walker, and Guyer.

Kant, *CPR*: both Prefaces, Introduction, The Highest Principle of all Analytic Judgements (A150/ B189 ff), The Highest Principle of all Synthetic Judgements (A154/ B193 ff), Phenomena and Noumena.
Allison, Henry. *Kant's Transcendental Idealism*, chs. 1, 2.
Ralph Walker, *Kant*, chs. 1, 2, 9.
Paul Guyer, 'Introduction', *Cambridge Companion to Kant*.
Peter Strawson, *The Bounds of Sense*, part IV.

Week 2: Space and Time

This week we'll be working through the Transcendental Aesthetic, which is primarily covered in section 2 of the reading list, though it's also covered in sections 3 and 4. Here the commentaries should be quite helpful again, as should Charles Parsons article in the *Cambridge Companion to Kant*. Do read the relevant bits of *The Bounds of Sense* by Strawson.

Kant, *CPR*: Transcendental Aesthetic, Amphiboly of Concepts of Reflection.
Henry Allison, *Kant's Transcendental Idealism*, ch. 5.
Charles Parsons, 'The Transcendental Aesthetic', in Guyer (ed.) *The Cambridge Companion to Kant*.
Peter Strawson, *The Bounds of Sense*, part II, section I.

Week 3: Categories

Focus mostly on the ideas around the Table of Categories and Table of Judgments from the Metaphysical Deduction, section 5 of the reading list. Also begin looking at material from sections 6 and 7, especially insofar as you see the connections with material from section 5. These topics are all quite closely related, so it'll be helpful to consider how they're related from the outset, even if you can only write specifically on one thing at a time. In addition to the commentaries, Young's article is helpful; you may want to look at that one. Again, do take a look at Strawson.

Kant, *CPR*: A50-A83/B74-B116, *CPR*: 'The Deduction of the Pure Concepts of Understanding' (both versions).
Henry Allison, *Kant's Transcendental Idealism*, ch. 6.
J.M. Young, 'Functions of Thought and the Synthesis of Intuitions' in Guyer (ed.) *The Cambridge Companion to Kant*.
Peter Strawson, *The Bounds of Sense*, pp. 72-85.
Béatrice Longuenesse, *Kant and the Capacity to Judge* (Princeton University Press, 1998), intro, ch. 1.

Week 4: Transcendental Deduction and Schematism

Read the Transcendental Deduction and Schematism; material from sections 6 and 7 of the reading list. In addition to the commentaries, Guyer's paper on the Transcendental Deduction in the *Cambridge Companion to Kant* is good to look at as is Anil Gomes' paper. You may find Engstrom's paper interesting. David Bell's paper is a particularly fascinating read – broad minded and suggestive, it draws on diverse features of Kant's thought and philosophy generally.

Kant, *CPR*: 'The Deduction of the Pure Concepts of Understanding' (both versions), Schematism.
 Henry Allison, *Kant's Transcendental Idealism*, ch. 7.
 Jonathan Bennett, *Kant's Analytic*, ch. 10.
 Paul Guyer, 'The Transcendental Deduction of the Categories', in Guyer (ed.) *The Cambridge Companion to Kant*.
 Anil Gomes, 'Is Kant's Transcendental Deduction of the Categories Fit for Purpose?', *Kantian Review* 2011.
 Stephen Engstrom, 'The Transcendental Deduction and Skepticism' *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 1994.
 David Bell, 'The Art of Judgement' *Mind* 1987
 Peter Strawson, *The Bounds of Sense*, pp. 85-117.

Week 5: Analogies

We will consider the First Analogy along the way, but we will focus on the Second Analogy, which is covered in section 9 of the reading list. This will be our last week on the Analytic before we move on to the Dialectic. Read Allison, Longuenesse, and the chapter from Watkins's book, as well as Strawson.

Kant, *CPR*: Second Analogy, A764/B792-A769/B797; *Prolegomena*. §§26-31, 36.
 Henry Allison, *Kant's Transcendental Idealism*, ch.10 (Revised ed: ch.9 §III).
 Béatrice Longuenesse, 'Kant on Causality: What Was He Trying to Prove?', in C. Mercer and E. O'Neill (eds.) *Early Modern Philosophy* (OUP, 2005).
 Eric Watkins, *Kant and the Metaphysics of Causality* (CUP, 2005), ch. 3.
 Peter Strawson, *The Bounds of Sense*, pp. 133-146.

Week 6: Antinomies

Do at least take a quick read of all the antinomies, though we'll focus on the Third Antinomy, which discusses the nature of freedom according to Kant's transcendental idealism. The antinomies are covered in sections 12 and 13 of the reading list. Walker will provide a nice overview, as will Allison and Wood's paper in the *Cambridge Companion*. For an interesting (and, I think, persuasive) reading of the Third Antinomy, read Wood's chapter 'Kant's Compatibilism'. For a development of Kantian ideas which departs from Kant but has been very influential for contemporary moral psychology and metaethics more broadly, read Strawson's paper 'Freedom and Resentment'.

Kant, *CPR*: The Antinomy of Pure Reason, particularly the Third Antinomy.
 Henry Allison, *Kant's Transcendental Idealism*, ch. 3 (Revised ed: ch. 13) and ch. 15 (Revised ed: ch. 13).
 Ralph Walker. *Kant*, ch. 10, part 3, pp. 147-150.
 Allen Wood, 'The Antinomies of Pure Reason' in Guyer (ed.) *The Cambridge Companion to Kant's Critique of Pure Reason*; and 'Kant's Compatibilism' in Wood (ed.), *Self and Nature in Kant's Philosophy*.
 Peter Strawson, *The Bounds of Sense*, pp. 175-206; 'Freedom and Resentment', in *Freedom and Resentment and Other Essays* (Methuen, 1974).

Week 7: God

We'll focus on the idea of God, rather than Kant's discussion of the classical theological proofs. The former is more interesting, in my opinion, but if you'd like to discuss the latter, we can do that too: if that's the case, it would be helpful to further focus on the ontological argument. We could look at Wood's discussion of it in the second half of his book (below), as well as Plantinga's discussion in his paper (also below). The idea of God is covered in section 12 of the reading list, focusing on the Dialectic. Generally, Wood's book provides a helpful discussion of Kant's philosophy of religion (you can focus on the first two chapters of the first section). Also, Chignell's paper "Belief in Kant" is particularly good.

Kant, *CPR*: The Ideal of Pure Reason.

Ralph Walker, *Kant*, ch. 12.

Allen Wood, *Kant's Rational Theology* (Cornell University Press, 1978).

Béatrice Longuenesse, 'The transcendental ideal, and the unity of the critical system' in *Kant on the Human Standpoint* (CUP, 2005).

Andrew Chignell, 'Belief in Kant' *Philosophical Review* 2007.

Alvin Plantinga, 'Kant's Objection to the Ontological Argument' *Journal of Philosophy* 1966.

Peter Strawson, *The Bounds of Sense*, pp. 207-31.

Week 8: Ethics

Here we'll be taking a brief, introductory look at Kant's ethics. Read the first two (of three) sections of his short book, the *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals* – this short (and unfortunately haphazardly written) book provides the basis for the majority of people's understanding of Kantian ethics. It's a bit confusing to read, so don't get too put off by that; the main principles are grasped readily enough. O'Neill's summary of Kantian ethics is helpful, as is Wood's book *Kantian Ethics* – I recommend chapters 4 and 5 below, because they provide a nice definition and discussion of the categorical imperative, but if other chapters look interesting, do take a look at those, too, as the book is quite clear and helpful generally. Korsgaard's commentary is important and influential, but somewhat idiosyncratic, so perhaps only look at that after you've looked at the others. Herman's paper discusses the value and nature of acting from duty for Kant, which has become quite relevant in recent discussions of moral worth beyond the confines of Kant scholarship (e.g. as in Nomy Arpaly and Pauline Sliwa, among others).

Kant, *Groundwork*, §1 and §2.

Onora O'Neill, 'Kantian Ethics', in Singer (ed.) *A Companion to Ethics* (Blackwell, 1991).

Allen Wood, *Kantian Ethics* (CUP, 2007), chs. 4 and 5.

Barbara Herman, 'On the Value of Acting from the Motive of Duty', *Philosophical Review* 1981. Reprinted in her *The Practice of Moral Judgment* (Harvard, 1993).

Christine Korsgaard, 'Kant's analysis of obligation: The argument of Groundwork I', 'Kant's Formula of Universal Law' and 'Kant's Formula of Humanity' in her *Creating the Kingdom of Ends* (CUP, 1996).