

<b>Course title:</b>	<b>German Philosophy: From Kant to Habermas</b>
<b>Instructor:</b>	Dr. Frieder Otto Wolf
<b>Email address:</b>	fow@snafu.de
<b>Track:</b>	B-Track
<b>Language of instruction:</b>	English
<b>Contact hours:</b>	48 (6 per day)
<b>ECTS credits:</b>	5
<b>Prerequisites:</b>	Students should be able to speak and read English at the upper intermediate level (B2) or higher. Prior experience with reading philosophical texts will be helpful.

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### Course description

Philosophy has constituted a central element in the emergence of modern German culture. In the late 18<sup>th</sup> 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 18<sup>th</sup> 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 19<sup>th</sup> century and its historical tragedy in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. This will include a discussion of the new beginnings of philosophy since the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, from Marx, and Nietzsche, via Frege to Husserl and Wittgenstein, who have been reacting to the scientific and political revolutions of the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> 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 20<sup>th</sup> 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 20<sup>th</sup> 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 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> 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, midterm exam, essay paper

### Grading

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

### Reading

A course reader will be provided online as PDF file.

### Course schedule

Date	Program*	
Tuesday, July 23, 2024	<b>Session 1</b>	<b>Orientation meeting:</b> Introduction of instructor and participants/ Reading philosophy philosophically  Class discussion with inputs from the instructor
	<b>Session 2</b>	<b>The double “moment of German philosophy”</b>  Lecture, with debate
	<b>Session 3</b>	<b>Kant’s Transcendental Turn:</b> Reading: Immanuel Kant: “Prefaces,” from: <i>The Critique of Pure Reason (both editions, 1781 and 1787)</i>  Class reading, with introduction
Friday, July 26, 2024	<b>Session 1</b>	<b>Fichte’s Radicalization of Kant</b> Reading: Johann Gottlieb Fichte: <i>The Science of Knowing (1804) (Selections)</i>  Class reading, with introduction
	<b>Session 2</b>	<b>Hegel’s Theoretical Synthesis:</b> Reading: Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel: “Preface,” in: <i>Id., The Phenomenology of Spirit (1806)</i>  Class reading, with introduction
	<b>Session 3</b>	<b>Hegel’s Practical Synthesis:</b> Reading: Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel: “Preface,” in: <i>Id., The Philosophy of Right (1820)</i>

		Class reading, with introduction
Tuesday, July 30, 2024	<b>Session 1</b>	<b>Philosophy after Hegel: The ‘Young Hegelians’</b>  Lecture, with debate
	<b>Session 2</b>	<b>Philosophy ‘after Philosophy’:</b> The historical break of 1848 in continental Europe’s politics and the emergence of the ‘positive sciences’  Lecture, with debate
	<b>Session 3</b>	Excursion to the DHM (German Historical Museum)
Friday, August 2, 2024	<b>Session 1</b>	<b>New Beginnings, 1: A New Materialism</b> Reading: Karl Marx, <i>[Notes on] Feuerbach</i> (1845)  Class reading, with introduction by students
	<b>Session 2</b>	<b>New Beginnings, 2: An Existentialist Perspective</b> Reading: Friedrich Nietzsche, <i>Prejudices of the Philosophers</i> (Ch. 1 of “Beyond Good and Evil, 1885)  Class reading, with introduction by students
	<b>Session 3</b>	Mid-term exam
Tuesday, August 6, 2024	<b>Session 1</b>	<b>New Beginnings, 3: The Revolution in Logic</b> Readings: Gottlob Frege, <i>On Sense and Reference</i> (1892), ‘Diverse Quotations’  Class reading, with introduction by students
	<b>Session 2</b>	<b>New Beginnings, 4: Phenomenology</b> Reading: Edmund Husserl, <i>Philosophy as a rigorous science</i> (1910-11)  Class reading, with introduction by students
	<b>Session 3</b>	<b>New Beginnings, 5: Logical positivism</b> Reading: Ludwig Wittgenstein, <i>Tractatus Logico-philosophicus</i> (1918)  Class reading, with introduction by students
Friday, August 9, 2024	<b>Session 1</b>	<b>German philosophy in the night of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, 1:</b> The ‘Conservative Revolution’ Reading: Martin Heidegger, <i>What is Metaphysics?</i> (1929)  Class reading, with introduction by students
	<b>Session 2</b>	<b>German philosophy in the Night of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, 2:</b> The Frankfurt School Reading: Max Horkheimer, <i>The End of Reason</i> (1941)  Class reading, with introduction by students

	<b>Session 3</b>	<b>German Philosophy in the Night of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, 3:</b> Perspectives on the ‘dialectics of enlightenment’ and the ‘destruction of reason’  Lecture, with debate
Tuesday, August 13, 2024	<b>Session 1</b>	<b>A renewal of ‘critical theory’</b> Reading: Jürgen Habermas, <i>The Idea of the Theory of Knowledge as Social Theory</i> (1968)  Class reading, with introduction by students
	<b>Session 2</b>	<b>A feminist retrospective on German philosophy</b> Reading: Elisabeth List, <i>Reason, Gender, and the Paradox of Rationalization</i> (2000)  Class reading, with introduction by students
	<b>Session 3</b>	<b>The German moments of philosophy and the transition to global philosophy</b>  Lecture with debate
Friday, August 16, 2024	<b>Session 1</b>	<b>Concluding debate: What did I learn here?</b>  Class discussion, with introduction by students
	<b>Session 2</b>	<b>“My own take” - looking back on the course:</b> exchange of personal impressions  Class discussion, with round of impressions from everyone
	<b>Session 3</b>	FUBiS Farewell Ceremony

\*Field trips may be subject to change depending on the availability of appointments and speakers. On field trip days adaptation of class times is possible.