PRELIMINARY SYLLABUS

Metaphysics and the Quest(ion) of God After Kant
(TH-626 – Fall Semester 2016)

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COURSE DESCRIPTION

The starting point for modern philosophy in general and the philosophy of religion in particular belongs to Immanuel Kant (1724-1804). It is well recognized in the secondary literature that Kant’s “Copernican Revolution” has placed traditional (pre-critical) metaphysics and, by extension, the philosophical problem of religion – including his critique of the metaphysical doctrine of God – under such pervasive criticism that religion is now threatened up to the point of becoming nothing more than an illusion. The best example of the powerful and influent character of the Kantian criticism of religion is, perhaps, Ludwig A. Feuerbach’s (1804-1872) understanding of religion as a human projection. One is no longer able to speak of God by means either of the authority of the Scriptures or through an appeal to any kind of supernatural source. The reality of God, as such, is now at stake.

This course aims firstly at investigating, historically, the fundamental nature of Kant’s criticism both of religion and of the idea of God. Secondly, it will investigate some selected writings by the young Georg W. F. Hegel (1770-1831) and Friedrich D. E. Schleiermacher (1768-1834) as critical responses to Kant’s transcendental philosophical standpoint that have led to a consequent repositioning of the Kantian problematic on religion and the idea of God. Finally, the course will present the repercussions of this critical tradition in the contemporary – and basically German – philosophical and theological landscape and its significance for a critical reconstruction of the possibility of a meaningful discourse about God today.

REQUIRED TEXTBOOKS


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**ASSESSMENT EXPECTATIONS**

During sessions students will read and present on assigned chapters and/or articles. Presentations have to be concise, no longer than 30 minutes. During the presentations, students are expected to be able to delineate with due precision the general outline and the main concepts advanced by the authors. Most of the required texts are available in the library, especially the most expensive ones. Other texts not available in the library will be provided by the instructor. The recommended literature will supplement the required books as supporting exegetical material. **Students are not obliged, however, to purchase any of them.** The recommended books will also be provided by the instructor during the course. A final essay, no longer than 15 pages and no less than 10 pages (bibliography and footnotes excluded), will be prepared by the students based on the required texts with the help of the supplementary literature provided during the course.

**IMPORTANT:** Plagiarism, the failure to give proper credit for the words and ideas of another person, whether published or unpublished, is strictly prohibited. All written material submitted by students must be their own original work; where the words and ideas of others are used they must be acknowledged. Credit will not be given for work containing plagiarism, and plagiarism will lead to failure of a course. Please see the Hartford Seminary Catalogue for the full plagiarism policy.

**ATTENDANCE POLICY FOR WEEKLY CLASSES**

Attendance in class is required. If you know you will be unable to attend a class session please inform the professor in advance. Missing two sessions will result in an automatic lowering of your final grade by 10%. Missing three or more sessions will result in automatic failure of the course.

**EMAIL POLICY**

The instructor will use the official Hartsem student email addresses for all communications. Please check your Hartsem email account regularly.

**OFFICE HOURS**

Office hours will be scheduled by appointment.