

PH9F6-20 Critiques of Enlightenment in Post-Kantian German Philosophy

22/23

Department

Philosophy

Level

Taught Postgraduate Level

Module leader

David James

Credit value

20

Module duration

10 weeks

Assessment

100% coursework

Study location

University of Warwick main campus, Coventry

Description

Introductory description

This module features an in-depth examination of, and critical engagement with, various critiques of enlightenment found in the German Post-Kantian philosophical tradition. It begins with Kant's own views on enlightenment together with his attempt to explain the course of history in accordance with them, and it culminates in the critique of enlightenment offered by Horkheimer and Adorno. Texts by philosophers such as Herder and Hegel will also be discussed. Particular attention will be paid to how different views of enlightenment are nevertheless interrelated and the issue of whether these views entail abandonment of the project of enlightenment or revision of it. Other issues to be discussed include the forms of rationality and morality associated with enlightenment, the relationship between enlightenment and human progress, and the question of whether a bureaucratic and capitalist society is an inevitable outcome of enlightenment thinking.

Module aims

The module aims to provide an in-depth examination of, and critical engagement with, various critiques of enlightenment found in the German philosophical tradition beginning with Kant and culminating in the Frankfurt School. Particular attention will be paid to the ways in which various views of enlightenment in Post-Kantian German philosophy are interrelated as well as to the issue

of whether they entail an abandonment of the Enlightenment project or, rather, a revision and reactualisation of it. The emphasis will be on a close reading of key texts and discussion of central issues raised by these texts.

Outline syllabus

This is an indicative module outline only to give an indication of the sort of topics that may be covered. Actual sessions held may differ.

Week 1- Herder's philosophy of history: enlightenment and counter-enlightenment
Week 2 - Kant on enlightenment
Week 3 – Kant's philosophy of history
Week 4 – Fichte's idea of progress
Week 5 - Hegel's philosophy of history
Week 6 – Reading week
Week 7 – Marx as Enlightenment thinker
Week 8 – The dialectic of enlightenment: the concept of enlightenment
Week 9 – The dialectic of enlightenment: the enlightenment and morality
Week 10 - The dialectic of enlightenment: the culture industry

Learning outcomes

By the end of the module, students should be able to:

- A systematic understanding and knowledge of the various critiques of enlightenment encountered during the course, and the major issues that they raise in connection with the enlightenment project. Students should also be able to offer relevant support for and critical responses to the arguments and views set out in the texts examined during the course
- The ability to discuss clearly in speech and in writing the issues raised by their close reading and critical analysis of the relevant texts. They should be able to engage with these texts in a way that appreciates their potential relevance to present-day concerns while being sensitive to the historical context in which they were written. Students should also be able to evaluate the relevant secondary literature.
- The ability to analyse and critically evaluate different theories and arguments presented in primary texts, and come to an independent assessment of their merits with the aid of relevant secondary literature. Students should also be able to discern and critically evaluate the different types of argument involved.

Indicative reading list

Fichte, Johann Gottlieb, *Early Philosophical Writings*, trans. Daniel Breazeale (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1988). Fichte, Johann Gottlieb, *Introductions to the Wissenschaftslehre and Other Writings (1797-1800)*, trans. Daniel Breazeale (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1994). Herder, Johann Gottfried von, 'This Too a Philosophy of History for the Formation of Humanity', in *Philosophical Writings*, ed. Michael N. Forster (Cambridge University Press, 2002). Kant, Immanuel, *Political Writings*, ed. H. S. Reiss, 2 edn (Cambridge University Press, 1991). Marx, Karl, *Capital Volume 1*, trans. Ben Fowkes (London: Penguin, 1990). Marx, Karl, 'Preface' to the Critique of Political Economy', in *Later Political Writings*, ed. Terrell Carver (Cambridge University Press, 1996). Hegel, G. W. F., *Lectures on the Philosophy of World History: Introduction*, trans. H. B. Nisbet (Cambridge University Press, 1975). Max Horkheimer and Theodor W. Adorno, *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, trans. Edmund Jephcott (Stanford University Press, 2002).

Subject specific skills

Ability to analyse and interpret philosophical texts and the arguments that they contain, the ability to compare different texts and to be aware of the historical context in which they were written and/or with which they engage.

Transferable skills

Analytic skills, verbal skills required to pose relevant questions and offer clear explanations, ability to write clearly and coherently.

Study

Study time

Type	Required
Lectures	10 sessions of 1 hour (5%)
Seminars	10 sessions of 1 hour (5%)
Private study	180 hours (90%)
Total	200 hours

Private study description

No private study requirements defined for this module.

Costs

No further costs have been identified for this module.

Assessment

You must pass all assessment components to pass the module.

Students can register for this module without taking any assessment.

Assessment group A2

	Weighting	Study time
5000 word essay	100%	

Feedback on assessment

Feedback on essays will be provided on the coversheet for the essay, addressing standard areas of evaluation and individual content.

Availability

Courses

This module is Core option list A for:

- TPHA-V7P2 Postgraduate Taught Continental Philosophy
 - Year 1 of V7P2 Continental Philosophy
 - Year 2 of V7P2 Continental Philosophy

This module is Option list C for:

- TPHA-V7PM Postgraduate Taught Philosophy
 - Year 1 of V7PM Philosophy
 - Year 2 of V7PM Philosophy