PHIL 285: Graduate Seminar Winter 2018

Clinton Tolley
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Day/Time/Location
Weds 1-3:50pm / Philosophy Seminar Room [H&SS 7077]
office hours by appointment and tbd

Course Description
In this course we will examine Hegel’s influential conception of ‘spirit [Geist]’ as it is presented in the third volume of his 1817/1830 Encyclopedia of the Philosophical Sciences. We will analyze Hegel’s treatment of spirit both in relation to its own historical context as well as in relation to more recent philosophy of mind, action, psychology, social theory, politics, and the philosophy of culture (art, religion, science). We will also explore recent trends in secondary literature on Hegel’s philosophy of spirit by authors such as Judith Butler, Alfredo Ferrarin Markus Gabriel, Beatrice Longuenesse, Catherine Malabou, Herbert Marcuse, Frederick Neuhouser, Angelica Nuzzo, Terry Pinkard, Robert Pippin, Gillian Rose, Paul Redding, Ju Shklar, Alison Stone, Willem de Vries, Allen Wood, Christopher Yeomans, among others. The course will not presuppose any prior knowledge of Hegel’s philosophy, though some background in the history of modern philosophy will be helpful.

Questions to be addressed include: * what is ‘Geist’? (‘mind’, ‘spirit’)? * how does it relate to soul [Seele]? * how does it relate to the concept of ‘life [Leben]’? * what is the relation between spirit and other elements in nature, such as electricity or magnetism? * how does it relate to consciousness [Bewusstsein]? * what are the conditions for spirit being or having an ‘I’ [Ich] or self-consciousness? * how does spirit relate to consciousness and group (‘we’)-consciousness? * what kind of spirit is present in groups (families) of humans? * are there spirits besides or beyond whatever is present in human beings? * what does Hegel mean by dividing his treatment of spirit into ‘subjective’, ‘objective’, and ‘absolute’ spirit? * how does Hegel’s philosophy of subjective spirit relate to psychology? * what is the difference between being an ‘I’ and being a person? * what is objective about the shapes of spirit (e.g. family, society, state, history)? * within objective spirit, what differentiates one from the other? * right from that of ‘morality [Moralität]’ (and ‘the good’), and both from ‘ethical life [Sittlichkeit]’? * what is the ontological status of ethical, social, and political laws, values, and statuses? * what does Hegel mean by ‘ethical substance’? * who or what is the subject of action? * what kind of spirit is the state? world history? * how does the individual human person relate to these wholes? * in what sense is absolute spirit absolute? is it also subjective? is it also objective? * are art, religion, science, and philosophy manifestations of absolute spirit? * who or what is subject or agent of the activity in art, religion, science, and philosophy? * how does the individual human person relate to these shapes of spirit?

PHIL 285 – Hegel’s Philosophy of Spirit

Distribution Requirement Fulfillment
* history of philosophy
* ethics/social/political philosophy
* philosophy of mind

Texts
The main text for our course will be the Philosophy of Spirit (translated in our edition as the Philosophy of Mind (ed. Inwood, OUP)) that Hegel includes as the third volume of his Encyclopedia of the Philosophical Sciences – though this will be supplemented throughout the term.