



UNIVERSITETET I BERGEN

Institutt for filosofi og førstesemesterstudier

## Workshop on Kant's Moral Philosophy

**Dr. Jens Timmermann, Reader in Moral Philosophy, University of St Andrews**

**May 12-14 2014, Sydneplassen 12/13, room 210**

### PROGRAMME

#### **Monday May 12th at 13:15-15:00**

##### **Introduction. Kant's practical philosophy**

A brief survey of Kant's ethical theory and philosophy of action, covering topics such as action from duty (vs. action in conformity with duty) and the workings of Kant's moral principle, the categorical imperative.

Suggested reading: *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals* (1785), Section I.

#### **Tuesday May 13th at 12:15-15:00**

##### **Kantian Imprudence. Why do we do things that harm our interests?**

We shall be looking at texts that explain Kant's notion of happiness and the difficulties involved in pursuing it. Why do we do what turns out to be bad for us? Kant's answer is in accordance with the Socratic intellectualist tradition that has its roots in Plato's *Protagoras*. Imprudent action results from a cognitive defect. Suggested readings: *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*, Section II; *Critique of Practical Reason* (1788), Analytic, Chapter I.

#### **Wednesday May 14th at 12:15-15:00**

##### **Kantian Immorality. Why do we do immoral things?**

Kant's explanation of immoral action is radically different from his theory of imprudent action. We can (and do) clearheadedly choose what we know to be immoral, under the guise of the pleasant. Immoral action is therefore not the result of a cognitive problem, but a volitional fault. This account differs significantly from intellectualist readings of Kantian immorality popularised by philosophers like Christine Korsgaard and Andrews Reath.

Suggested reading: *Religion within the Limits of Mere Reason* (1793), Section I.

Jens Timmermann is Reader in Moral Philosophy at the University of St Andrews. He was educated at Göttingen and at Balliol College, Oxford, and completed his Dr. phil. under the supervision of Günther Patzig and Konrad Cramer in 1998. Junior Research Fellow at Keble College, Oxford 1997-2000. He is the author of *Sittengesetz und Freiheit* (De Gruyter, 2003) and of *Kant's 'Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals': A Commentary* (Cambridge University Press, 2007); the editor of *Kant's 'Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals': A Critical Guide* (Cambridge University Press, 2009); and co-editor (with Andrews Reath) of *Kant's 'Critique of Practical Reason': A Critical Guide* (Cambridge University Press, 2010). He recently published the first German English facing-page edition of Kant's *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals* (Cambridge University Press, 2011).

This workshop is a very good opportunity to learn more about Kant's moral philosophy more generally, and to get to discuss actual moral problems from a Kantian perspective more specifically. (Handouts will be distributed at the workshop.)

#### **All interested are heartily welcome!**

For further information concerning Dr. Timmermann's talks, contact: [anita.leirfall@fof.uib.no](mailto:anita.leirfall@fof.uib.no)

---

Institutt for filosofi og  
førstesemesterstudier  
Telefon 55 58 23 82  
Telefaks 55 58 96 51  
fof@hf.uib.no

Postadresse  
Postboks 7805  
5020 Bergen

Besøksadresse  
Sydneplass 12-13  
Bergen

Saksbehandler  
Steinar Thunestvedt  
55582384

### Suggested readings

The most convenient source is the *Cambridge Practical Philosophy* volume (eds. Mary J. Gregor and Allen W. Wood):

[http://books.google.co.uk/books/about/Practical\\_Philosophy.html?id=0hCsbUjFiBwC&redir\\_esc=y](http://books.google.co.uk/books/about/Practical_Philosophy.html?id=0hCsbUjFiBwC&redir_esc=y)

Kant's *Religion within the Limits of Mere Reason*:

[http://books.google.co.uk/books?id=iI5HnwEACAAJ&dq=editions:STvO6V-yuz0C&hl=en&sa=X&ei=P8VnU8\\_5OIav7Aa1xIDoAw&ved=0CDkQ6AEwAQ](http://books.google.co.uk/books?id=iI5HnwEACAAJ&dq=editions:STvO6V-yuz0C&hl=en&sa=X&ei=P8VnU8_5OIav7Aa1xIDoAw&ved=0CDkQ6AEwAQ)

Kant's *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals* is now available in the following format (translation heavily revised):

[http://books.google.co.uk/books/about/Immanuel\\_Kant\\_Groundwork\\_of\\_the\\_Metaphys.html?id=aJCKrSWnZZQC&redir\\_esc=y](http://books.google.co.uk/books/about/Immanuel_Kant_Groundwork_of_the_Metaphys.html?id=aJCKrSWnZZQC&redir_esc=y)

Since there is little literature on the specific topic of practical irrationality, let alone literature that contrasts imprudence and morality, no secondary literature is mentioned in this list. However, Dr. Timmermann will suggest some secondary sources during his lectures.