

POSSIBLE TOPICS FOR YOUR FINAL PAPER (just suggestions—you are encouraged to come up with your own)

1. The relationship between the 3 formulations of the Categorical imperative: How does Kant get from one to the other? How does he see them as related to each other? Examine whether as they stand, the 3 really do generate the same actions or maxims as permissible or impermissible. Can you see any difference between them that Kant does not recognize? (This topic has the advantage of having very targeted scholarly literature devoted to it, including articles in the Guyer collection on reserve.)
2. Going into depth on any one of the 3 formulations (*not* the one you are writing paper #2 on). How does Kant derive this formulation? What exactly does it mean? How does it work in generating or regulating conduct? What are some of the interpretive challenges in Kant's discussion of this formulation? (This topic has the advantage of having very targeted scholarly literature devoted to it, including articles in the Guyer collection on reserve.)
3. Kant's theory of freedom, especially in section III. What does he mean by freedom? How does he see freedom as related to morality? How does he see the idea of the "two realms" or "two worlds" (noumena and phenomena) solving what he regards in section III as an important problem about freedom.
4. Morality and God in Kant. You would probably have to read a bit in Kant's Religion Within the Limits of Reason Alone for this one (I'd help you figure out where), but you could use the passages from the Critique of Practical Reason in the Denis book as the core. There is good secondary literature, especially Allen Wood's Kant's Moral Religion.
5. Kant's theory of happiness. Some possible directions: What does Kant mean by "happiness"? What is the relation of happiness and reason? Happiness and morality? The moral requirement to further other people's ends (presumably leading to their happiness), but *not* a similar one for your own? Happiness-as-apportioned-to-virtue as part of the supreme good?
6. Kant on race. There would be different ways of pursuing this topic. There is only a small literature on this issue, all of it very recent; but there should be enough for a paper on this topic, taking into account the course reading, if you are interested.
7. Schopenhauer's views on morality and his criticisms of Kant. There is plenty material here to work with, although there is almost no scholarly literature that really takes up Schopenhauer's criticisms of Kant directly. But there is a little bit. And some of Schopenhauer's criticisms are like ones we have already seen, so you could combine those discussions.

SPECIFICATIONS FOR FINAL PAPER:

The paper must be a research paper in the following sense: (1) It must set up a question or set of related questions that you are investigating, that is, trying to answer.

(2) It must use primary sources, which will almost certainly include Kant (but it may be possible to write a paper only about Schopenhauer).

(3) It must use at least 2 scholarly sources that comment on the issue you are investigating. These can be scholarly journal articles, or chapters in scholarly books. Lists of several relevant books are in the handouts on scholarly work on Kant. Many scholarly articles and chapters refer to other scholarly articles and chapters, and that is a good way to find them.

***You must also discuss your topic with me before you get too far into it. But I would somewhat like you to look around at some of the secondary literature related to the topic you think you'd like to write on before you talk to me. But it's a chicken-and-egg issue, and if you want to talk to me first so I can help point you toward secondary literature, I guess that's OK.