I. DESCRIPTION

We study Wilfrid Sellars’s famous attack on the Myth of the Given and followed by the appropriations of his Hegelian-spirited project by the "Pittsburgh school," i.e., Robert Brandom and John McDowell. The course focuses on the inferentialism of Brandom and McDowell's neo-empiricism. We examine the central texts of these philosophers, their public debates, as well as their reception by other contemporary philosophers, such as Richard Rorty, Hilary Putnam, and Hubert Dreyfus.

This course introduces students to pioneering contemporary discussions that challenge the modern conceptions of philosophical activity and provide opportunities for innovative response to central metaphysical and epistemological problems. It also engages important recent Analytic philosophers and their appropriation of and alignment with the contributions of seminal continental philosophers.

II. REQUIRED TEXTS

Wilfrid Sellars, Empiricism and the Philosophy of Mind (Harvard, 1997).

-Other readings essential for the course are available on iLearn (http://ilearn.sfsu.edu) as .pdf files. Please print these out and bring to class.

III. COURSE REQUIREMENTS

The grade will be determined by a 15-20 page term paper (50%) and class presentation(s) (40%), and written reply to a presentation (10%). Each presenter will submit a 3-5 page paper on the topic presented at least 48 hours before the presentation, otherwise the student will not be permitted to present and will not get any credit for the presentation. For a detailed account of the presentation requirements, consult the handout. In addition, regular attendance and thoughtful participation in class discussion can enhance your final grade by one gradation. For example, a “B-” might become a “B” if you have contributed productively to the class.
IV. POLICIES

Missed or Late Work
Assignments turned in late will be docked 1/3 a letter grade per day (e.g. a B+ would become a B).

Electronic Communication
The best way to get in touch with me is via email (azad@sfsu.edu). Feel free to email me at any point during the semester if you have any questions or concerns. I do not answer emails in the evening, but you can expect to receive a response within a day from my receiving your email.

Laptops and Cellphones
Laptops are permitted in class for the sole purpose of taking notes. Please do not visit any websites (especially social media), as it distracts other students and disrupts the learning environment of the class. Please do not text or browse the Internet on your cellphone during class. If you feel that you must use your cellphone, please leave the classroom and do so outside.

Plagiarism
Students are responsible for knowing what plagiarism is, and for not committing it in any of their submitted work. For more details see: http://conduct.sfsu.edu/plagiarism. Any assignment found to be plagiarized will be given an "F" grade. All instances of plagiarism in the College of Humanities will be reported to the Dean of the College.

Religious Holidays
Students who must be absent from class in order to observe religious a holiday must inform the instructor, in writing, about such holidays during the first two weeks of the class each semester. If such holidays occur during the first two weeks of the semester, the student must notify the instructor, in writing, at least three days before the date that he/she will be absent. Students who meet these conditions will not be penalized for their absence, and will be able to make up the work missed.

Disability Accommodation
Students with disabilities who need reasonable accommodations are encouraged to contact the instructor. The Disability Programs and Resource Center (DPRC: http://www.sfsu.edu/~dprc) is available to facilitate the reasonable accommodations process. The DPRC is in the Student Services Building 110. They can be reached by telephone (voice/TTY 415-338-2472) or by email dprc@sfsu.edu.

V. SCHEDULE: This schedule is subject to revision. Major changes will be discussed with the students.

1. Jan. 27: Introduction
   -Rorty, Introduction to “Empiricism and the Philosophy of Mind.”

2. Feb. 3: Sellars on the Myth of the Given and Kant
   -Brandom’s Study Guide, pp. 119-162.
   -Suggested Readings:
     -Sellars, “Sensibility and Understanding.”

3. Feb. 10: Sellars and Brandom on the Myth of Jones and Sense Impressions

4. Feb. 17: McDowell on Sellars, Sense Impressions and Intentionality
   -McDowell: “Having the World in View: Sellars, Kant, and Intentionality” (3 lectures).
5. **Feb. 24: Analytic Hegelians I**  
   - Brandom, “Freedom and Constraint by Norms.”  
   - Suggested Reading:  

6. **Mar. 3: Brandom’s Inferentialism I: Constitutive-Pragmatist-Relationally-Linguist-Conceptual-Expressivism**  

7. **Mar. 10: Brandom’s Inferentialism II: On Reliabilism and Social Practice**  

8. **Mar. 17: Brandom’s Inferentialism III: Objectivity and Normativity.**  
   - Suggested Reading:  

March 24: No Class. Spring Recess  
March 31: No Class. Cesar Chavez Day

9. **Apr. 7: McDowell’s Empiricism I: Intuitions and the Unboundedness of the Conceptual**  
   - Suggested Readings:  
   - Rorty, “McDowell, Davidson, and Spontaneity.”  
   - McDowell, “Reply to Rorty.”

    - McDowell, *Mind and World*, Lectures III-IV, Afterword, Part II  
    - Suggested Reading:  

11. **Apr. 21: Final McDowell**  
    A) **McDowell’s Empiricism III: Naturalized Platonism and Rational Animals**  
        - McDowell, *Mind and World*, Lectures V-VI, Afterword, Parts III and IV.
    B) **The Shift in McDowell’s Account of Empirical Content**  
        - McDowell, “Avoiding the Myth of the Given.”

12. **Apr. 28: Tracking Some of the Debates Between Brandom & McDowell**  
    - McDowell, “Knowledge and the Internal.”  
    - Brandom, “Knowledge and the Social Articulation of the Space of Reasons.”  
    - Suggested Readings:  
    - Brandom: “Perception and Rational Constraint”  
    - McDowell’s Reply.

13. **May 5: Analytic Hegelians II**  
    - Brandom, “Some Pragmatist Themes in Hegel’s Idealism.”  
    - McDowell: “Comments on Robert Brandom’s ‘Some Pragmatist Themes in Hegel’s Idealism.’”  
    - Suggested Reading:  
14. **May 12: Putnam on McDowell’s Empiricism.**

   - Suggested Reading:
     - Putnam, “McDowell’s Mind and McDowell’s World.”
     - McDowell’s Reply.

**May 22, Noon: Final Paper Due on iLearn**