F.W.J. Schelling called idealism “the soul of philosophy.” In his view, reason, when it is most rational, inevitably issues in idealism, the thesis that reality is mind-dependent, or more generally, idea-dependent. However, idealism is not identical with subjectivism; in fact, it is fully compatible with an objectivism of ideas, such as one first encounters in Plato, and later in German and British Idealists of the 19th Century. The tension between subjective idealism and objective idealism will be a focus of this course. Students will learn how the effort to overcome idealism typifies contemporary continental philosophy to this day. They will also learn how such an effort is doomed to fail if it does not first reckon with the inevitability and reasonableness of idealism.

The course will be divided into two: a lecture series, running on two mornings a week for the first six weeks of the semester, and a seminar, meeting one night a week for the last six weeks of the seminar. Doctoral students will be required to give seminar presentations in the second half of the semester.

Texts: Selections from:

*The Collected Dialogues of Plato*
*Eriugena, Periphyseon*
*Hume, An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding*
*Berkley, Philosophical Writings (Cambridge)*
*Kant, Critique of Pure Reason*
*Fichte, Science of Knowledge*
*Hegel, The Difference Between Fichte’s and Schelling’s System of Philosophy*
*Hegel, Philosophy of Mind (Encyclopedia, part III)*
*Schelling, Grounding of the Positive Philosophy*
*Bradley, Appearance and Reality*