

**Philosophy 5955-640  
Spring 2025**

**Stephen P. Steinberg, Ph.D.  
Lecturer in Philosophy**

## **Contemporary Continental Philosophy SYLLABUS**

This **MLA seminar course** is an introduction to 20th-century continental European philosophy, focusing on the origins and development of phenomenology, existentialism, hermeneutics, and deconstruction. The centrality of phenomenology to an understanding of these movements and other contemporary trends in European thought will be emphasized throughout. We will begin the semester with a brief exploration of the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century philosophical background and an introduction to the phenomenology of Edmund Husserl. This will be followed by an examination of three existentialist critics of Husserl, whose philosophies have influenced much of recent continental thought: Martin Heidegger, Jean-Paul Sartre, and Maurice Merleau-Ponty. Finally, we will examine the important influence of phenomenology and existentialism on contemporary trends in continental philosophy as exhibited in works by writers such as Hannah Arendt, Simone de Beauvoir, Hans Georg Gadamer, Paul Ricoeur, and Jacques Derrida.

- Primarily intended for students in the **Master of Liberal Arts Program**.
- **Undergraduates are very welcome**, but must obtain the permission of the instructor, their faculty advisor, and their college office.
- **No prerequisites** or previous study of philosophy required.
- Requires student use of **Canvas**, **Zoom**, and other online applications.

**Course Format:** Weekly Seminar Meetings (Tuesdays, 5:15-8:15 p.m.)

**Course Location:** 493 Claudia Cohen Hall

**Instructor:** [Stephen P. Steinberg, Ph.D.](#), *Lecturer in Philosophy*

**Email:** [sps@upenn.edu](mailto:sps@upenn.edu) *Please do not use Canvas email to contact the instructor.*

**Office Hours:** Immediately after class or by appointment (via Zoom or in person).

**“Drop-in” Office Hour:** Tuesdays 2:30-3:00 pm (when classes are meeting).

**Office Location:** 429 Claudia Cohen Hall, Department of Philosophy

### **Course Goals:**

- Develop familiarity with and an understanding of the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century philosophical background and origins of contemporary continental European philosophy.
- Develop familiarity with and an understanding of the transcendental phenomenology and phenomenological method of Edmund Husserl and its central role in the development of phenomenology, existentialism, hermeneutics, and deconstruction in the 20<sup>th</sup> century.
- Develop familiarity with and an understanding of the development of post-Husserlian phenomenology, existentialism, hermeneutics, and deconstruction in the 20th century.

## About this COURSE

Critically engaging the **readings and seminar discussions** are the primary learning modalities in this course, so keeping up with the assigned readings, contributing to the weekly discussion forums on Canvas, and participating regularly and actively in the weekly seminar discussions should be prioritized. There is a lot of reading, and good philosophical reading often requires repeated readings and carefully analyzing and evaluating what you are reading.

## About SEMINAR DISCUSSIONS

The **Tuesday Evening Seminar Discussions** will provide an opportunity for in-depth discussion of each week's topic. Active participation in the seminar discussions will be essential to developing a deeper engagement with and understanding of 20<sup>th</sup> century continental European philosophy. Each discussion will highlight and explain important aspects of the required readings. Student questions and comments submitted **by 12:00 p.m. on Tuesdays on the weekly Canvas Discussion Forums** or raised during the weekly seminar discussions will be a central focus of these conversations.

## About READINGS

There is a lot of reading, and good philosophical reading often requires repeated readings and carefully analyzing and evaluating what you are reading. The course readings are divided into **Required Readings** and optional **Recommended Readings**. The **Required Readings** will be the focus of each week's seminar discussions. Students should come to class having read and reflected on the Required Readings and well prepared to discuss them. The **Recommended Readings** are intended to provide useful background (especially for those with no previous study of philosophy) and opportunities for deeper exploration of particular topics.

## About CANVAS

The University's Canvas learning management system serves as the central resource for course information and materials and integrates many of the functions and utilities you will need to utilize during the course of the semester. *It is imperative that you familiarize yourself with Canvas before the beginning of the Spring semester and quickly achieve a level of comfort using it to access course materials and participate in the work of the course.* For an introduction to or help with Canvas, go to [Canvas for Students](#) or the [Canvas Student Guide](#). You should also review Canvas's [basic computer requirements](#) and [supported browsers](#), and consider downloading the Canvas Student app on your [iOS](#) or [Android](#) devices.

## About the CANVAS DISCUSSION FORUMS

The **Canvas Discussion Forums** are fully integrated with and accessed from the course's Canvas website. Students in this course are **required** to post questions/comments on each week's readings to the weekly Discussion Forum **by 12:00 p.m. on Tuesdays**. These questions and comments will be an important focus of each week's seminar conversation.

## About OFFICE HOURS

Students in this course should take full advantage of the instructor's office hours, including the Tuesday, 2:30-3:00 p.m., office "drop-ins." Office hours may be in-person (either immediately after class or by appointment) or online via Zoom. I will usually be available immediately after each Tuesday Seminar Discussion, which is often the most convenient time to answer short questions, discuss student work, or schedule a longer conversation. If you can't stay after class, or wish to speak more privately or at greater length, just email me to set up an appointment to meet either online via Zoom or in person at a more convenient time. (In your email, please list several times when you're available to meet.)

## COURSE STRUCTURE for Spring 2025

This course is scheduled to meet in-person, once-per-week, on **Tuesdays from 5:15-8:15 p.m.**

### Required Assignments & Assessments

- **Weekly:**
  - **Assigned Readings** (from the required textbooks and from PDF readings on Canvas).
  - **Canvas Discussion Forums** (for questions and comments on the readings).
  - **Attendance and Active Participation in Weekly Seminar Discussions.**
- **Other:**
  - **Two Short Mid-Term Essays** (*approximately* 4-5 pp. or 1000-1250 words each) on topics selected from lists distributed on Canvas.
  - **Roundtable discussions** of students' preliminary final paper topics.
  - **Brief Written Proposal** (1-2 pp.) for the student's final paper.
  - **Final Paper** (*approximately* 10-12 pp. or 2500-3000 words) on a topic of the student's choice, approved by and developed in consultation with the instructor.

### Weekly Student Schedule

- **Wednesday to Tuesday:**
  - Critically read and take notes on the weekly assigned readings and prepare for active participation in the Tuesday seminar discussions.
  - Submit questions and comments about the readings on the Canvas Discussion Forums for the Tuesday seminar discussions.
- **Tuesday:** Participate actively in the weekly seminar discussions focused on student questions/comments and important aspects of the lectures and readings.

### Estimated Total Student Workload

Approximately 10-15 hrs./wk., including class time, reading, and preparation of student papers. [The amount of reading and paper preparation time will vary from week-to-week.]

## COURSE MATERIALS

All required and recommended supplemental texts are available from the University of Pennsylvania Bookstore and can be [purchased or rented online](#), or can be ordered (often at lower cost) from Amazon.com or other bookstores using the ISBN #s listed below. Some texts may be available as e-textbooks or in other digital formats.

### Required Texts:

- David R. Cerbone, *Understanding Phenomenology* (Taylor & Francis, 2006, pb.), ISBN-13: 9781844650552.
- Martin Heidegger, *Basic Writings*, ed. by David Farrell Krell (HarperCollins, 2008, pb.), ISBN-13: 9780061627019.
- Martin Heidegger, *Discourse on Thinking* (HarperCollins, 1959, pb.), ISBN-13: 9780061314599.
- Dermot Moran and Timothy Mooney (eds.), *The Phenomenology Reader* (Taylor & Francis, 2002, pb.), ISBN-13: 9780415224222.
- Charles Guignon and Derek Pereboom (eds.), *Existentialism: Basic Writings, Second Edition* (Hackett, 2001, pb.), ISBN-13: 9780872205956.
- Dan Zahavi, *Phenomenology: The Basics* (Routledge, 2019, pb.), ISBN-13: 9781138216709.

### Recommended Texts:

- George Steiner, *Martin Heidegger* (Chicago, 1991, pb.), ISBN-13: 9780226772325.

**Additional Required and Recommended Supplemental PDF Readings** will be distributed as PDF files on the course's Canvas website.

### Online Philosophy Resources:

The [Philosophy Department website](#) provides an excellent list of online philosophy resources and texts. Among these, the following may be especially helpful:

- **Dictionary of Philosophical Terms and Names:**  
<http://www.philosophypages.com/dy/index.htm>
- **Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy:**  
<http://www.iep.utm.edu/religion/>
- **Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy:**  
<http://plato.stanford.edu/>
- **Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy:**  
<https://www.rep.routledge.com/>

### **About FUTURE CHANGES**

Please keep in mind that it may be necessary to make changes in the course plans described in this Syllabus, either before or during the semester. *All changes will be announced on Canvas to all students registered for the course.*

### ***In case of EMERGENCY...***

Life is unpredictable. Stuff happens. In the event that you encounter sudden health emergencies (for yourself or your family) or any other personal circumstances or issues that may interfere with your participation in this course please ***inform your instructor as soon as possible***, either directly or via Course Absence Notices (accessed from Paths@Penn), so that alternative arrangements can be made.

### **COURSE OUTLINE, POLICIES, and RESOURCES**

- For information on **Course Modules, Seminar Topics, Readings, and Assignments**, see below, pp. 6-13.
- For information on **Course Requirements, Policies, and Resources**, see below, pp. 14-21.

## MODULES, SEMINAR TOPICS, READINGS, and ASSIGNMENTS

**PLEASE NOTE:**

- Readings marked by “[PDF]” will be distributed as PDF files on [Canvas](#).
- Readings marked with an asterisk (\*) are especially important or useful.

**MODULE I: INTRODUCTION**

*January 12-31 Pre-course Survey Available on Canvas.*

**Wk.1 1/21 Modernity and Consciousness:  
The Subjective Turn**

**REQUIRED READINGS** [*to be read after the first class meeting*]:

- \*David Cerbone, “Introduction: opening exercises,” in *Understanding Phenomenology*.
- Dan Zahavi, in *Phenomenology: The Basics*:
  - “Introduction.”
  - \*Ch.1: “The Phenomena.”

**RECOMMENDED READINGS**

- \*Rene Descartes, “Meditations I and II,” from *Meditations on First Philosophy* (1641), from *The Philosophical Works of Descartes* (1911, Cambridge University Press), Elizabeth S. Haldane, trans. [PDF]
- \*Thomas Nagel, “The Subjective Dimensions of Consciousness,” excerpt from “What is it Like to be a Bat?” from *Mortal Questions in Western Philosophy: An Anthology*, John Cottingham, ed.. [PDF]

**Wk.2 1/28 Philosophy as the Science of Consciousness:  
Franz Brentano, Minds, and Intentionality**

**REQUIRED READINGS:**

- Franz von Brentano, in *The Phenomenology Reader*, Dermot Moran and Timothy Mooney, eds., Part I:
  - Selection #1: “Psychology from an Empirical Standpoint: Foreword to the 1874 Edition.”
  - \*Selection #2: “The Distinction Between Mental and Physical Phenomena” (1874).
- \*David Cerbone, “Franz Brentano (1838-1917),” p.12 in *Understanding Phenomenology*.

**RECOMMENDED READINGS:**

- \*Dan Zahavi, Ch.2: “Intentionality,” in *Phenomenology: The Basics*.
- Robert Sokolowski, Ch. 1, “What Is Intentionality and Why Is It Important?” from *Introduction to Phenomenology*. [PDF]

**MODULE II: EDMUND HUSSERL'S TRANSCENDENTAL PHENOMENOLOGY**

**Wk.3 2/4 The Natural Attitude and Philosophy as Rigorous Science**

**REQUIRED READINGS:**

- **David Cerbone**, in *Understanding Phenomenology*:
  - \*Excerpt, pp. 11-21, from Ch. 1, "Husserl and the project of pure phenomenology,"
- \***Edmund Husserl**, excerpt, pp. 166-185, from "Philosophy as Rigorous Science," from *Phenomenology and the Crisis of Philosophy*, in *The Essential Husserl*, Don Welton, ed. [PDF]

**RECOMMENDED READINGS:**

- **Edmund Husserl**, Secs. 27-30, from Ch.1 of *Ideas I*. [PDF]

**Wk.4 2/11 The Transcendental Turn:  
The Phenomenological Reduction and the Suspension of the Natural Attitude**

**REQUIRED READINGS:**

- **David Cerbone**, excerpts, pp. 21-23 and 34-37, from Ch. 1, "Husserl and the project of pure phenomenology," in *Understanding Phenomenology*.
- \***Edmund Husserl**, "Phenomenology and Anthropology," pp. 276-289, in *Existentialism: Basic Writings*.
- \***Edmund Husserl**, *The Paris Lectures*, Selection #1 from *Phenomenology and Existentialism*, ed. by Robert C. Solomon. [PDF].

**RECOMMENDED READINGS:**

- **Edmund Husserl**, excerpts, pp. 60-68 and pp. 83-85 (from Secs. 27-34 50, and 55), from "The Basic Approach of Phenomenology," from *Ideas I*, in *The Essential Husserl*, Don Welton, ed. [PDF]
- \***Edmund Husserl**, "Introduction" and "First Meditation" from *Cartesian Meditations*, trans. by Dorion Cairns. [PDF]
- \***Izchak Miller**, "The Phenomenological Reduction," Ch. 9, from *Husserl, Perception, and Temporal Awareness*. [PDF]
- **Dan Zahavi**, in *Phenomenology: The Basics*:
  - \*Ch.3: "Methodological considerations."
  - Ch.4: excerpt, pp. 44-51, from "Science and the lifeworld."

February 16

First Mid-Term Essay Topics Available on Canvas

Wk.5 2/18

## Husserl's Account of Intentionality, the Lived Body, and the Life-World

### SPECIAL HOMEWORK ASSIGNMENT

#### REQUIRED READINGS:

- **David Cerbone, *Understanding Phenomenology*:**
  - Excerpt, pp. 23-34, from Ch. 1, "Husserl and the project of pure phenomenology,"
  - "Husserl and the life-world," p. 51.
- ***Phenomenology and Existentialism*, Robert C. Solomon, ed.:**
  - \*Selection #24: **Edmund Husserl**, "Noema and Noesis." [PDF]
  - \*Selection #28: **Dagfinn Føllesdal**, "Husserl's Notion of Noema," in *Phenomenology and Existentialism*, Robert C. Solomon, ed. [PDF]

#### RECOMMENDED READINGS I:

- **Edmund Husserl**, in *The Phenomenology Reader*, Dermot Moran and Timothy Mooney, eds., Part II:
  - Secs. 87-90 (pp. 134-140) and Secs. 93-95 (pp.144-148), excerpts from Selection #5: "Noesis and Noema," from *Ideas I*.
  - \*Secs. 28-35 (pp. 151-174), excerpt from Selection #6: "The Way into Phenomenological Transcendental Philosophy by Inquiring Back from the Pre-given Life-World," from *The Crisis of the European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology: An Introduction to Phenomenological Philosophy*.
- **\*Ronald McIntyre and David Woodruff Smith**, "Theory of Intentionality," from *Husserl's Phenomenology: A Textbook*, J. N. Mohanty and Wm. R. McKenna, eds. [PDF]
- **Dan Zahavi**, in *Phenomenology: The Basics*.
  - \*Ch.4: excerpt, pp. 51-55, from "Science and the lifeworld."
  - Ch.8: "Intersubjectivity and sociality"

#### RECOMMENDED READINGS II - *Examples of Husserl's phenomenological descriptions:*

- **\*Edmund Husserl**, Excerpt from Secs. 27-30 of Ch.1 of *Ideas I*, trans. by F. Kersten. [*Husserl's description of the experience of "the World" in the natural attitude.*] [PDF]
- **\*Edmund Husserl**, Excerpts from "Fifth Meditation" from *Cartesian Meditations*, trans. by Dorion Cairns, in *Phenomenology and Existentialism*, Robert C. Solomon, ed. [*Husserl's description of the constitution of the experience of the Other (i.e., Intersubjectivity)*]. [PDF]



**MODULE III: MARTIN HEIDEGGER'S EXISTENTIAL PHENOMENOLOGY**

**Wk.6 2/25 The Question About Being**

**REQUIRED READINGS:**

- **Martin Heidegger**, in *The Phenomenology Reader*, Dermot Moran and Timothy Mooney, eds., Part VI:
  - Introduction.
  - \*Selection #1: “My Way to Phenomenology.”
- **Martin Heidegger**, in *Basic Writings*, David Farrell Krell, ed.:
  - \*Selection I: “*Being and Time*: Introduction.”
  - \*Selection II: “What is Metaphysics?”

**RECOMMENDED READINGS:**

- **David Farrell Krell**, “General Introduction: The Question of Being,” in Martin Heidegger, *Basic Writings*, David Farrell Krell, ed.
- **Martin Heidegger**, in *The Phenomenology Reader*, Dermot Moran and Timothy Mooney, eds., Part VI:
  - Selection #2. “The Fundamental Discoveries of Phenomenology, its Principle, and the Clarification of its Name.”
- **George Steiner**, *Martin Heidegger*:
  - \* “Introduction—Heidegger: In 1991.”
  - \* “In Place of a Forward.”
  - \* Ch. 1: “Some Basic Terms.”

**Wk.7 3/4 The Analytic of Dasein**

**REQUIRED READINGS:**

- **David Cerbone**, Ch. 2, “Heidegger and the existential turn,” in *Understanding Phenomenology*.
- **Martin Heidegger**, in *Existentialism: Basic Writings*, Charles Guignon and Derk Pereboom, eds.:
  - Introduction, pp. 183-210.
  - \* “Selections,” from Divisions One and Two of *Being and Time*, pp. 219-254.

**RECOMMENDED READINGS:**

- **Søren Kierkegaard**, from *Existentialism*, by Robert C. Solomon:
  - “Truth is Subjectivity” from *Concluding Unscientific Postscript* [PDF]
  - Excerpt from “*The Concept of Anxiety*.” [PDF]
  - “Concerning the Dedication to ‘The Individual.’” [PDF]
- \* **George Steiner**, Ch. 2, “Being and Time,” in *Martin Heidegger*.

*Friday, March 7 First Mid-term Essays Due via Canvas.*

*March 8-24 Mid-course Survey available on Canvas.*

**Wk.8 3/11 NO CLASS -- Spring Break [3/8-16]**

Wk.9 3/18

## The Destruction of the History of Western Metaphysics and the Problem of Hermeneutic Understanding

### REQUIRED READINGS:

- **Martin Heidegger**, from *Being and Time*:
  - \*Excerpt from Section #32: "Understanding and Interpretation." [PDF]
  - \*Section #63: "The Hermeneutical Situation." [PDF]
- \***Martin Heidegger**, "Overcoming Metaphysics," from *The End of Philosophy*. [PDF]
- **Martin Heidegger**, Secs. 6 & 8 of the "Introduction" to *Being and Time*. [PDF]

### RECOMMENDED READINGS I:

- **Friedrich Nietzsche**, in *Existentialism: Basic Writings*, Charles Guignon and Derk Pereboom, eds.:
  - Excerpts, pp. 172-181, from *Twilight of the Idols, Or, How to Philosophize with the Hammer*:
    - "The Problem of Socrates."
    - "'Reason' in Philosophy."
    - "How the 'True World' Finally Became a Fiction."

### RECOMMENDED READINGS II – *Elements of Heidegger's Destruction of the History of Western Metaphysics*:

- **Martin Heidegger**, in *Basic Writings*, David Farrell Krell, ed.:
  - \*Selection III: "The Essence of Truth."
  - \*Selection VI: "Modern Science, Metaphysics, and Mathematics."
  - Selection VII: "The Question Concerning Technology."
- **Parmenides**, "Poem of Parmenides," trans. by John Burnett. [PDF]

March 23

*Second Mid-term Essay Topics Available on Canvas.*

Wk.10 3/25

## The Task of Thinking After the End of Philosophy

*First Roundtable Discussion of Tentative Final Paper Topics*

### REQUIRED READINGS:

- **Martin Heidegger**, *Discourse on Thinking*:
  - \*"Memorial Address."
  - "Conversation on a Country Path."
- **Martin Heidegger**, in *Basic Writings*, David Farrell Krell, ed.:
  - Selection IV: "The Origin of the Work of Art."
  - Selection V: "Letter on Humanism."
  - \*Selection IX: "What Calls for Thinking."
  - \*Selection XI: "The End of Philosophy and the Task of Thinking."

### RECOMMENDED READINGS:

- \***George Steiner**, Ch. 3, "The Presence of Heidegger," in *Martin Heidegger*.
- **Vincent Van Gogh**, "A Pair of Shoes," painting (1886). [JPEG]

**MODULE IV: POST-HEIDEGGERIAN PHENOMENOLOGY**

**Wk.11 4/1 Jean-Paul Sartre: Freedom, Authenticity, and the Existential Account of Intentionality**

**REQUIRED READINGS:**

- **David Cerbone**, Ch. 3, "Sartre and subjectivity," in *Understanding Phenomenology*.
- **Jean-Paul Sartre**, in *The Phenomenology Reader*, Part IX:
  - Introduction, pp. 377-381.
  - \*Selection #1: "Intentionality: A Fundamental Idea of Husserl's Phenomenology."
  - \*Excerpts, pp. 382-392 and 395-405, from Selection #2: "The Transcendence of the Ego."
- **Jean-Paul Sartre**, in *Existentialism: Basic Writings*, Charles Guignon and Derk Pereboom, eds.:
  - Introduction, pp. 255-275.
  - \*"The Humanism of Existentialism," pp.290-308.

**RECOMMENDED READINGS:**

- **Izchak Miller**, "Husserl and Sartre on the Self," *The Monist*, Vol. 69, No. 4, Intentionality (October, 1986), pp. 534-545. [PDF]
- **Jean-Paul Sartre**, in *Existentialism: Basic Writings*, Charles Guignon and Derk Pereboom, eds.:
  - \*Selections #1-10, pp. 309-362, from *Being and Nothingness*.

**Wk.12 4/8 Maurice Merleau-Ponty: The Embodiment of Consciousness and the Primacy of Perception**

**Second Roundtable Discussion of Progress on Final Papers.**

**REQUIRED READINGS:**

- \***David Cerbone**, Ch. 4, "Merleau-Ponty and the phenomenology of embodiment," *Understanding Phenomenology*.
- \***Maurice Merleau-Ponty**, selections from *Phenomenology and Existentialism*, Robert C. Solomon, ed. (*to be read in the order listed*): [PDF]
  - Selection #11: "The Philosopher and his Shadow."
  - Selection #27: "Experience and Objective Thought."
  - Selection #33: "The Battle Over Existentialism."
  - Selection #37: "Preface to the *Phenomenology of Perception*."
  - Selection #44: "The Body, Motility, and Spatiality."
  - Selection #52: "Other People and the Human World."
  - Selection #55: "Freedom."

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**RECOMMENDED READINGS:**

- **Maurice Merleau-Ponty**, “An Unpublished Text: A Prospectus of His Work” from *The Merleau-Ponty Reader*, T. Toadvine and L. Lawlor, eds. [PDF]
- **Maurice Merleau-Ponty**, in *The Phenomenology Reader*, Part X:
  - “Introduction,” pp.423-426.
  - Selection #1: “The Body as Object and Mechanistic Psychology.”
- **Dan Zahavi**, in *Phenomenology: The Basics*:
  - \*Ch.5: “Digging deeper: from surface to depth phenomenology.”
  - \*Ch.6: “Merleau-Ponty’s preface to *Phenomenology of Perception*.”
  - \*Ch.7: “Spatiality and embodiment.”

**Sunday, April 13**

**Second Mid-Term Essays Due via Canvas**

**Wk. 13 4/15**

**Simone de Beauvoir: The Body as Situation**

**REQUIRED READINGS:**

- **Simone de Beauvoir**, in *The Phenomenology Reader*, Part XI:
  - “Introduction,” pp. 463-466.
  - \*Selection #2: “Women’s Situation and Character,” pp.486-507.
- \***Simone de Beauvoir**, “Introduction to an Ethics of Ambiguity,” (1946) with an “Introduction” by Gail Weiss, in *Philosophical Writings*, Margaret A Simons, ed. [PDF]
- \***Simone de Beauvoir**, “A Review of *The Phenomenology of Perception* by Maurice Merleau-Ponty” (1945) in *Philosophical Writings*, Margaret A Simons, ed. [PDF]

**RECOMMENDED READINGS:**

- \***Sara Heinama**, “Simone de Beauvoir’s Phenomenology of Sexual Difference,” from *Hypatia*, 14:4 (Fall 1999). [PDF]

**Sunday, April 20**

**Final Paper Proposals Due via Canvas**

**Wk.14 4/22**

**Jacques Derrida: The Deconstruction of Meaning and the Critique of the Metaphysics of Presence**

**REQUIRED READINGS:**

- **David Cerbone**, excerpt, pp. 148-157, from Ch. 5, “Problems and prospects: phenomenology and its critics,” in *Understanding Phenomenology*.
- **Jacques Derrida**, in *The Phenomenology Reader*, Part XIII:
  - Selection 1: “Signs and the Blink of an Eye.”
  - Selection 2: “Differance.”
- **Jacques Derrida**, from *A Derrida Reader: Between the Blinds*, Peggy Kamuf, ed.:
  - “Letter to a Japanese Friend.” [PDF]
  - “Restitution of the Truth in Pointing.” [PDF]

*Continued on next page...*

**RECOMMENDED READINGS:**

- [\\*Julian Baggini, "Think Jacques Derrida was a charlatan? Look again" - Prospect Magazine \[PDF\]](#)
- **Richard Kearney**, "Jacques Derrida" from *Modern Movements in European Philosophy*. [PDF]
- **Richard Kearney**, from *Dialogues with Contemporary Continental Thinkers*:
  - "Dialogue with Jacques Derrida" [PDF]:
    - "Prefatory Note."
    - "Deconstruction and the Other."

**Wk.15 4/29**

**Hannah Arendt and the Phenomenology of Human Thought and Action**

*Updates on Progress on Final Papers (if needed)*

**REQUIRED READINGS:**

- \* **Hannah Arendt**, in *The Phenomenology Reader*, Part VIII:
  - "Introduction," pp. 341-344.
  - \*Selection #2: "Labor, Work, Action."
- \***Hannah Arendt**, "Thinking and Moral Considerations," *Social Research*, 38:3, Autumn 1971. [PDF]

**RECOMMENDED READINGS:**

- **Hannah Arendt**, in *The Phenomenology Reader*, Part VIII:
  - Selection #1: "What is Existenz Philosophy?"

*Sunday 5/11*

*Final Papers Due Via Canvas*

*May 11-31*

*Post-course Survey on Canvas*

## Course Requirements, Policies, and Resources

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### 1. Required Readings, Attendance, and Class Participation

This course is a seminar, and as such, its success depends largely on the responsible preparation and active participation of all its members. *Familiarity with all assigned readings, and attendance and active participation in the Tuesday seminar meetings are required. Students are expected to do all of the readings before class and come to class prepared with questions and comments on the material.*

Your grade for participation will reflect how often and substantively you contributed to both the online discussion forums and the in-class discussions, as well as the degree to which your contributions were constructive and generative of further response(s) from your fellow classmates. Failure to participate, or combative posturing, defamatory remarks, or statements that are off-topic may negatively impact your participation grade.

### 2. Final Grade Components

**30% - Seminar Participation and Engagement with the Course:** Keeping up with the assigned readings, posting discussion forum questions and comments, and active participation in the weekly seminar discussions are required.

**30% - Two Mid-term Essays (15% each):** Two short essays (*approximately* 4-5 pp. or 1000-1250 words each) responding to a question selected from a list of topics distributed on Canvas. These essays are intended to demonstrate familiarity with the readings, lectures, and seminar discussions on Husserl and Heidegger and to provide practice in philosophical analysis and argumentation.

**40% - Final Paper (including 1-2 pp. Written Proposal and participation in Roundtable Class Discussions):** A final paper (*approximately* 10-12 pp. or 2500-3000 words) on a topic of the student's choosing approved by and developed in consultation with the instructor.

### 3. Grading Standards\*

**A** = Outstanding, nearly flawless work; assignment(s) completed thoroughly; technically excellent in spelling, grammar, format, citations, etc.; excellent in writing style, presentation, organization, and clarity of philosophical analysis; evidence of real intellectual engagement with the course content; thorough grasp of the philosophical issues and connections among issues; and synthesis of individual elements into a broader narrative or analysis.

**B** = Good, generally satisfactory work; all aspects of assignment(s) completed thoroughly and competently; technically competent (though perhaps not perfect) in spelling, grammar, format, citations, etc.; adequate in writing style, organization, presentation and clarity of philosophical analysis; limited grasp of the philosophical issues and connections among issues.

**C** = Less than fully satisfactory work; assignment(s) not completed thoroughly or according to instructions; basic grasp of issues not always evident; more than occasional technical flaws in writing, presentation, organization, spelling, grammar, format, citations, etc.

**D** = Basic work of course (or assignment) not done; little effort evident.

**F** = Failure in all or virtually all of the above criteria.

\* *The grading scheme used for assignments and final grades in this course includes the use of plusses (+) and minuses (-) and conforms to the [grading system](#) of the School of Arts and Sciences (with the addition of +.30 for A+ work on individual assignments).*

### 4. Weekly Discussion Questions

**Each student is required to prepare and submit a question or comment for class discussion by 12:00 p.m. on Tuesdays on the weekly Canvas Discussion Forums.** These questions will be a focus of discussion in each week's seminar meeting and are intended to foster engagement with the course material and contribute to the student's participation grade.

### 5. Major Written Assignments

Satisfactory and on-time completion of several written assignments will be required:

- **Two short mid-term essays (approximately 4-5 pp. or 1000-1250 words each) -- due via Canvas on Friday, March 7<sup>th</sup> and Sunday, April 13<sup>th</sup>** -- on a topic selected from a list of topics distributed in class. These essays are intended to demonstrate familiarity with the readings and class discussions on Husserl and Heidegger and to provide practice in philosophical analysis and argumentation.
- **A short, written proposal (1-2 pp.) -- due via Canvas on Sunday, April 20<sup>th</sup>** -- defining a philosophic problem raised by the course content to be addressed in the student's final paper, including a thesis statement, a brief sketch of the student's anticipated argument, and identification of any special questions or problems posed by the topic.

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- **A final paper (approximately 10-12 pp. or 2500-3000 words) – due via Canvas on Sunday, May 11<sup>th</sup> --** engaging the philosophic problem defined in the written proposal or subsequent revisions made in consultation with the instructor. The written proposal may be incorporated, with revisions, into the final paper. *Students **must** obtain the instructor's approval of their final paper topic.*

## 6. Additional Oral and Written Assignments

- **Roundtable Discussion of Tentative Final Paper Topics** (tentatively scheduled for **Tuesdays, March 25<sup>th</sup>, April 8<sup>th</sup>, and, if needed, on April 29<sup>th</sup>**): Periodically during the latter half of the semester, students will be asked to discuss in class the topic of their final paper, their progress working on it, and any problems or difficulties they may be encountering.
- **Weekly submission of questions or comments on each week's required readings:** These should be submitted by **12:00 p.m. on Tuesdays** on the weekly Canvas discussion forums.
- **Satisfactory and on-time completion** of other written assignments, in-class presentations, and exercises that may be assigned on a week-to-week basis during the semester is required.

## 7. Submission of Written Assignments

- **IMPORTANT:** *Please include your name and your topic number (or title for final papers) on the first page of each essay and in the digital filename.*
- *All assignment due dates and times are U.S./Canada Eastern Time (GMT-04:00).*
- All written assignments should be submitted **via Canvas**.
- All written assignments should be submitted as **pdf, doc, or docx documents, with normal 1" margins, numbered pages, double-spaced, and using a 12-point font.** Please do not submit documents in Google Docs or other formats, which may not be accepted by Canvas.
- *All direct and indirect quotations, paraphrases, and sources should be cited using the "Notes and Bibliography" system of the Chicago Manual of Style. **Do not use parenthetical formats for your citations of sources.*** See the quick reference guides at:
  - [Chicago Style Introduction](#)
  - [Chicago Manual of Style Citation Guide.](#)
  - [Notes and Bibliography System – Sample Paper](#)

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- *All written assignments--including midterm papers, discussion forum posts, and final papers and proposals--are subject to automated review for plagiarism and the use of generative artificial intelligence, which are not permitted in this class.* Students unfamiliar with academic writing, plagiarism, copyright, citation of sources, etc., should review the [Code of Academic Integrity](#) and seek additional assistance as needed from the [Weingarten Learning Resource Center](#), the [Marks Family Writing Center](#), or the [Information Desk at Van Pelt Library](#).
- Your papers should include a **clearly stated thesis and conclusion**.

## 8. Writing Resources

- The [Penn Marks Family Writing Center](#) offers individual writing guidance and feedback, scheduled appointments, workshops, etc.
- The [Weingarten Learning Resource Center](#) is a valuable resource for students needing assistance with their research, writing, and preparation of papers.
- For brief guides to writing a philosophy paper, see:
  - ["Guidelines for Writing a Philosophy Paper,"](#) by Jim Pryor (NYU). **[PDF]**
  - ["Writing Philosophy Papers,"](#) by John Perry, Michael Bratman, and John Martin Fischer, from *Introduction to Philosophy: Classical and Contemporary Readings, 8th ed.* **[PDF]**
  - [A sample student philosophy paper](#) is also available on Canvas. **[PDF]**
- Students needing additional guidance on reading philosophy or who want to improve their analytical, argumentative, and expository writing skills may find the following text helpful:
  - *Writing Philosophy: A Student's Guide to Writing Philosophy Essays*, by Lewis Vaughn (Oxford, 2018, 2nd edition, pb.), ISBN #9780190853013.
- For a brief guide to developing, analyzing, and writing philosophical arguments, see:
  - *A Rulebook for Arguments*, Anthony Weston (Hackett, 2018, 5<sup>th</sup> revised edition, pb.), ISBN #9781624666544.

## 9. Policy on Grading, Incompletes, and Extensions

- **IMPORTANT:** *All students in this course will receive a grade based on work submitted at the time assignments are due and should therefore submit even incomplete work at that time.*
- In fairness to your fellow students, yourselves, and the instructors, *no incompletes or extensions will be given in this course, except in truly extraordinary circumstances beyond the control of the student.*
- Students who have submitted work on time may, subject to the advance approval of their recitation instructor and applicable University regulations, submit additional work relevant to the course, such as rewrites of the mid-term or final papers, an additional paper, etc., for additional credit, which will be factored into their final grade along with all of their regular course work and grades.

## 10. Policy on Use of Generative Artificial Intelligence

Your written work in this course should reflect your own understanding, synthesis, and analysis of the material. *Generative artificial intelligence (“generative-AI,” for short), including but not limited to tools such as ChatGPT, Bing, etc., may not be used to complete weekly discussion posts, mid-term essays, final papers or other assignments.* These tasks are designed to develop and evaluate *your own* understanding of and critical engagement with the course material and your ability to develop and articulate your own philosophical ideas and arguments. Hence, you may not submit any work produced by a generative AI program as your own. *Failure to disclose material generated by an AI program and identify the source (i.e., the AI tool) in your footnotes and bibliography will be considered a violation of the University’s Policy on Academic Integrity.*

## 11. Academic Integrity

- **IMPORTANT:** *All students in this course are required to familiarize themselves with and abide by the University’s [Code of Academic Integrity](#).*
- *All written assignments are subject to automated review for plagiarism and the use of generative artificial intelligence.*
- *All suspected instances of academic dishonesty will be referred to the Center for Community Standards and Accountability (CSA) for adjudication.*
- *A confirmed violation of the Code of Academic Integrity will result in a grade of ‘F’ for the course.*

## 12. Policy on Use of Electronic Devices

- Electronic devices may be used during seminar meetings *only for personal note-taking or accessing digital texts*, provided they are used in a manner that is not disruptive or distracting to other students or the course instructor. No electronic devices, such as laptops, PDAs, cell phones, iPads, etc., may be used during lectures or recitations for other purposes, including, but not limited to, email, text messaging, social media, web browsing, Internet access, recording, etc.
- **Recordings:** Students are *prohibited from making recordings of any kind without explicit written permission from the University and the course instructor*. Video or audio recording (including taping, recording, photographing, screen capture, and other methods of capture) of class meetings, lectures, recitations, office hours, chat exchanges, discussion boards, etc., for purposes other than instruction is prohibited. *Audio or video recording during lectures and recitations are not permitted under any circumstances without the explicit written permission of both the University and the course instructor.*

## 13. Food and Drink

Where permitted by posted building regulations, students may bring food and drink into class, provided that it is handled and consumed in a manner that is not distracting to other students or the instructor.

## 14. If you need help, **ASK FOR IT!**

- **There are many ways in which students in the this course can receive personal assistance, guidance, feedback on their work, etc., such as:**
  - Email your instructor [sps@upenn.edu].
  - Participate in your instructor's office hours [after class or make an appointment].
  - Submit Canvas discussion forum questions and comments about the readings and lectures before the Wednesday Seminar Meetings.
  - Participate actively in weekly Wednesday Seminar Meetings.
  - Follow up with your instructor regarding comments on mid-term essays and final paper proposals.
  - Submit the pre-/mid-/post-course Canvas surveys.
  - Contact one of the University Resources listed below or one of the Writing Resources listed above.

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- **Course Action Notices**

**Course SUPPORT Notices:**

Your instructor will use **Course Support Notices** – formerly Course Problem Notices -- to alert students who seem to be having trouble in the course. These notices also go to the student's faculty advisor and school advising office. This is not intended to be a disciplinary or punitive measure; it is used to make sure that no one falls behind and that students get appropriate help and attention.

**Course ABSENCE Notices:**

You should use **Course Absence Notices** – formerly Course Absence Reports -- to inform your instructor when you will be absent from class because of medical issues, family emergencies, or other issues that necessitate missing class. Students can log in to the Course Action Notices system from [Path@Penn](#) and send a report to one or more instructors, indicating the number of days missed and the general reason for the absence. Students who submit Course Absence Notices are still responsible for following up with their instructor about any missed work. Course Absence Notices do not constitute “excuses.”

- **University Resources and Support Services**

There are a wide variety of University Resources designed to help and support students—especially during the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic:

**[Weingarten Learning Resources Center](#)**

The Office of Learning Resources at the Weingarten Learning Resources Center (WLRC) offers individualized instruction and a variety of workshops to guide Penn students towards more efficient and effective academic study skills and strategies. Professional staff provide free and confidential instruction in areas such as time and project management, academic reading and writing, study strategies, exam preparation, and test-taking strategies. Online advising is available. To schedule an appointment with a Learning Instructor, call (215) 573-9235 or consult their website.

**[Tutoring Center](#)**

The Tutoring Center offers Penn undergraduates free, accessible, and convenient options to supplement their academic experience. Tutoring is available online, one-on-one, in groups, in workshops, and by appointment.

**[Student Disabilities Services](#)**

In compliance with Penn policy and equal access laws, your instructors are available to discuss appropriate academic accommodations that you may require as a student with a disability. Except under unusual circumstances, requests for academic accommodations should be made during the first two weeks of the semester. Students must register with Student Disabilities Services (SDS) for disability verification and for determination of reasonable academic accommodations.

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### **Counseling & Psychological Services**

Students with concerns of a personal, emotional, social, or educational nature may visit or contact Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) for help and guidance free of charge.

### **Wellness at Penn**

The Wellness at Penn initiative offers support, resources, and practical tools for students in the eight domains of wellness at Penn: physical, emotional, social, intellectual, environmental, financial, occupational, and spiritual.

### **Technology Support for Students**

At Penn, every school, center, and University-affiliated organization has a dedicated IT Support Provider (also known as a Local Support Provider or LSP). Please follow [this link](#) for school-specific remote IT support guides and contact information. Students can also contact the [Tech Center](#), located on the ground floor of Van Pelt Library, for 24/7 desktop support [855-249-3243; [techcenter@upenn.edu](mailto:techcenter@upenn.edu)].