

PHL 324 H5F: The Continental Tradition – Phenomenology and its Discontents

Meeting Times: Tuesdays and Thursdays from 6-9 pm

Location: IB 240

Instructor: Sean M. Smith

Email: sean.smith@mail.utoronto.ca

Office Hours: Rm. 217 of the Academic Annex. Tuesdays and Thursdays from 3:30-5:30 pm or by appointment. Students should not hesitate to make an appointment if they are unable to come to office hours. We *will* find time to meet and discuss any issues.

Course Description:

In this course, we will explore the philosophy of the so-called 'Continental' tradition. In particular, we will focus on Phenomenology and Existentialism as well as some of the criticisms that part of the tradition has endured from post-Phenomenological thinkers. We begin with a close look at the various permutations of Husserl's founding of the Phenomenological Method. We will cover the three periods of his development from static, to genetic, and finally, generative phenomenology. We will then explore Heidegger's *magnum opus*, *Being and Time*, and its contributions to what has been called 'Existential Phenomenology'. We then move on to Merleau-Ponty's *Phenomenology of Perception*, which tries to recover the centrality of the body for existential phenomenology. Finally, we will conclude with three different critical perspectives from the points of view of feminism, ethics, and hermeneutics.

Texts: All texts are mandatory and can be purchased from the UTM Bookstore

Moran, D. and Mooney, T. (eds.) (2002) *The Phenomenology Reader*. New York: Routledge. [tPR]

Heidegger, M. (2010) *Being and Time: A Revised Edition of the Stambaugh Translation*. Translated by Joan Stambaugh. New York, SUNY Press. [BT]

Merleau-Ponty, M. (2012) *The Phenomenology of Perception*. Translated by Donald Landes. New York: Routledge. [PhP]

Note: All other texts will be available as pdf's on Blackboard

Course Requirements:

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|----------------------------------|---------------------|
| 1. Short Paper (5-7 pp) | 30% of course grade |
| 2. Final Paper Proposal (1-2 pp) | 10% of course grade |
| 3. Final Paper (10-12 pp) | 50% of course grade |
| 4. Class Participation | 10% of course grade |

Paper Submission Guidelines: See below for late penalty and extension policies.

- Filenames should have this format: LastNameFirstName-Paper1PHL324-PaperTitle.doc
- Do *not* include a title page. Title pages are evil.
- In the top right hand corner of the first page include the following information single-spaced:

Your Name
Student Number
Course Code
Paper 1 (or 2, whichever it is)
Due Date
Word Count

- Make sure you title your papers in a way that reflects the content of what you've written.
- Double space your work and use a 12 pt. font.
- Include page numbers in the footer of your pages. Look at this document and mimic it, including your name and the total number of pages after the actual page of the document.

Short Paper – 5-7 pp (30%):

Topic: This first short paper will involve a comparative analysis of Husserl and Heidegger and the latter's critique of the former. Heidegger's fundamental ontology is often read as a critique of certain strands of Husserl's thought. In your own words explain what you take that critique to be. Is Heidegger's critique of Husserl successful? To what extent does his critique apply to the different layers of Husserl's thought that we have considered. Is Husserl's conception of the Lifeworld a possible answer to some of Heidegger's critique? Why or why not?

Instructions: You should not try to answer all of these questions in your paper. You should use them as a guide to formulate a critical thesis that takes a stand on the philosophical interaction between Husserl and Heidegger. If you would like to write your first paper on something else, I am open to that, but you will need to talk to me about. Whether you elect to write your paper in direct response to the topic prompt above, or on something else, you *must* consult with me about your thesis. Send it to me in an email and get my go-ahead before you write the paper. Start early, this class moves fast. If there are any questions, email me or come see me in office hours.

IMPORTANT: Submit this paper physically in class to me the day it is due.

Final Paper Proposal – 1-2 pp (10%)

This short assignment will include a draft of your opening paragraph. This paragraph should do a few things: First, it should explain the topic of your paper by indicating some problem of question you plan to address. Second, it should include a clear statement of your thesis and how you intend to argue for it in your paper. You should also include an essay plan of some sort where you give me some indication of the structure of your paper (this can be in point form). Finally, include a works cited page with any sources you plan on citing for your paper. I will provide you with feedback on your outline that will help you turn this proposal into a well-crafted final term paper.

IMPORTANT: The Final Paper Proposal must be submitted via email. I will return it to you as I mark it. This will make it quicker for you to get my feedback and get to work on the final paper itself.

Final Paper – 10-12 pp (50%):

This paper will be on any topic of your choosing. Consult with me before writing so I can give you feedback about the direction you're headed in. Write up an introduction paragraph and a paper outline. Send it to me for approval. Do not write your term paper until you get approval of your thesis and essay plan. This paper is worth half your grade for the class, so make sure you work on it seriously.

IMPORTANT: The final paper must be submitted *by email* to the above address by no later than midnight on the due date. The file should be doc, docx, or pdf. Also, when you submit this paper for grading, make sure you specify at the top whether or not you want comments.

Class Participation (10%):

This part of your grade will be made up of your attendance and participation in the class. Even though the class is a lecture, it is important that everyone learns how to converse about these ideas. Therefore, as standing homework, for every class, every student should come prepared with a question or selected passage from that week's readings. Sometime during the class we will have a group work session where we break off into smaller groups and each member of the group will share their question or passage with the other members. You will discuss any overlap between the selected passages or questions and at the end of the group discussion we will work through some of the questions and passages discussed by the individual groups together as a class.

IMPORTANT: If for any reason you feel you are unable to participate in class discussion, please talk to me in office hours or send me an email and we will find another way for you to participate in the class. If you wish, you may also talk to the people in accessibility services. For that information, see '**Course Policies**' sections D and F.

Schedule and Reading:

PART I: *Husserl's Founding of Phenomenology*

Class 1: Tuesday May 9th – CANCELLED DUE TO GRADUATE CONFERENCE

Class 2: Thursday May 11th - **Husserl's Logical Investigations: Static Phenomenology:** *tPR* Part II Intro, Chs. 1, and 2

Class 3: Tuesday May 16th – **The Transcendental Turn to Genetic Phenomenology:** *tPR* Part II, 3-5

Class 4: Thursday May 18th – **Entering the Lifeworld: Intersubjectivity and Generative Phenomenology:** *tPR* Part II, 6

PART II: *Heidegger's Existential Phenomenology*

Class 5: Tuesday May 23rd – **Dasein's Being-in-the-World:** Chapter 1 of the Introduction to *BT*; Chs. I-II, III §§15, 19-24 of Division I of *BT*

Class 6: Thursday May 25th – **Care and Authenticity:** Chs. IV and VI §§39-41 of Division I of *BT*

Class 7: Tuesday May 30th – **Being-Towards-Death:** Chs. I of Division II of *BT* – **FIRST PAPER DUE**

PART III: *Merleau-Ponty and the Living Body*

Class 8: Thursday June 1st – **Completing Husserl:** *Preface and Introduction* (focus on IV. The Phenomenal Field) to *PhP*

Class 9: Tuesday June 6th – **The Body as Subject:** *PhP* Part One: The Body – Introduction, III (focus on e and j-m), IV – **FINAL PAPER PROPOSAL DUE**

Class 10: Thursday June 8th – **The World as Meaningful:** *PhP* Part Two: The Perceived World – Introduction, II D, III C

PART IV: *Critical Perspectives on Phenomenology*

Class 11: Tuesday June 13th – **Feminism** “Labor, Work, Action” by Hannah Arendt (*tPR* 362 ff.), “Woman’s Character and Situation” by Simone de Beauvoir (*tPR* 486 ff.), and “Throwing Like a Girl” by Iris Marion Young (pdf)

Class 12: Thursday June 15th – **Ethics and Foundationalism:** Emmanuel Levinas’ “Is Ontology Fundamental?” (pdf on Blackboard), “Ethics and the Face” (*tPR* 515 ff), Jacques Derrida’s “Difference” (*tPR* 555 ff.) – **FINAL PAPER DUE**

Course Policies:

A. Late Assignments: Assignments will be reduced 1/3 a letter grade for each day that they are late. Extensions may be granted if extraordinary circumstances are documented, but students should contact the instructors to request extensions before the due date.

B. Contact Policy: The instructor will be available to answer questions at weekly office hours and by appointment. Blackboard will be used to post announcements and readings; students are expected to check it, and their university email accounts, regularly.

C. Absences. If students have a compelling medical or personal reason to miss a class, they should let the instructors know and offer to provide documentation (an email from college registrar, or from accessibility services, will often suffice). Since the course is at the 300-level, there is a substantial portion of the grade dedicated to participation. Students should not miss any class unless it is absolutely necessary.

D. Accessibility: If you require accommodations or have any accessibility concerns, feel free to contact Accessibility Services at any time. Their address is: www.accessibility.utoronto.ca

The course instructor is happy to provide any accommodations needed to ensure that all materials and activities are accessible to all students. It is the responsibility of students, however, to communicate their needs to accessibility services so that accommodations can be organised in a timely and efficient manner.

E. Academic Integrity: Don't plagiarise. Academic integrity is essential to the pursuit of learning and scholarship in a university, and to ensuring that a degree from the University of Toronto is a strong signal of each student's individual academic achievement. As a result, the University treats cases of cheating and plagiarism very seriously. Another common, though often unreported consequence of representing someone's ideas as your own, is spontaneous combustion, something to be avoided at all costs. The University of Toronto's Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters (<http://www.governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/policies/behaveac.htm>) outlines the behaviours that constitute academic dishonesty and the processes for addressing academic offences.

All suspected cases of academic dishonesty will be investigated following procedures outlined in the Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters. If you have questions or concerns about what constitutes appropriate academic behaviour or appropriate research and citation methods, you are expected to seek out additional information on academic integrity from your instructor or from other institutional resources (see <http://academicintegrity.utoronto.ca/>)

F. Mental Health: Academic work is difficult and psychologically demanding. It's important to work hard and push yourself to do your best, but it is even more important to take care of and be kind to yourself. The instructor is available to discuss such matters if there is need. The University also has a number of resources available. Please do not hesitate to make use of these resources if difficulties arise:

<http://discover.utoronto.ca/health-wellness>
<http://life.utoronto.ca/get-help/counselling/>
<http://mentalhealth.utoronto.ca/>

Successfully dealing with academic stress and other related mental health issues is usually achieved by being honest with yourself about how you are doing and being proactive.