

TWENTIETH CENTURY PHILOSOPHY

PHL 297-301
MWF 10:50-11:50

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or by appointment

COURSE DESCRIPTION

In this course we will attempt to answer the question: what is the relation between Being, language, and philosophy? Our method of investigation will entail the close-reading of primary, philosophical texts from the last century. While an exhaustive account of all philosophical movements in the twentieth century is beyond the reach of a ten-week course, the texts we will read should offer us a sufficient panorama of the thinkers and movements concerned with our question. The major schools of thought we will address include phenomenology, the ordinary language movement and the Vienna School, critical theory and the Frankfurt School, post-structuralism and deconstruction, and philosophical hermeneutics. If we are careful readers and thinkers, our ten weeks together should grant us an understanding of the question, and perhaps even a few steps towards an answer.

COURSE READINGS

The readings in this course will demand a great deal of your time and skill. Our focus will be on the close and careful reading of primary philosophical texts that will challenge you with difficult concepts and unfamiliar vocabulary. I urge you to prepare the readings for class carefully, which should include reading the texts multiple times, taking notes, highlighting key concepts and ideas, and most importantly, asking questions about terms, ideas, and figures that elude your best attempts at class preparation. While much of my preparation centers around the clarification of ideas I think will give you difficulty, I cannot read your minds and cannot foresee every obstacle. For that reason, be honest with yourselves and ask good questions about ambiguities you encounter in the texts. You will need to purchase two books; the remainder of our readings will be available as PDF files on the Blackboard website for the course.

Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 2003.
ISBN# 0631146709

Martin Heidegger. *Poetry, Language, Thought*. New York: Harper Perennial, 2001.
ISBN# 0060937289

Available on Blackboard:

Vattimo, Gianni. "Storia d'una Virgola" in *Responsabilità e Vocazione del Filosofo* (Genova: Il Melangolo, 2000), pp. 12-14. Translated by R. Valgenti as "The History of a Comma" (unpublished).

Habermas, Jürgen. “Hermeneutic and Analytic Philosophy. Two Complementary Versions of the Linguistic Turn?” in *German Philosophy Since Kant*, ed. Anthony O’Hear (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), pp. 413-441.

Heidegger, Martin. “Introduction: Exposition of the Question of the Meaning of Being” in *Being and Time*. Translated by J. Macquarrie and E. Robinson (San Francisco: Harper San Francisco, 1962), pp. 21-64.

Derrida, Jacques. “The Supplement of Copula: Philosophy before Linguistics” in *Margins of Philosophy*. Translated by Alan Bass (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986), pp. 177-205.

Benjamin, Walter. “The Work of Art in the Age of Its Technological Reproducibility” in *Walter Benjamin: Selected Writings Volume 3, 1935-1938*. Translated by Edmund Jephcott (Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press, 2002), pp. 101-133.

Adorno, T. and Horkheimer, M. “The Concept of Enlightenment” from *The Dialectic of Enlightenment*. Translated by J. Cumming (Continuum, 1976), pp. 3-41.

Gadamer, Hans-Georg. “The Universality of the Hermeneutic Problem” in *Philosophical Hermeneutics*. Translated by David Linge (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1977), pp. 3-17.

Ricoeur, Paul. “Hermeneutics and the Critique of Ideology” in *From Text to Action*. Translated by K. Blamey and J. Thompson (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1991), pp. 270-307.

EVALUATION

Close-Reading Analyses (60%)

You will be required to write four (4) close textual analyses. Each one will be worth 15% of your grade. There will be an assignment posted each week on blackboard from weeks 2-9. I intend to use these assignments as springboards for discussion in class on Fridays; therefore, if you choose to complete that week’s assignment, it is due on the Friday of the week it is assigned, at the beginning of class. You are required to submit 2 of them before the mid-term, and another two before the final. Be forewarned: there are no make-ups, and no late assignments will be accepted. A detailed description of the requirements for this assignment is attached to the end of this syllabus.

Mid-term Exam (20%)

On Monday, May 1, there will be a mid-term exam administered in class. The exam will consist of 10 short answer questions and one essay, to be taken during the one-hour class period. The exam will cover the readings and class notes from weeks 1-5.

Final Exam (20%)

On Friday, June 3, there will be a final exam administered in class. The exam will consist of 10 short answer questions and one essay, to be taken during the one-hour class period. The exam will cover the readings and class notes from weeks 6-10.

Attendance

You are expected to attend every class session. You are allowed five (5) absences – these are free passes and you need not give me an excuse. If you miss more than five classes your final class grade will drop 5 points for each additional absence. Do not make a habit of being late to the class, or this will also reflect on your grade - if you are 15+ minutes late or leave the class early, you will be given an absence.

Course Blackboard

The Blackboard website for the course is a place where you will be required to do several things: check course updates, download readings, download text-analysis assignments, submit written essays, etc. I make frequent use of the site, so make sure that your campus connect username and password, along with your email address, are up to date. To access the site, go to oll.depaul.edu and enter your campus connect information. Everyone should be enrolled automatically; if you have trouble signing-on, please send me an email and I will make sure that you are added to the roster.

Final Grade:

Your final grade will be the average generated by the four methods of evaluation outlined above. Grades are not rounded. Therefore, an 89.9 is still a “B+”, an 86.9 a “B”, etc.

		77-79	C+
93-100	A	73-76	C
90-92	A-	70-72	C-
87-89	B+	67-69	D+
83-86	B	60-66	D
80-82	B-	0-59	F

Academic Integrity

Plagiarism, cheating, and any other violations of DePaul University’s academic integrity policy will not be tolerated. Ignorance and good intentions are not excuses. If you are caught, **you will fail the course**. Be informed: I will utilize the "Turn-it-in" service in cases where I suspect plagiarism.

Copies of the Academic Integrity Policy can be found on the Faculty Council web page at <http://pres.depaul.edu/faccouncil/pdf/acadIntegrity.pdf>

Cell phones, pagers, etc.

Don't even dream about having one turned on in my class. If you leave the room to take a call, please do not return and promptly drop the course.

Office Hours

If at any time during the quarter you are in need of extra help, have special learning needs, or just have some questions about the material not covered in class, please come to my office hours. Don’t leave questions about reading or essays to the last minute!!!! If you cannot make the time listed at the top of this syllabus, please feel free to set up an appointment with me that is more convenient. The best way to do that is to speak to me before or after class, or to email me with at least two days notice. If you need to contact me, email is best, as I rarely if ever check the voicemail at the extension listed above.

Class Schedule

(all readings are due on the day that they are listed)

Monday	March 27	Syllabus and Course Outline: Discussion of Theme
Wednesday	March 29	Habermas, "Hermeneutic and Analytic Philosophy"
Friday	March 31	Habermas, "Hermeneutic and Analytic Philosophy"
Monday	April 3	Phenomenology and the Question of Being Heidegger, <i>Being and Time</i> , pp. 21-35
Wednesday	April 5	Heidegger, <i>Being and Time</i> , pp. 36-49
Friday	April 7	Heidegger, <i>Being and Time</i> , pp. 49-63
Monday	April 10	Heidegger after the "Turn" Heidegger, "The Origin of the Work of Art"
Wednesday	April 12	Heidegger, "The Origin of the Work of Art"
Friday	April 14	Heidegger, "Language"
Monday	April 17	Ordinary Language and the Vienna School Wittgenstein, <i>Philosophical Investigations</i> , Preface + 1-38
Wednesday	April 19	Wittgenstein, <i>Philosophical Investigations</i> , 39-64
Friday	April 21	Wittgenstein, <i>Philosophical Investigations</i> , 65-143
Monday	April 24	Wittgenstein, <i>Philosophical Investigations</i> , 144-242
Wednesday	April 26	Wittgenstein, <i>Philosophical Investigations</i> , 243-427
Friday	April 28	Wittgenstein, <i>Philosophical Investigations</i> , 427-693
Monday	May 1	Mid-Term Exam
Wednesday	May 3	Benjamin, "The Work of Art in the Age of Its Technological Reproducibility"
Friday	May 5	Benjamin, "The Work of Art in the Age of Its Technological Reproducibility"
Monday	May 8	Critical Theory and the Frankfurt School Adorno & Horkheimer, "The Concept of Enlightenment"
Wednesday	May 10	Adorno & Horkheimer, "The Concept of Enlightenment"
Friday	May 12	Adorno & Horkheimer, "The Concept of Enlightenment"
Monday	May 15	Structuralism, Post-Structuralism, and Deconstruction Derrida, "The Supplement of Copula: Philosophy before Linguistics"
Wednesday	May 17	Derrida, "The Supplement of Copula: Philosophy before Linguistics"
Friday	May 19	Derrida, "The Supplement of Copula: Philosophy before Linguistics"
Monday	May 22	Philosophical Hermeneutics
Wednesday	May 24	Gadamer, "The Universality of the Hermeneutic Problem"
Friday	May 26	Ricoeur, "Hermeneutics and the Critique of Ideology"
Monday	May 29	No Class for Memorial Day
Wednesday	June 1	Closing Lecture
Friday	June 3	Final Exam

I reserve the right to modify the course schedule as needed.

DUE DATE: FRIDAY, APRIL 7, BEGINNING OF CLASS
 LENGTH: 750-1000 WORDS (not including the passage itself)
 FORMAT: TYPED / DOUBLE-SPACED

You are required to submit two copies of your assignment – one paper copy in class, and one electronic copy in MS Word to the Blackboard website “drop-box.” Do not send it to my email!

ESSAY TOPIC

For this assignment, you will perform a “close reading” of the following passage from *Being and Time*, p. 44.

“In thus demonstrating the origin of our basic ontological concepts by an investigation in which their ‘birth certificate’ is displayed, we have nothing to do with a vicious relativizing of ontological standpoints. But this destruction is just as far from having the *negative* sense of shaking off the ontological tradition. We must, on the contrary, stake out the positive possibilities of that tradition, and this always means keeping it within its *limits*; these in turn are given factually in the way the question is formulated at the time, and in the way the possible field for investigation is thus bounded off. On its negative side, this destruction does not relate itself towards the past; its criticism is aimed at ‘today’ and at the prevalent way of treating the history of ontology, whether it is headed towards doxography, towards intellectual history, or towards a history of problems. But to bury the past in nullity [*Nichtigkeit*] is not the purpose of this destruction; its aim is *positive*; its negative function remains unexpressed and indirect.”

WHAT IS A CLOSE-READING?

Close reading is one of the primary crafts you should learn when you receive a liberal arts education, when you become a scholar, or when you merely develop a critical intelligence. Close reading is a form of interpretation of texts or discussion in which you aim to find the meaning of the text or discussion in ways that allow you to perceive the subtle undercurrents of and difficulties with the text or discussion. You can think of a close reading as a detailed, organized, and written version of your thoughts that accompany a careful and insightful (re)reading of a passage.

When you give a close reading, begin with an explanation of the passage’s context. Where does it come in the overall work, what immediately precedes it, and what follows it? Are there any essential terms or concepts the reader must know that have been developed earlier in the overall text? Assume that the reader is marginally familiar with the overall text; your task is to build on the familiarity and lead them to a rich and insightful reading of the passage you have selected.

After you have given the context to the passage, state the passage’s meaning simply through a clear and effective paraphrase. Focus on a clear reading of the passage, even if it means glossing over some ambiguities. Once you make the basic meaning of the passage clear, address those ambiguities through your interpretation of the passage. The heart of the close reading is interpretation. A good interpretation makes a text come alive with meaning, nuance, and questions. It is also a charitable reading, seeing the best and most interesting in a passage, not the worst. When you give an

interpretation, here are some points to keep in mind: What is crucial term or concept in the passage? Is it entirely new, or is the author revising/re-interpreting a traditional philosophical term? Where are the ambiguities, and are they productive? How does your interpretation enrich a general reading of the text? Also be sure to engage any possible objections to your reading, attempting to dispel challenges that other possible readers might have.

GRADING RUBRIC

What must the essay contain?

1. The passage itself copied out (download from assignment)
2. A paragraph on the context of the passage
3. A short paragraph paraphrase of the passage
4. Interpretation of the passage, one paragraph per main point, to build a cohesive, overall argument
5. Possible objections to your reading and your replies

With those specific details in mind, I will follow this basic rubric for evaluating your essays:

“A” These essays include all 5 points mentioned above. In particular, the passage selected is indicative of a conceptually rich moment in the overall text; the contextual explanation of the passage demonstrates a solid understanding of Heidegger’s overall project in *Being and Time*, and coordinates seamlessly with the writer’s paraphrase of the specific passage. The writer’s interpretation of the passage must be thorough and nuanced, demonstrating not only an understanding of the key concepts, but also of the way that they inter-relate in the passage. The details of the interpretation should not be rhapsodic, but rather reflect a developed and organized argument on the part of the writer. This argument will set up the refutation of possible objections, presenting strong reading of potential ambiguities and explaining why they should not be interpreted in another manner.

“B” These essays resemble the “A” essays in many ways, but lack their finer points of insight and overall polish. Like the “A” essays, all of the 5 required points are present. Points 1,2, and 3 are equal to the “A” essay, but the interpretation, coherence of the argument, and entertaining of objection lack the insight and detail of the “A” essay. A “B” essay must, in the end, reflect a consistent, coherent, and accurate reading of the passage.

“C” These essays possess some fundamental flaws, but still manage to make an argument that follows the basic requirements of the assignment. Indicators for the “C” essay include 1-2 missing elements from the list above, a poorly developed argument in the interpretation of the text, or a generally weak understanding of the passage’s context and meaning. “C” essays also include logical inconsistencies, errors in the understanding of the texts, and/or serious errors of grammar/punctuation.

“D” These essays are missing 3 of the above points, and present only a marginal understanding of the passage selected.

“F” An essay that is missing 4 or 5 of the key points, or that shows no understanding of the text at hand.