

Course Outline

Time : Wednesday 14:30 – 17:15

Location: ELB 307

Course Outline

This graduate seminar will address the different ways in which phenomenology has thematized otherness by studying the key texts by three classical phenomenologists: Edmund Husserl, Emmanuel Levinas and Paul Ricoeur. The course will show that while Husserl assigned the Other a central place in transcendental phenomenology, without which the constitution of the world would not be possible, and while Levinas presented his own alterology as a radical alternative to Husserl, which conceptualizes the Other as the foundation of ethics, Ricoeur sought a way to reconcile the Husserlian and Levinasian approaches to the Other within his own hermeneutically-oriented dialectic of selfhood and otherness. The central questions of this seminar can be formulated as follows: what does it mean to think of the Other in the framework of transcendental phenomenology? In which sense can the Other be said to constitute the foundations of ethics? What are the forms and functions that the Other has been assigned in phenomenological hermeneutics? We will begin with the analysis of Husserl's Fifth Cartesian Meditation. From there we will turn to Levinas' *Totality and Infinity*. At the end of the course, we will focus on Ricoeur's *Oneself as Another*. Our central objective will be to recognize that phenomenology places the Other at the center of philosophical reflection and to appreciate the significantly different ways in which phenomenology has thematized otherness.

Learning outcomes

1. Demonstrate a solid grasp of the issues discussed.
2. Analyze and critically interpret some significant primary texts in modern Western philosophy.
3. Demonstrate an enhanced ability to conduct independent research on the topics covered and related issues.

Topics

1. Phenomenological broadening of transcendental philosophy
2. The constitution of the Other
3. The Other and transcendental intersubjectivity
4. Western philosophy and the search for totality
5. Infinity as a phenomenological category
6. Ethics as first philosophy
7. The face as an ethical category
8. Ipseity and Alterity
9. Oneself as Another, the Other as Oneself
10. Hermeneutics of Selfhood and Otherness

Learning activities

In this course, you are expected to

- read and think about the assigned readings;
- develop the skills mentioned in the course outcomes through philosophical discussion and writing (essays, take home exams, and critical summaries of tutorial readings);
- attend lectures/tutorials to participate in discussion.

Activities and workload:

In-class (mandatory):

1. Lectures will be conducted in a seminar fashion: 2 hours each week.
2. Reading: approximately 2-3 hours on the basic and suggested readings each week.
3. Writing assignments: an average of 1 hour each week on preparing and writing essay assignments throughout the term. You should try to design a schedule that allows you to apportion more time on writing and discussing your essay with your teacher two to three weeks before each essay is due.

Assessment scheme

The assessment methods are designed to encourage participation and learning through argumentative writing and active participation.

Task nature	Description	Weight
Participation in Discussions	Active and Meaningful Contribution to Seminar Discussions	20%
Two Seminar Presentations	ca. 20-30 minute long	40%
Term paper	Around 2500 words	40%
Extra Seminar Presentation	ca. 20-30 minute long	+10%

Remarks:

1. Participation in Lectures/Seminars: Grading is based on meaningful participation in discussions. Absence will damage your grades.
2. Seminar Presentation: Presentation should be based on the assigned readings. While it is not necessary to cover all the assigned pages, it is crucial that the presentation be based on the readings, that it would present the most important ideas in the readings, and that it would offer an analysis and interpretation of the text.
3. The term paper: you may choose to write on any philosophical problem addressed in this course. You will be asked to submit a preliminary statement on a chosen topic. You will be expected to do some independent research, to formulate a central thesis as well as to develop arguments in support of it. The due date of this assignment will be announced in class towards the end of the semester.

Grade Descriptor

Please refer to: http://phil.arts.cuhk.edu.hk/~phidept/UG/Grade_descriptors.pdf

Details of course website

Relevant announcements and course documents will be posted on Blackboard.

Required texts

Husserl, Edmund. 1960. *Cartesian Meditations: An Introduction to Phenomenology*. Trans. by Dorion Cairns. The Hague/Boston/London: Martinus Nijhoff.

Levinas, Emmanuel. 1969. *Totality and Infinity: An Essay on Interiority*. Trans. by Alphonso Lingis. Pittsburgh, PA: Duquesne University Press.

Ricoeur, Paul. 1992. *Oneself as Another*. Trans. by Kathleen Blamey. Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press.

Course schedule

<i>Week</i>	<i>Topics</i>	<i>Required reading and Assignments</i>
Sep 8	Introduction	
Sep 15	The Sphere of Ownness and Transcendence	Husserl, CM, 89-112
Sep 22	Public holiday - the day following the Chinese Mid-Autumn Festival	
Sep 29	The Other and Intersubjective Community	Husserl, CM, 112-136
Oct 6	Phenomenology of Alterity within Husserlian Phenomenology as a Whole	Husserl, CM, 136-157
Oct 13	Metaphysics and Transcendence	Levinas, TI, 23-52
Oct 20	Separation and Discourse	Levinas, TI, 53-81
Oct 27	Truth and Justice	Levinas, TI, 82-105
Nov 3	Separation as Life, Enjoyment and Representation	Levinas, TI, 109-142
Nov 10	I and Dependence, the Dwelling	Levinas, TI, 143-174
Nov 17	Ethics and the Face	Levinas, TI, 187-220
Nov 24	The Question of Selfhood	Ricoeur, OA, 1-25 and 317-335
Dec 1	Selfhood and Otherness	Ricoeur, OA, 335-356

Contact details for teacher(s) or TA(s)

Teacher	
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Academic honesty and plagiarism

Attention is drawn to University policy and regulations on honesty in academic work, and to the disciplinary guidelines and procedures applicable to breaches of such policy and regulations. Details may be found at http://www.cuhk.edu.hk/policy/academic_honesty/

For assignments in the form of a computer-generated document that is principally text-based and submitted via VeriGuide, the statement, in the form of a receipt, will be issued by the system upon students' uploading of the soft copy of the assignment. Assignments without the receipt will not be graded by teachers. Only the final version of the assignment should be submitted via VeriGuide.