PHIL5340/PHIL7340 Seminar on Modern Western Philosophy: Husserl's Phenomenology

Course Outline

Mode of Teaching: Face-to-face Teaching

Term: 2025-26 Term 1

Time：Tuesday 18:30-21:30 **Location：WMY 403**

Course overview (as shown on CUSIS)

This course aims at an in-depth discussion of selected works of major philosophers in modern Western philosophy such as Descartes, Hume, Kant and Hegel. The specific content of the course may vary from semester to semester. Students may repeat the course for credit, provided that two courses with identical course codes are not elected in the same semester.

Topics/Schedule (Tentative)

This course will introduce you to phenomenology, which is one of the most important philosophical movements in Continental philosophy. We will zero in on the works of the founder of the phenomenological movement – Edmund Husserl. We will begin with Husserl's *Logical Investigations* and pay close attention to two themes: Husserl's critique of psychologism and the phenomenological theory of intentionality. We will then pay close attention to Husserl's *Ideas I* and focus on such fundamental phenomenological themes as the essential structures of transcendental consciousness, *epoche* and the reductions. While carefully reading the key passages in *Ideas II*, we will explore the meaning of the natural attitude and the crucial distinction between the naturalistic and the personalistic attitudes. In the last part of the course, we will address some of the central themes in Husserl's last and unfinished work, *The Crisis of European Sciences*. Discussion will focus on the life-world and the paradox of subjectivity.

I. Introduction

1. Husserl and the Phenomenological Movement

II. Logical Investigations

2. Critique of Psychologism

3. Intentionality

III. Ideas I: The Fundamental Phenomenological Outlook

4. The Natural Attitude

5. *Epoche* and the Reductions

6. Structures of Pure Consciousness

III. Ideas II: The Personalistic and the Naturalistic Attitudes

7. Personalistic Attitude

8. Naturalistic Attitude

9. The Natural and the Naturalistic World

IV. The Crisis: The Sciences, History, and the Life-world

10. The Crisis of the Sciences

11. The Life-World

12. Transcendental Subjectivity

Learning outcomes (as shown on CUSIS)

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.

4. Obtain familiarity with the central themes and concepts in Husserl's phenomenology.

5. Learn how to understand and evaluate phenomenological claims, employed by Husserl and other philosophers who have been inspired by him.

6. Develop critical and exegetical skills by means of reading and interpreting Husserl's works.

7. Obtain the basis to further explore the central phenomenological themes as addressed in the writings of post-Husserlian philosophy.

8. Improve your skills of presenting philosophical arguments in written and oral form.

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 (reflective summaries and essays);
- attend lectures to participate in discussion.

Activities and workload:

In-class (mandatory):

1. Lectures will be conducted in a seminar fashion: 3 academic hours each week. Some lectures will be held online.
2. Reading: approximately 2-3 hours on the basic and suggested readings each week.

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

Task nature	**Description**	**Weight**
Term paper	Around 2500-3000 words	45%
Reflective summaries	Each around 1000 words	45%
Participation in Discussions	Discussion	10%

Remarks on Assessment:

1. Participation in Lectures/Seminars: Grading is based on meaningful participation in discussions. Absence will damage your grades.
2. Reflective Summaries: Your essay should be approximately two single-spaced typewritten pages. You are supposed to a) provide at least a one page long summary of the assigned readings (or longer), b) identify what you consider to be the most important point(s) in the readings (philosophically, with argumentation) (at least one paragraph), c) identify what in the readings raises most questions for reflection (philosophically, with argumentation, one paragraph). Your critical summary should be approximately 1000 words long.
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.

Recommended learning resources

Required Texts:

1. Edmund Husserl, *Logical Investigations*, Vols. 1 and 2. New York and London: Routledge, 2001.

2. Edmund Husserl, *Ideas: General Introduction to Pure Phenomenology*. London: Routledge Classics, 2012.

3. Edmund Husserl, *Ideas Pertaining to Pure Phenomenology and to a Phenomenological Philosophy. Second Book. Studies in the Phenomenology of Constitution*. Springer, 2008.

4. Edmund Husserl, *The Crisis of European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology: An Introduction to Phenomenological Philosophy*.

Other Texts by Husserl:

5. Edmund Husserl, *The Idea of Phenomenology*. Springer, 1980.

6. Edmund Husserl, *Cartesian Meditations: An Introduction to Phenomenology*. Martinus Nijhoff, 1977.

7. Edmund Husserl, *The Paris Lectures*. Kluwer Publishers, 1998.

Commentaries:

8. Dan Zahavi, *Husserl's Phenomenology*. Stanford University Press, 2003.

9. Robert Sokolowski, *Introduction to Phenomenology*. Cambridge University Press, 1999.

10. Dermot Moran, *Introduction to Phenomenology*. London: Routledge, 2000.

11. R.O. Elveton, ed., *The Phenomenology of Husserl: Selected Critical Readings*. Noesis Press: 2003.

12. Paul Ricoeur, *Husserl: An Analysis of His Phenomenology*. Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1967.

13. J.N. Mohanty, *The Philosophy of Edmund Husserl*. Yale University Press, 2008.

14. E. Marbach, I. Kern and R. Bernet, *Introduction to Husserlian Phenomenology*. Evanston, Ill: Northwestern University Press, 1993.

15. Jan Patocka, *An Introduction to Husserl's Phenomenology*. Trans. by E. Kohak. Open Court: 2018.

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/academichonesty/

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.

Course schedule

Week	***Topics***	***Required reading***
1	Introduction	
2	Critique of Psychologism Intentionality	*Logical Investigations,* *"Prolegomena" §17-§20* *5th LI, §9-§15*
3	Philosophy as Rigorous Science	The *Logos* Article
4	The Natural Attitude and *Epoche*	*Ideas I*, 51-89
5	Pure Consciousness and Phenomenological Reductions	*Ideas I*, 90-119
6	Personalistic and Naturalistic Attitudes	*Ideas II*, 181-200
7	Nature and Spirit	*Ideas II*, 200-222
8	The Crisis of the Sciences	*Crisis*, 3-18; 21-34
9	Husserl's Critique of Modernity	*Crisis*, 48-73
10	Husserl's Critique of Kant	*Crisis*, 103-123
11	The Life-World	*Crisis*, 123-148
12	The New Way to the Reduction and the Paradox of Subjectivity	*Crisis*, 148-167 and 168-189

* This course schedule is tentative and it might be modified with the aim of adapting it to your intellectual interests and needs.

All use of AI tools is prohibited in assignments and assessment

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

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TA	
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