

Course outline

Part 1 - Reason in Husserl:

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This course will trace out the emergence of the concept of reason in the development of Husserl's philosophical thinking -- from his ground-breaking *Logical Investigations*, in which the concept played only a peripheral role, through his *Ideas I*, whose fourth and final part is entitled "Reason and Actuality," and the *Kaizo* lectures from 1922-23, where the notion of reason is one of the dominant themes, up to his final published work, *The Crisis of European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology*, in which Husserl contrasts his own conception of reason to the modern narrower notion of rationality that he believes has had disastrous consequences not just for philosophy, but for modern science and modern life as a whole.

The first session will begin by recalling some different notions of reason from the philosophical tradition, including well-known classical conceptions such as those of Aristotle, Descartes, Kant, Hegel, and those described by Husserl's closer contemporaries Brentano and Weber. We will then turn to Husserl's introduction of intentionality as the basic structure of consciousness in the Fifth of his *Logical Investigations* and analyze his unique approach to the concept of truth in the Sixth Investigation to gain a clear understanding of what he means by "evidence," how this is related to his conceptions of meaning-intention and meaning-fulfillment, and how this approach to the question of truth establishes an intimate connection between the notions of truth and being that will also have decisive implications for Heidegger's notion of truth as well.

The second session will be devoted to showing how in the *Ideas I* the notion of reason becomes a name for the striving towards fulfillment that is inherent in all intentionality. Here Husserl makes clear that he is re-conceiving what had traditionally been thought of in terms of the search for "objectivity" and that it is in the experience of "evidence" that the actuality of the intended objects is given for those intentions that show themselves to have been correct. He also makes clear that this experience of fulfillment can take many different forms, depending upon the kind of object intended, and depending upon the different kinds of intentions that can go beyond mere believing and may include valuing and willing as well.

In the third session, we will take a closer look at the *Kaizo* articles that are very explicitly formulated as part of a project of ethical renewal. In them, it becomes clear that by the middle period of his work, Husserl has now come to see the critique of knowledge and theoretical rationality as part of an overall project of the striving for rationality in a much more comprehensive sense that is part of the search for appropriate values and goals for human life in general.

Finally, in the fourth session we will see how the *Crisis* builds on these insights and contrasts this comprehensive and appropriate project of rationality as ethical self-responsibility to the modern notion of rationality that is oriented on models derived solely from modern natural science that threaten to undermine the very possibility of rational discourse about norms and values and hence lead to an overall irrationality that betrays the original aims of science itself, according to Husserl's interpretation

of establishment of science together with the beginnings of philosophy in ancient Greece. We will also reflect on the extent to which this is strictly a development within “the West” or whether there is still some validity in Husserl’s project from our current perspective that now encompasses much more than just the history of Western philosophy and thinking.