

Philosophy 235: TWENTIETH-CENTURY CONTINENTAL PHILOSOPHY
Spring, 2010

Professor: Alan Schrift
Office: Steiner 311
Office Phone: 3161
Office Hours: M-W 2:30 - 4:00, and by appointment

Required Texts

R. Kearney & M. Rainwater:	<i>The Continental Philosophy Reader</i>
Jean-Paul Sartre:	<i>Essays in Existentialism</i>
Michel Foucault:	<i>The Essential Foucault</i>
Hélène Cixous & C. Clément:	<i>The Newly Born Woman</i>
Jean-François Lyotard:	<i>Just Gaming</i>
Jacques Derrida	<i>Rogues: Two Essays on Reason</i>
Giorgio Agamben	<i>State of Exception</i>

In addition to these texts, a number of readings will be available on e-reserve.

Course Objectives

This course examines several of the philosophical movements that developed during the course of the twentieth century in France and Germany. Beginning with an examination of the origins of 20th-century European philosophy in phenomenology (Husserl), we will move on to examine existentialism (Sartre and Beauvoir), existential phenomenology (Merleau-Ponty), hermeneutics (Heidegger, Gadamer), critical theory (Benjamin, Habermas), structuralism (Saussure, Lacan), post-structuralism and deconstruction (Foucault, Derrida), French feminism (Cixous), and postmodernism (Lyotard). Among the themes covered will be the relation between science and philosophy, the relations between language and thinking, the place of the subject in the human sciences and philosophy, the critique of foundationalism, and the functions of ideology, interpretation, power, and desire in the search for “knowledge” and “truth”. During the semester, special attention will also be focused on connections between 20th century philosophy and developments in other humanistic and social science disciplines, including anthropology, literary studies, psychoanalysis, linguistics, and social/political theory.

Course Requirements

Final grades will be determined on the basis of overall class participation and the following requirements [percentage of final grade in brackets]:

1. **Mid-term/Short paper:** in response to questions provided; 8-10 pages. [30%] Due: March 10 in class.

2. **Final paper:** topic of student's choice, in consultation with instructor; 15-20 pages. [50%] Due: May 18. In connection with this final paper, keep in mind the following requirements/deadlines:

April 16: turn in a one-paragraph description of topic with annotated bibliography.

April 23: turn in detailed outline.

April 30: submit electronically (and without your name on it) a 5-page thesis statement that describes your project in some detail. One copy will be evaluated by the instructor, and one copy will be evaluated by a fellow student.

May 4: turn in comments on one another's thesis statements (xerox final page summary and submit this to the instructor).

May 14: Paper Due.

3. **Position Papers:** each week, submit on Tuesday a one-page typed comment on some aspect of the reading of that week. These papers will be graded, and will be figured into your class participation grade component. They will provide you with an opportunity to try out theses/topics for possible papers. [10%]

4. **Class Participation.** In addition to participating in class, you will be asked to submit a discussion question by 10:00am to the class "Discussion Board" on Blackboard.[10%]

ATTENDANCE: You are **expected** to attend class. Although attendance normally will not be taken, more than **three** unexcused absences **will** result in a lowering of your grade for the class participation component. More than **SIX** unexcused absences will result in failure of the course.

LATE POLICY: Written assignments which are submitted late will be penalized **one letter grade** for each 24 hours late. Papers submitted more than 48 hours late will **NOT** be accepted. Exceptions to this policy will be made only for medical reasons.

PHILOSOPHY 235: Tentative Course Outline

Week of

- Jan. 26 Introduction.
Review of Nineteenth Century Philosophy
- Jan 28 PHENOMENOLOGY: **Husserl**, “Paris Lecture” + Other Selections (E-reserve)
- Feb. 2 PHENOMENOLOGY: **Husserl** (Kearney, pp. 15-22)
Schmitt, “The Transcendental-Phenomenological Reduction” (E-reserve)
- Feb 4 **Merleau-Ponty**, “Preface to *Phenomenology*” (Kearney)
- Feb. 9 EXISTENTIALISM **Sartre**, *Transcendence of the Ego* (E-reserve)
Sartre, “Existentialism,” pp. 31-62
- Feb. 11 **Sartre**, *Being and Nothingness*, pp. 63-73
- Feb. 16 EXISTENTIALISM **Sartre**, *Being and Nothingness*, pp. 63-73
- Feb. 18 **Sartre**, pp. 75-91, 107-146
- Feb. 23 EXISTENTIALISM **Sartre**, pp. 147-186
- Feb. 25 **De Beauvoir**, *The Second Sex* (Kearney)
- Mar. 2 EXISTENTIAL ONTOLOGY **Heidegger**: *Being and Time*, Introduction, §2-4 (Kearney)
- Mar. 4 *Being and Time*, Introduction, §5-7 (Kearney)
- Mar. 9/11 HERMENEUTICS **Heidegger**, *Being and Time*, Chaps. 31-34 (E-reserve)
- Mar. 16 HERMENEUTICS **Heidegger**, *Being and Time*, Chaps. 31-34 (E-reserve)
Gadamer (Kearney)
- Mar. 18 CRITICAL THEORY **Habermas**, *Knowledge and Human Interests* (E-reserve)
- Mar. 19** **MIDTERM PAPER DUE**
- March 20- April 4** **SPRING BREAK**
- Apr. 6 CRITICAL THEORY **Benjamin** (Kearney)
- Apr. 8 STRUCTURALISM **Saussure**: *Course in General Linguistics* (Kearney)
Lacan (Kearney)
- Apr. 13 POSTSTRUCTURALISM **Foucault**, “The Discourse on Language” (Kearney)
- Apr. 15 “What is an Author?” (EF 377-91)

April 16: Description and Bibliography Due.

