

GRADUATE COURSES 2012-2013

AQ – PHL 535: Husserl and Phenomenology – Frédéric Seyler

PHL 535 PHENOMENOLOGY: HUSSERL

The purpose of this class will be to introduce to Husserlian phenomenological concepts through a close reading of Husserl's first major work, the "Logical Investigations". Husserl himself did see in this voluminous work a major breakthrough towards what would become widely known as contemporary phenomenology, one of the dominant philosophical orientations since the beginning of 20th century. In the "Investigations" Husserl laid the ground for key concepts in phenomenology (such as "intentionality" for instance) and reading this work is surely one of the best introductions to phenomenological inquiry and terminology.

AQ - PHL 516: HEGEL: PHILOSOPHY OF RIGHT – Kevin Thompson

This course examines the central issues and ideas of Hegel's political philosophy through a close reading and critical discussion of the Elements of the Philosophy of Right (1821) and related passages from the first edition of the Encyclopedia of the Philosophical Sciences in Outline (1817).

It focuses specifically on the set of concepts that constitute Hegel's unique contribution to political thought: objective spirit, freedom, and ethical life. We begin, however, with a discussion of the methodology Hegel employs throughout his mature work as this lays the foundation for his distinctive approach to the central issue of modern political philosophy: the sovereignty of the state. The ultimate task of the seminar is thus to come to an understanding of how this distinctive method serves to justify Hegel's normative claims regarding the institutional structure of a genuinely rational social order.

AQ - PHL 411, Plato: On Life – Michael Naas

"On Life" (Peri biou or Peri zôês)... though there is no Platonic dialogue with this subtitle, no dialogue that poses directly the question "what is life?" we will argue in this seminar that almost everything in Plato's dialogues can and should be read through the theme of life. From the question of what distinguishes human life from other kinds of life—whether that of plants, others animals, or the gods—to the question of how best to live a uniquely human life, almost all of Plato's epistemological, ethical, and political concerns are centered around the theme or question of life. But even Plato's ontology is, as we will see, inflected by this theme of life, insofar as both Being and the Good are commonly characterized by Plato in terms of life, life as opposed to death, to be sure, but also life as opposed to becoming, life as opposed to visibility, phenomenality, corporeality, and so on. We will thus want to ask in the course of the seminar whether the life that Plato privileges in so many of his most important dialogues is not in the end a life beyond or in excess of life, a life beyond what we *call* life, and, thus, a life to which our finite human existences have but limited access.

In order to broach this theme of life, we will range far and wide throughout the Platonic corpus, reading passages from many later dialogues, from *Sophist*, *Theaetetus*, and *Statesman*, to *Phaedrus*, *Timaeus*, and *Laws*. But in order to see just how significant this theme is in Plato, we will spend most of our time reading a single dialogue, the *Republic*, and particularly—at least at the outset—the many metaphors and analogies of animal life used in that dialogue to develop everything from the nature of the

guardians in the ideal state to a conception of the human soul to a theory of the afterlife. This focus on animal life in the *Republic* will thus be our starting point for asking the question of life more generally, the question of what distinguishes different forms of life from one another and the question of whether there is not some complicity between the ontological question “what is life?” and “life itself”—if there *is* such a thing.

AQ – PHL 522: Social Death and the Problem of Thinking Otherwise:

Frantz Fanon, Michel Foucault, Édouard Glissant – Darrell Moore

In this seminar we will examine select writings by Frantz Fanon, Michel Foucault, and Édouard Glissant -- three francophone thinkers who take up the problem of freedom and invention within a modernity shapes how we feel about them. Each thinker attempts to open spaces within which we would be enabled to articulate action in the present and to think the extent to which the past inflects but does not constrain action. We will pay particular attention to ways in which each thinker constitutes freedom and invention as problems of the present and how they engage them once constituted. How do Fanon, Foucault and Glissant respectively develop their diagnosis of the present and gesture beyond the limits – of the subject, of history, of language -- within which they work? How do their respective methods – sociogeny, genealogy, and poetics of relation – orient readers in and through the problem they diagnosed?

We will read Fanon’s *Black Skin White Masks* and selected essays, Foucault’s work on ethics (e.g., *Government of the Self*), and Glissant’s *Poetics of Relation*.

WQ - PHL 550 Heidegger and Phenomenology - Will McNeill

In this course we shall begin by looking briefly at Heidegger’s critique of Husserl, primarily as articulated in his 1925 course *The History of the Concept of Time*, and then spend the greater part of the seminar studying Heidegger’s own transformation of phenomenological seeing as reflected in the 1927 lecture course *The Basic Problems of Phenomenology*. This course, which was meant to continue the project of *Being and Time*, displays the full force of the project announced there as the “destructuring” of the history of ontology by integrating into Heidegger’s phenomenological method a series of critical encounters with Kant and modern ontology, medieval ontology, and ancient Greek ontology—encounters that all demonstrate the necessity of a radical posing of the question of being upon the horizon of time.

WQ - PHL 416: Aristotle’s *De anima* - Sean D. Kirkland

This class will proceed as a straightforward, often line-by-line reading of Aristotle’s text on the soul. However, we will take the first session or two to prepare for that reading by considering a few crucial passages from the *Organon*, the *Metaphysics*, and the *Physics*, so that we have some familiarity with Aristotle’s methodology (*dialektikê*), as well as with some of his most fundamental philosophical concepts. After this, we will simply read the text of the *De anima*, taking up and returning often to such specific themes as form and matter, change/movement as the mode of being of the living thing, potency and actuality/being-at-work, temporality, and the relation between the Aristotelian soul and its world. We are also going to note along the way

and specifically develop those themes and arguments that will be important to the commentators on whom Rick will be focusing in his seminar in the Spring.

WQ - PHL 511: Critique of Judgment - Avery Goldman

In this class we will be undertaking a close reading of Kant's *Critique of Judgment*, guided by the question of how this work fits into the critical system. While much recent scholarly interest has limited itself to the first half of the book, to Kant's aesthetics, we will attempt to interpret the book in its entirety, connecting the discussion of beauty to that of teleological natural science. For Kant, both are examples of reflective judgment, the general theme of the book. All such reflective judgments, those that search for the universal to which particulars belong, require a regulating or guiding idea, described by Kant as the principle of "purposiveness [*Zweckmäßigkeit*]." And it is this principle, which essentially presumes that nature offers itself in an orderly fashion, that we will need to investigate if we wish to conceive of not only the unity of the *Critique of Judgment* and the role that this book plays in Kant's systematic analysis of the cognitive faculties, but so too the idealistic tradition that develops out of it.

WQ – PHL 629: Violence, Fate, and the Problem of the Debt: Benjamin, Arendt, and Schmitt – Peg Birmingham

We will look at three figures: Benjamin, Arendt, and Schmitt. Andrew will be looking at Benjamin and Arendt (first four weeks) and I will be looking at Schmitt (last 6 weeks). In addition to "Political Theology," and "The Concept of the Political," I will also be looking at "The Nomos of the Earth" and "The Partisan," concentrating on the issue of sovereign violence and the law.

SQ – PHL 400: GERMAN ROMANTICISM: THE ROLE OF NATURE IN POST-KANTIAN GERMAN AESTHETICS – Elizabeth Millán

In this seminar we will study the meaning of aesthetics in the immediate post-Kantian period of German thought. In particular, we shall investigate the role of nature in the aesthetic writings of Friedrich Schlegel, Novalis, Schelling, Goethe, and Alexander von Humboldt. The connection to Kant's third critique will be explored, so some familiarity with that text would be helpful.

SQ - PHL 557: PHILOSOPHY OF SCIENCE—PHENOMENOLOGY, DECONSTRUCTION, AND BEYOND - H. Peter Steeves

Phenomenology stream; fulfills "Contemporary European philosophy" distribution requirement

In this course we will investigate the basic question of what might constitute a Continental philosophy of science, focusing on what is meant by a "natural law," what sort of necessity such a law indicates, and whether or not science must always proceed accompanied by a naïve

realism. Because in some respects analytic philosophy has made philosophy of science its model for doing philosophy in general, we will begin by taking a brief survey of analytic authors and then move to discuss why Continental philosophy has had less to say on the topic. Starting with Husserl's *Crisis* and moving to various works by Derrida (and others), we will try to flesh out the foundations for a Continental philosophy of science. Along the way, it will be helpful to have specific scientific questions and methodologies in mind, thus we will be using physics as our touchstone, especially turning to cosmology (investigating the origin and ultimate end of the universe) as well as the laws of thermodynamics as we proceed. NB: Though it is not a requirement, for students with the background and interest in doing rigorous interdisciplinary work, opportunities will exist to read and work in physics (informed by a burgeoning Continental philosophy of science).

SQ – PHL 578: From Death Drive to Death Penalty: Derrida and the Death Penalty Seminars - Elizabeth Rottenberg

This class (tentatively titled "From Death Drive to Death Penalty") will be magnetized by two questions: what does it mean to say, as Derrida says in his provocative statement at the end of his 1999 Death Penalty Seminar, "even when the death penalty will have been abolished . . . it will survive, there will still be some death penalty"? And why is psychoanalysis in a privileged position to address this irreducible thing in the life of the animate being that is the possibility of cruelty? Readings will include texts by Kant, Sade, Nietzsche, Freud, Lacan, and Derrida (and a few historical texts on the French Revolution and the guillotine). Questions raised throughout the course will relate to problems of capital punishment, cruelty, and the phantasm of sovereignty.

SQ - PHL 640: Ethics and Economics – Patricia Werhane

This course is designed to provide deeper background thinking in the foundations of free enterprise and its critics. It would be especially useful for those teaching business ethics from whatever perspective. Readings will include selections from John Locke and Adam Smith, philosophical "fathers" of modern capitalism and Karl Marx, its seminal critic. We will also read a selection of essays from modern critics of capitalism.

SQ – PHL 500, Medieval Theories of Knowledge: On Aristotle's *De Anima* – Rick Lee

During this course, we will look at Averroes's and Aquinas's commentaries on Aristotle's *De Anima*. In particular, we will focus on sensation and its relation to the intellect. This will raise questions of the materiality or immateriality of the intellect as well as the dependence or independence of the intellect with regard to sensation and, therefore, the body.