

2018-2019 GRADUATE COURSE DESCRIPTIONS

AUTUMN

PHL 415—Aristotle's *Metaphysics*

Sean D. Kirkland

In this seminar we will begin by looking briefly at Aristotle's earlier ontology in the *Categories*, after which we will turn to his later ontology in the *Metaphysics*. From week to week, we will read Aristotle's text very closely, focused on the emergence and the increasingly sophisticated notion of *ousia* or 'being, beingness, substance' in Aristotle's thinking. In particular, we will attend to the conceptual vocabulary Aristotle initially introduces to explain the way of being of a substance, *eidōs* and *hylē* or 'form' and 'matter,' and investigate his motivation for shifting or expanding that vocabulary toward that of *energeia* and *dunamis*, or 'actualization, being-at-work' and 'potency.'

PHL 515—Hegel's *Phenomenology*

María Acosta

This course is conceived as an introductory course on the *Phenomenology of Spirit*. What is important for me is that you learn Hegel's methodology and understand the singularity of this book, while also discussing the relevance of some of his analysis and criticisms of modern epistemology, different forms of violence, the limitations and potentialities of ethical life, etc. That way, by the end of our seminar, you will be prepared to continue reading Hegel on your own. We will start with a general discussion of Hegel's conception of philosophy's task, and we'll then move on to read the *Phenomenology*, starting with its Introduction. The aim is not to read the entire book, but to concentrate on some of the figures of consciousness: the pure concept of recognition at the beginning of Self-Consciousness; the Master-Servant dialect that follows it; the analysis of ethical life at the beginning of the Spirit chapter; its collapse in and through Antigone's tragedy; Hegel's analysis of a totalitarian logic of terror through his reading of the French Revolution; the figures of the Beautiful Soul and Forgiveness (which we will read as central to Hegel's theory of action); and the closing chapter on Absolute Knowledge. Some of these figures will be accompanied by discussion of 20th century authors who place Hegel's analysis in a new light (Fanon, Butler, Nancy, and Zambrana, to mention just a few).

PHL 551—The Fate of Phenomenology: Heidegger's Legacy

Will McNeill

This seminar will examine the fate of phenomenology in Heidegger's work: his critique and transformation of Husserlian phenomenology in the early to mid-1920s; his radicalization of phenomenology in the period of *Being and Time* (1927); his subsequent apparent abandonment and critique of phenomenology from the late 1920s through the mid-1930s; his late reflections on the limits of phenomenology in the 1960s; and his apparent rehabilitation of phenomenology in the last years of his life. The course will be animated by the question of whether Heidegger indeed abandons phenomenology in his later work, or whether the later work may still claim to be phenomenological, and if so, in what sense.

PHL 661 Topics in Feminist Theory—Adriana Cavarero: A Philosophy in the Singular (W)

Fanny Söderbäck

This seminar offers a careful examination of the works of Italian feminist philosopher Adriana Cavarero, whose overall project might be described as a series of counter-histories, or minor histories, each of which is marked by an insistence that Western philosophy has failed to account for the categories of singularity and uniqueness. Cavarero is widely recognized for her writings on feminism, political philosophy, art, and literature. She has written extensively on the place of birth in our culture, on narration and voice, on contemporary violence, ethics and politics, as well as topics related

to embodiment and sexual difference. Students will critically examine these contributions, alongside texts by some of her most important interlocutors, such as Hannah Arendt, Judith Butler, Luce Irigaray, Plato, and Sophocles. Cavarero herself will visit one seminar session and will give a public lecture in early November.

WINTER

PHL 440—Spinoza's *Ethics*

Rick Lee

During the Winter Quarter, we will be reading Spinoza's *Ethics* and we will try to get through Part IV. The course will be as close a reading as time permits us to do of the text. (The two courses offered this year, PHL 440—Spinoza and PHL 438—Leibniz, will not be a confrontation between the two philosophers. Therefore, taking either part on its own should present no problem.)

PHL 515—Hegel's *Science of Logic I (T)*

Kevin Thompson

This course examines the central issues and ideas of Hegel's *Science of Logic* [1812/13, 1816]. In this work, Hegel presents the fundamental categories and structures of the post-critical metaphysics that serves as the foundations of his entire philosophical system. Accordingly, we will explore the major topics of the work—being, essence, and concept—through a close reading of the text, with an underlying concern to set out and evaluate its overarching argumentative structure.

PHL 577—Derrida: *Performativity and the Event I and II*

Michael Naas

This seminar revolves around Derrida's appropriation and critique of traditional speech act theory from the early 1970s through 2004. We will begin by reading two classic texts of speech act theory, J. L. Austin's *How to Do Things with Words* and "A Plea for excuses." We will then turn to Derrida's reading of Austin in "Signature, Event, Context" and "Limited Inc." and his rethinking of notions such as context, intention, presence, power, and the opposition between speech and writing. In the second half of the seminar, we will read a series of later texts that demonstrate how Derrida began using speech act theory in order to rethink the foundation of political and professional institutions ("Declarations of Independence," "The University Without Condition," "Geopsychoanalysis"), juridical performatives (in his texts on perjury and pardon, human rights), and the original performativity (the "yes, yes") that is to be found at the basis of all language and in every relation to the other. Finally, at the end of seminar, we will consider how Derrida's appropriation of speech act theory eventually turns into a rethinking of the event as what comes before every speech act and all performativity.

PHL 590—Deleuze 1968

Peg Birmingham

Deleuze's concept of "expressionism in philosophy," developed in his work on Spinoza appears in 1968, the same year as the publication of his systematic study, *Difference and Repetition*. Deleuze's work on Spinoza is the culmination of his work in the 1950s and 1960s, beginning with his seminal study of Hume, to write a "counter history" of philosophy that will allow him to escape a history of philosophy that reduces difference and repetition to the regime of representation and identity. If philosophy is to grasp things in their being, and here we might think of Husserl's charge "to the things themselves," then Deleuze's claim is that we can "grasp the thing itself in what it is, only in its difference from what it is not." (*Desert Islands*, 32) Simply put, Deleuze's project is to think the thing in its "thisness," its singularity, which he claims requires a thinking of the concept of difference and a notion of repetition.

Recognizing the impossibility of reading carefully both texts in ten weeks, this course will undertake a careful reading of *Difference and Repetition* with some excursions into *Expressionism in*

Philosophy: Spinoza. Key issues will include how the notion of repetition is entwined with the concept of difference, singularity and the “drama of thought,” and Deleuze’s “transcendental empiricism.”

SPRING

PHL 438—Leibniz

Rick Lee

During the Spring Quarter, we will focus on Leibniz. We will begin with the early text “Primary Truths,” continue through the *Discourse on Metaphysics*, the *New System of Nature*, as well as some shorter texts. The course will finish with a reading of the *Principles of Nature and Grace* and the *Monadology*.

(The two courses offered this year, PHL 440—Spinoza and PHL 438—Leibniz, will not be a confrontation between the two philosophers. Therefore, taking either part on its own should present no problem.)

PHL 500—Michel Henry’s Phenomenology of Life: A Philosophy of Immanence

Frédéric Seyler

Michel Henry has elaborated his phenomenology through a discussion and critique of the phenomenological tradition that preceded him (Husserl, Heidegger, for instance) as well as of major figures of philosophy in general (notably: Descartes, Kant, Marx, Maine de Biran, Schopenhauer, Nietzsche). The outcome is a radicalization of Husserlian phenomenology, sometimes described by Henry as “radical” or “material phenomenology” (we will see why these terms are indeed accurate). The prevailing designation for Henry’s approach, however, is *phenomenology of life*, which is explained by the fact that life is considered as the principle of appearing in this phenomenology. At the same time, it is a decisive critique of *transcendence* as dominating Western tradition, as well as the development of the concept of life as *immanent* affectivity. We will study Henry’s thought through two main readings: *Genealogy of Psychoanalysis* (1985) and the first part of *Incarnation* (2000). Based on a semester of guest lectures at Osaka and Kyoto University, the *Genealogy of psychoanalysis* is an indispensable reading in that it reflects Henry’s reception of key thinkers (Descartes, Kant, Schopenhauer, Nietzsche and Freud), a reception through which he unfolds his own discovery, namely the central role played – both for appearing and being – by affectivity. While the *Genealogy* is a dialog with classical non-phenomenological thinkers, *Incarnation* critically discusses historical phenomenology (Husserl, in particular) and deploys from there the new phenomenology of life. It is perhaps the best text in order to have a systematic and phenomenological account of Henry’s renewal of phenomenology. In addition, the four volumes of articles and conferences titled *Phénoménologie de la vie* and published posthumously by *Presses universitaires de France* constitute an indispensable source, from which excerpts can be read either individually or, punctually, in the seminar.

PHL 515-101: Hegel’s Science of Logic II (T)

Kevin Thompson

See Winter PHL 515

PHL 578—Derrida: Performativity and the Event I and II

Elizabeth Rottenberg

See Winter PHL 577