PH-4443: The Phenomenology of Embodiment
Dominican School of Philosophy and Theology

Spring 2020
Tuesdays, 12:40-3:30 PM
DSPT 2

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Course Description and Objectives:

Since the time of Descartes, modern philosophy has struggled to explain the relationship between the human mind and body, and more generally, between the material and the spiritual. Analytic Philosophy of Mind has proposed a number of possible solutions to the mind-body problem: substance dualism, property dualism, and various forms of materialism. But problems and paradoxes with these accounts have persisted, leading a number of philosophers and scientists to suggest that a new, more adequate understanding of both mind and body is needed. Meanwhile, promising insights into the human mind and body have arisen from disciplines and methods outside the Anglo-Analytic tradition: Embodied cognitive science and phenomenological analyses of embodied experience have provided a deepening appreciation of how the body shapes perception, cognition, self-identity, practical intentionality, and our relationships with others; Aristotelian-Thomistic Hylomorphism has also been re-discovered as a philosophical alternative to the standard post-Cartesian understanding of the body, allowing for a richer, more intimate integration of mental and bodily capacities.

This course will examine these alternative approaches to embodiment in detail, using phenomenological methodology as a central touchstone. We will begin by briefly examining the Cartesian context of the terms of the mind-body problem, and the standard dualistic and monistic solutions which emerge from it. We will then turn to key texts from the phenomenological and Thomistic traditions, paired with investigations from embodied cognitive science, to explore alternative ways of thinking about both the mind and body, and to
carefully analyze pervasive aspects of embodied experience: perception, affectivity and emotion, intersubjectivity, and self-identity. This course, an advanced seminar for M.A. and Ph.D. students, will include a review of foundational phenomenological concepts, as well as key principles of the Aristotelian-Thomistic tradition. Thus, while a certain familiarity with the history of philosophy on the part of the student is presumed, no prior coursework in phenomenology or Thomistic philosophy is required.

By the end of the semester, students will have gained a deeper understanding of the ways in which our embodiment makes all aspects of human experience possible. Students will also have a grasp of the key features of phenomenological method, Aristotelian-Thomistic Hylomorphism, and embodied cognitive science, and be able to describe some of the important contributions that each of these approaches makes to the understanding of human embodiment in each of the following aspects of human experience: perception, emotion, cognition, self-identity, agency, and intersubjectivity.

**Course Requirements:**

As an advanced seminar course, this class will focus primarily on the discussion of assigned texts, although the instructor will provide background material in lecture form from time to time. Students will be expected to carefully prepare assigned readings in order to actively participate in the conversation and raise thoughtful questions in class. Each week a student will be asked to lead the class discussion by introducing a particular text and raising several substantive questions for discussion. Because this class is structured as a seminar, attendance and participation in the discussion is essential. Students are expected to be at every class meeting, and absences will significantly affect a student’s final grade. Students with disabilities or whose first language is not English are encouraged to speak with the instructor about any special needs they might have.

Students will be evaluated according to the quality of their class participation and leadership of class discussions, and a final research paper of 15-20 pages. These assignments are designed to help students develop their own critical thinking regarding the philosophical accounts and contemporary issues of human embodiment, and articulate their understanding of these topics.
both orally and in writing. They also offer students the opportunity to show their growth in the DSPT’s institutional goals of integrative thinking, self-direction, collaborative learning, and leadership (Institutional Goals A1-3 and B1). All sources in the final research paper should be cited using proper “Turabian” format (see Kate L. Turabian, *A Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Theses, and Dissertations.* Eighth Edition. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2013). Students should conscientiously avoid plagiarism, and are asked to consult the *DSPT Student Handbook* for the DSPT’s policies regarding academic honesty. A paper proposal consisting of a short paragraph describing a student’s chosen topic, along with a preliminary bibliography of a minimum of 10 sources, should be submitted by April 21. The final research paper is due by May 26, 2017. Late papers will be accepted, but may be subject to a 1/3 letter grade reduction for each day late (e.g., an “A” paper turned in one day late would receive an “A-”).

Grading:

- Weekly Class Participation: 25%
- Class Presentations and Discussion Leadership: 25%
- Final Research Paper: 50%

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**Assigned Texts:**


Weekly reading assignments will be taken from these assigned texts, as well as from readings posted on Moodle (http://moodle.gtu.edu). The *Summa Theologiae* of St. Thomas Aquinas can be found online (including, for example, at http://www.newadvent.org/summa).

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**Course Schedule:**

2/4: Introduction to the Course

   Enlightenment Approaches to the Body, the Mind-Body Problem

   Descartes, *Meditations on First Philosophy*, Meditations 1-2, 5-6

2/11: Alternative Approaches to Embodiment I: Phenomenology

   An Introduction to Phenomenology

   Gallagher and Zahavi, *The Phenomenological Mind*, Chapters 1-2, 6

   Sokolowski, *Introduction to Phenomenology*, Chapter 7

   Optional: Zahavi, “Phenomenology”

2/18: Alternative Approaches to Embodiment II: Hylomorphism or

   Beginning Again from Aristotle

   Aristotle, *Physics*, Book II, Chapter 1

   Aristotle, *De Anima*, Book II, Chapters 1-4

   Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae* I, qqs. 75, 76, a. 1-5, and 77, a. 1-6

   William Jaworski, “Hylomorphism and Post-Cartesian Philosophy of Mind”

   Optional: Gyula Klima, “Mind vs. Body and Other False Dilemmas of Post-Cartesian Philosophy of Mind”

2/25: Alternative Approaches to Embodiment III: 4e Cognitive Science

   Noë, *Action in Perception*, Chapter 1

   Gallagher, *Enactivist Interventions*, Chapter 1-2, 4
3/3: Perception and Embodiment I

Aristotle, *De Anima*, Book II, Chapters 5-7, 10-12; Book III, Chapters 1-2
Gallagher and Zahavi, *The Phenomenological Mind* 5
Husserl, *Thing and Space*, §§44-57
Optional: John J. Drummond, “On Seeing a Material Thing in Space”

3/10: Perception and Embodiment II

Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, Introduction to Part Two;
Chapter III, Parts A-C
Noë, *Action in Perception*, Chapter 3 (Optional: Chapter 2)

3/17: Affectivity, Moods, and Emotions

Heidegger, *Being and Time*, §§28-30
Aquinas, ST I, q.78, and I-II, qq. 22-23, 25
Lombardo, *The Logic of Desire*, Chapters 1-2
Optional: Anthony Hatzimoysis, “Emotions in Heidegger and Sartre”

3/24: No Class (Reading Week)

3/31: Husserl, Stein, and Merleau-Ponty on the Lived Body

Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, Part One, Chapters II-IV
4/7: The Lived Body and Intersubjectivity

Gallagher and Zahavi, *The Phenomenological Mind*, Chapter 9

Husserl, *Cartesian Meditations*, §§42-55


Optional: Dan Zahavi, “Phenomenology of Empathy”

4/14: No Class (Fr. Justin Away)

4/21: The Lived Body and Self-Awareness

Jean-Paul Sartre, *Being and Nothingness*, Part 3, Chapter 2

Optional: “First-Person Thoughts and Embodied Self-Awareness”

Optional: Moran, “Sartre’s Treatment of the Body in *Being and Nothingness*: ‘The Double Sensation’”

4/28: Embodied Cognition I

Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae* I, q. 84, a. 1, 6-8; 85, a. 1-5; 87, a. 1, 3

Alva Noë, *Action in Perception*

Gallagher and Zahavi, *The Phenomenological Mind* 7

Optional: Gibson, “Theory of Affordances”

Optional: Dan Zahavi, “Empathy and Social Cognition”

5/5: Embodied Cognition II

Merleau-Ponty, *The Phenomenology of Perception*, Part One, Chapter VI

Lakoff and Johnson, *Metaphors We Live By*, Chapters 1, 6, 12, 13, 26

Shaun Gallagher, *Enactivist Interventions*, Chapters 9–10

5/12: Body and Agency

Heidegger, *Being and Time*, §§15-24
Gallagher and Zahavi, *The Phenomenological Mind* 8, 10
Enactivist Interventions, Chapter 5
Optional: Erik Rietveld, “Affordances and Unreflective Freedom”
Optional: Caiani, “Extending the Notion of Affordance”

5/19: Gender and Identity

Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception* Part I, Chapter V
Simon de Beauvoir, selections from *The Second Sex*
Stein, selections from *Woman*
Iris Marion Young, “Throwing Like a Girl”

5/26: Final Research Paper Due by 5 PM

N.B.: The instructor reserves the right to revise the course syllabus as the need arises.

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**Additional Resources**

The following is a list of some supplemental and suggested readings. These are by no means required reading for the course, but may serve as an initial point of departure for further research into topics, approaches, and contemporary issues surrounding embodiment.


