

PHHS 2001 CONTEMPORARY PHILOSOPHY

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Dominican School for Philosophy and Theology

Spring 2020

time: M 9:40am-12:30pm

place: DSPT #1

3 units

Office Hours:

By appointment; I can be reached under (415) 567 7824 (St. Dominic's parish, ask for Fr. Anselm) or aramelow@dspt.edu; I am also available after class.

Description

Lecture on late 19th and 20th century philosophy: beginning with Kierkegaard and Nietzsche, we will treat pragmatism, phenomenology, existentialism, hermeneutics, analytic philosophy, structuralism, postmodernism, deconstruction and leading criticism of the same. The lecture is designed to give an overview and is open to questions and discussion.

As an outcome, the student will have gained an understanding of the development of philosophical thought in this epoch, and will be able to relate various thinkers and their positions on relevant topics through research and writing.

The student will demonstrate this knowledge through

- a) a **mid-term** (take home) and **final exam** (take home, non-comprehensive)
= 40% of grade
- b) a 15pp **research paper** (see below)
= 50% of grade

This will include an evaluation of the student in the following area:

Deep Learning ([Institutional Goal A.1](#) and 2): based on the paper, according to the published [rubrics of assessment](#).

- c) in addition, 10% of the grade will include an evaluation of the student in the following areas:
 - a. **Collaborative learning** (Institutional Goal B.1); based on
 - i. class participation
 - ii. the paper proposal you are submitting and integration of feedback
 - iii. your contribution to the common good of the class:
 1. class preparation
 2. class participation
 - b. **Self-direction** (Institutional Goal A.3):
finding your own paper topic will demonstrate this ability
 - c. **Leadership** (Institutional Goal B.1)
Your paper and its topic can be an opportunity to show that you can identify relevant issues and address them.

Class attendance is mandatory. Attendance and participation will impact the grade.

Missed deadlines will result in a penalty on the grade.

I would like you to forgo the use of laptops in the class sessions.

The **research paper** ideally will compare a philosopher to other thinkers on a particular topic. It will show the student's ability to do research. For this purpose, I ask you to give me a **paper proposal by Monday, 3/30.**

The **dead line for the paper is Monday 5/11.**

Out of fairness to other students who submit their work on time, missed deadlines will result in a lower grade. Further **guidelines** for the paper can be found at the end of the syllabus.

Bibliography

required:

- Lawhead, William F., *The Voyage of Discovery: A Historical Introduction to Philosophy: The Contemporary Voyage, 1900-*; Second Edition (Wadsworth Publ., ²2002) ISBN: 0-534-56126-8
- Forrest E. Baird, *20th Century Philosophy (Philosophic Classics, Volume V--3rd Edition)*, 438 pages (Upper Saddle River: Prentice Hall, ³2002) ISBN: 0130485632
- a **Reader** will be available at **Vick Copy** (1879 Euclid, corner of Hearst and Euclid)

Recommended:

- a) **R. Scruton**, *Short History of Modern Philosophy* (Routledge Classics) ³2001
(useful, although it covers only the some of the first part of the class. The respective pages are indicated in the syllabus)
- b) **Frederick Copleston**, S.J., *History of Philosophy*, the respective volumes
(Copleston is an older overview that ends with Sartre, so you would need to supplement it with other histories of philosophy)
- c) It is also useful to look at **encyclopedia articles**
e.g. *The Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, ed. Paul Edwards
(New York: Macmillan [1967])
- d) Helpful resources in the **internet**:
Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy
The Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy
Unlike these encyclopedias, *Wikipedia* is not a reliable academic source!

Class Schedule

The schedule is flexible and subject to changes; if there is not much reading assigned for a particular author, you might want to get a head start on the next ones.

- M 2/3 Introduction, left wing Hegelians, Marx and the turn of 1848
 read: Lawhead p. 453-459
 (suggested reading: Scruton¹ p. 219-233, 234-246)
- Kierkegaard
 read: Reader p. 3-11
 Stanford Enc.: <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/kierkegaard/>
 (or: Scruton p. 191-195)
- M 2/10 Nietzsche
 read: Reader p. 12-19
 (suggested reading: Scruton p. 195-199
 or one of the suggested Encyclopedias)
- Pragmatism: Peirce, James, Dewey
 read: Lawhead p. 460-478
 Baird p. 22-40
- M 2/17 ***President's Day, Academic Holiday***
- M 2/24 Pragmatism continued
Husserl I
 read²: Lawhead p. 527-533
 Baird p. 1-21
 for 1st person perspective:
 recommended: Reader p. 19-21
- M 3/2 Husserl II
- M 3/9 Edith Stein and Max Scheler
 read: Reader p. 21-26, 27-37
 (For Scheler you can find more [here.](#))
- M 3/16 Heidegger (I)
 read: Lawhead p. 534-545
 Baird p. 97-136
(take home exam handed out)
- M 3/23 ***Reading Week***
- M 3/30 ***take home exam due, paper proposals due***
Heidegger (II)
Gadamer
 read: Baird p. 178-205

¹ *Short History of Modern Philosophy* (Routledge Classics) by Roger Scruton; Routledge; 3rd edition [November 9, 2001].

² Suggested also: Scruton 263-269.

- M 4/6 Sartre
 read³: Lawhead p. 546-555
 Baird p. 206-238
Simone de Beauvoir, Merleau-Ponty
 read: Baird p. 139-153, 272-274
 Lawhead p. 564-9
- M 4/13 ***Easter Monday, holiday at DSPT***
- M 4/20 Moore and Frege
 read: Lawhead p. 501f.
 Baird p. 80-96
 for Frege, please use the *Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy*:
<http://www.iep.utm.edu/f/frege.htm>
Russell
 read : Lawhead p. 500-505
 Baird p. 50-79
- M 4/27 Early Wittgenstein
 read⁴: Lawhead p. 510-514
 Baird p. 137-149
Positivism, Ayer, Popper
 read: Lawhead p. 506-510
 Baird p. 166-177
 Reader: p. 38-42
- M 5/4 Quine
 read: Lawhead p. 556-558
 Baird p. 254-271
later Wittgenstein and Ryle/Austin
 read⁵: Lawhead p. 514-519, 520-526
 Baird p. 149-165, 286-298
- M 5/11 ***paper due!***
Saussure, Levi-Strauss, Foucault, Lyotard, Derrida
 read: Lawhead p. 559-561
 Baird p. 326-342, 343-366
- M 5/18 last week of classes
 evaluations ***final exam due at the end of this week***
 Derrida continued; the following only if there is time:
Rorty; read: Lawhead p. 561-3
 Baird p. 367-380
John Rawls and Communitarianism (MacIntyre, Taylor)
 read: Baird p. 312-325, 391-408, 422-438
Frankfurt School, Habermas
 read: Baird p. 409-421

³ Scruton 275-80.

⁴ Scruton 281-289.

⁵ Scruton 289-294.

Paper Guidelines

The topic of your paper will ideally be a comparison of two philosophers on a given issue.

Examples might be:

Anxiety in Kierkegaard and Heidegger.

Language in Wittgenstein and Gadamer.

Faith in Newman and Kierkegaard.

Time in Husserl and Augustine.

There are many other possibilities. I do encourage you to use topics of your own interest or background. There are many graduate student conferences now; you might want to write a paper with an eye to presenting it in such a venue. An increasing number of students have done so successfully.

The topic is, however, subject to approval. You can talk to me before or after your proposal.

The paper is a **research paper (15 pages, 12pt, double space)**. Hence I expect you to research and use secondary literature. This is to be documented in the use of footnotes (**not endnotes!**) and in a **bibliography**.

To avoid some common pitfalls: please **focus on your topic**. There is no need for biographical introductions on philosophers. (Biographical details can, of course, be brought in, if they explain some subject matter.)

Please avoid flowery or cryptic **language**. Be as sober as possible. Building literary smoke screens will not make your paper appear more profound, but only less intelligible. Focus on making arguments and positions clear.

Do some **proofreading**. If English is your second language, it can be a good idea to ask someone else to help you. Please do write complete sentences that have a grammatical structure. (Unfortunately that does not always seem to be self-understood.) Shorter sentences can make that easier. Grammatical correctness is more important than political correctness (e.g. do not use “they” as a singular).

Subdividing it into chapters (with headlines) can help the structure of your paper. It will help the clarity of your own thought process – as well as that of the reader. Please use page numbers.

Plagiarism is unacceptable and will result in a failing grade.

Proposal

The proposal is due the class after reading week. It consists in 2 or 3 sentences, stating your topic, plus a pertinent bibliography. (Please do not include the textbooks of the class.) This exercise is meant to help you to clarify your topic and focus your bibliography; after that, the paper should come easy. It is also a good exercise for a future thesis proposal. The topic is subject to approval.

The **bibliography** is most important. Please make your bibliography *as specific as possible*. I would like to see at least **three pertinent journal articles** in your bibliography; this is more important than generic books. As a help: please use the “[philosopher’s index](#)” at the [GTU library](#), although this might only provide you with a starting point. (Sometimes helpful also: the [Oxford Bibliographies](#).) Topics without pertinent literature are not viable; if it requires extensive research on primary texts, you should leave it for your dissertation.