

Continental Philosophy

Course Description:

This course introduces students to major developments in Post-Kantian Continental Philosophy. Our focus will be on attempts by continental philosophers to reflect upon and critique existing metaphysical, political, cultural, and moral orders in the service of envisioning new possibilities and forms of life. The course will include introductions to philosophical schools including Phenomenology, Existentialism, Critical Theory, Poststructuralism, and recent forms of Continental Realism. Themes include the nature of consciousness and its relations to objects; the nature and scope of philosophy, the relation between philosophy and its history; freedom and liberation, truth, and the critique of existing power structures.

Learning Objectives:

Develop working knowledge of major trends and within Continental Philosophy.
Appreciation of the modes of thinking and argumentation practiced by Continental Philosophers
Ability to relate ideas from Continental Philosophy with other areas of philosophy including (but not limited to): the history of philosophy; Kant and German Idealism; analytic metaphysics and philosophy of language; social and political philosophy; philosophy of science.

Assignments:

- 1 Class presentation that analyzes a portion of text from a class reading.
- 1 1,500-1,800 word explication of a text from the first half of the course.
- 1 2,500-3,000 word research paper on a relevant topic of student's choice.

Required Texts:

Friedrich Nietzsche: *Genealogy of Morality*
Martin Heidegger: *Basic Writings*
Simone de Beauvoir: *The Ethics of Ambiguity*
Frantz Fanon: *Black Skin, White Masks*
Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer: *The Dialectic of Enlightenment*
Michel Foucault: *Discipline and Punish*
Judith Butler: *Bodies that Matter*
Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari: *What is Philosophy?*
Alain Badiou: *Manifesto for Philosophy*

Units and Readings (15 weeks)

Kant and 19th Century German Philosophy (4 weeks)

- [1] *Transcendental Philosophy and the A Priori: Kant*
Immanuel Kant: Selections from *Critique of Pure Reason*
- [2] *Dialectics and the Constitution of Society: Hegel*
G.W.F. Hegel Selections from *Phenomenology of Spirit*: “The Master/Slave Dialectic”;
“Antigone”
- [3] *Truth, Fabrication, and History: Nietzsche*

Friedrich Nietzsche: “On Truth and Lies in an Extra-Moral Sense”, “On the Use and Abuse of History for Life”

- [4] *Religion, Morality, and Genealogy: Nietzsche*
Friedrich Nietzsche: *The Genealogy of Morality*

Phenomenology and Existentialism (5 Weeks)

- [5] *Intentionality and the Epoché: Brentano and Husserl*
Franz Brentano: Selections from *Psychology from an Empirical Standpoint*; Edmund Husserl: Selections from *Ideas I*.
- [6] *Dasein, Truth, Ontology: Heidegger*
Martin Heidegger: “What is Metaphysics?”; “On the Essence of Truth”
- [7] *Existentialism and Humanism: Sartre and Heidegger*
Jean-Paul Sartre: “Existentialism is a Humanism”; Martin Heidegger: “Letter on Humanism”
- [8] *Commitment and Ethics:*
Simone De Beauvoir: *The Ethics of Ambiguity*
- [9] *Identity, and Colonialism: Fanon*
Frantz Fanon: *Black Skin, White Masks*

Enlightenment, Critique, and Identity (3 Weeks)

- [10] *The Critique of Enlightenment Rationality*
Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer: Selections from *Dialectic of Enlightenment*
- [11] *The Critique of Power*
Michel Foucault: *Discipline and Punish*
- [12] *The Critique of Gender Norms*
Judith Butler: Selections from *Bodies that Matter*

What is Philosophy? (2 Weeks)

- [13] *Philosophy and the Creation of Concepts*
Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari: *What is Philosophy?*
- [14] *Mapping the Compossibility of Truths*
Alain Badiou: *Manifesto for Philosophy*
- [15] Review/Conclusion