**BA CONTINENTAL PHILOSOPHY**

**US 2 CREDITS**

**ECTS 4 CREDITS**

**ELECTIVE (Bachelor of Arts in Philosophy, Politics and Economics)**

**SPRING TERM 2023**

**WEDNESDAYS 8:20-9:20 / FRIDAYS 9:30-10:30**

**ROOM TBA**

Name of Tutor: James Cartlidge

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Office Hours: TBA

**Course Description**

*This course introduces students to some of the most important issues in 20th century Continental philosophy, concentrating on phenomenology, existentialism, and post-structuralism. It charts a course through these movements which starts with Nietzsche (who influenced all three), showing how each respond to the challenge of philosophizing in the wake of the ‘death of God’ and the crisis of nihilism that follows it. Phenomenology, existentialism, and post-structuralism all involve an interrogation of the dominant methods, themes and questions of previous philosophy and attempt to replace them with something more befitting our current historical predicament. Husserl envisaged phenomenology as the basis for and being intimately connected with science, requiring a suspension of our natural attitude towards things and describing our experience as we experience it, returning ‘to the things themselves’. Heidegger revolutionized Husserl’s phenomenological method, using it to begin philosophy again from the ground up and re-awaken ‘the question of Being’, a task which begins with an analysis of the structures of our existence as finite, historical ‘Dasein’. Existentialism asked what the meaning of our life is and how we can be moral in a world with no God in it, and therefore no inherent, pre-given meaning. Post-structuralism investigated the problematic history of our most important concepts, uncovering the power structures and presuppositions that underlie them. In the wake of such analysis, post-structuralists propose philosophical paradigms to replace the old ones and ask how we can conduct politics honestly in a global world, without resorting to totalizing explanations. Authors covered will include Nietzsche, Husserl, Heidegger, Sartre, de Beauvoir, Camus, Foucault, Lyotard, and Butler.*

**Learning Outcomes**

*Students will become familiar with some of the central authors, arguments, and ideas from 20th-Century Continental philosophy, especially phenomenology, existentialism, and post-structuralism. They will gain experience of interpreting and discussing these ideas in class and develop their writing and presenting skills through their assessments.*

**Assessments and Grading Criteria**

*Essay (2500 words) – 50%*

*In-Class Presentation (10 minutes) – 25%*

*Research Questions - 15%*

*Participation – 10%*

Essay: Students will be required to devise their own essay topics and are strongly encouraged to discuss them with the tutor before they begin writing. In their essays, students should demonstrate their capacity to conduct independent research on their chosen topic, show that they have understood the material and are able to engage critically with it. While a good essay can be written that reconstructs a philosopher’s position or clarifies a concept, such an essay will be unlikely to receive the top grade - essays that demonstrate understanding *and* critical engagement will be graded higher. Critical engagement goes beyond simply explaining what a philosopher has said and can come in the form of attacking or defending a position, putting philosophers’ concepts in conversation with one another, applying a concept or an argument to a particular social or political situation, or an artwork, and so on.

Research Questions: Throughout the semester, students will be asked to formulate research questions based on the class material and will be assessed on their ability to do this. These questions should demonstrate students’ capacity for devising interesting, focused, and pertinent questions that allow for productive research in the form of philosophical essays. It is advised that students pick their essay topic based on their research questions and discussions of them with the tutor – however, this is not mandatory.

Presentation: In the early stages of the course, students should select a topic which will be covered in the course that they would like to present on and deliver a 10-minute presentation on it in the appropriate class. The direction the presentation will take will be up to the student and, like the essays, should involve more than explaining what another philosopher has said, or what that lesson’s reading is about. Students should focus on a particular point, argument, or problem, develop a response to it and present this to the class.

Participation: This will be assessed in terms of attendance and participation in class discussions.

**Topics and Readings**

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| **Lesson 1** | Dates | ***Introduction: Analytic and Continental Philosophy*** |
| **Lesson 2** | Dates | ***Friedrich Nietzsche: The Death of God and Nihilism***  Compulsory Reading:   * Nietzsche, ‘The Gay Science’sections 108, 125, 341, 343 (6 pages) * Nietzsche ‘The Will to Power’(excerpt of ‘European Nihilism’, 15 pages)   Optional Reading:   * Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy, ‘Nietzsche’, ‘4: Nihilism and the Revaluation of Values’ * Deleuze and Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus* (opening of ‘A Recapitulation of the Three Syntheses’, 2 pages) |
| **Lesson 3** | Dates | ***The Birth of Phenomenology: Husserl and Heidegger***  Compulsory Reading:   * Robert Scharff, ‘Heidegger Becoming Phenomenological’, Chapter 4 (17 pages) * Heidegger, ‘Being and Time’ section 7, ‘The Phenomenological Method of Investigation’ (14 pages)   Optional Reading:   * Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, ‘Phenomenology’ * Christopher Edwards, ‘The Heidegger-Husserl Confrontation’ (21 pages) |
| **Lesson 4** | Dates | ***Phenomenology: Heidegger’s ‘Being and Time’, Introduction***  Compulsory Reading:   * Heidegger, ‘Being and Time’, Introduction (15 pages)   Optional Reading:   * Richard Polt, ‘Heidegger: An Introduction’ (sections on intro to *Being and Time*,20 pages) |
| **Lesson 5** | Dates | ***Phenomenology: Heidegger’s ‘Being and Time’ 2, The Analytic of Dasein***  Compulsory Reading:   * Heidegger, ‘Being and Time’, sections 25-27, sections 35-38 (34 pages)   Optional Reading:   * Jan Patočka, ‘The Natural World as a Philosophical Problem’, Supplement to the Second Czech Edition, section 10: ‘Heidegger’ (9 pages) |
| **Lesson 6** | Dates | ***Existentialism: Jean-Paul Sartre***  Compulsory Reading:   * Sartre, ‘Existentialism is a Humanism’ (14 pages) * Sartre, ‘Being and Nothingness’, ‘Negations’ (excerpt, 4 pages)   Optional Reading:   * Sartre, ‘Being and Nothingness’, ‘Patterns of Bad Faith’ (excerpt, 5 pages) |
| **Lesson 7** | Dates | ***Existentialism: Simone de Beauvoir***  Compulsory Reading:   * Simone de Beauvoir, ‘The Second Sex’: * Volume 1, Introduction (20 pages)   Optional Reading:   * Judith Butler, ‘Sex and Gender in Simone de Beauvoir’s Second Sex’ (14 pages) * McCall, ‘Simone de Beauvoir, The Second Sex and Jean-Paul Sartre’ (14 pages) |
| **Lesson 8** | Dates | ***Existentialism: Albert Camus***  Compulsory Reading:   * Camus, ‘The Myth of Sisyphus’: * ‘Absurd Walls’ (15 pages) * ‘The Myth of Sisyphus (4 pages)   Optional Reading:   * Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, ‘Albert Camus’, ‘Suicide, Absurdity, and Happiness: The Myth of Sisyphus’ |
| **Lesson 9** | Dates | ***Friedrich Nietzsche: The Genealogy of Morals***  Compulsory Reading:   * Nietzsche, ‘On the Genealogy of Morality’ essay 2: ‘Guilt, Bad Conscience and the Like’ (39 pages)   Optional Reading:   * Christopher Janaway, *Beyond Selflessness*, ‘Guilt, Bad Conscience and Self-Punishment’ (18 pages) |
| **Lesson 10** | Dates | ***Post-Structuralism: Michel Foucault, Genealogy and Power***  Compulsory Reading:   * Foucault, ‘The History of Sexuality, Vol. 1’, Part 4, Section 2: ‘Method’ (10 pages)   Optional Reading:   * Richard A. Lynch, ‘Foucault’s Theory of Power’ (*Michel Foucault: Key Concepts*) (13 pages) * Marcello Hoffman, ‘Disciplinary Power’ (*Michel Foucault: Key Concepts*) (13 pages) |
| **Lesson 11** | Dates | ***Post-Structuralism: Judith Butler, The Performativity of Gender***  Compulsory Reading:   * Butler, ‘Gender Trouble’, ‘Bodily Inscriptions, Performative Subversions’(18 pages) * Video: Butler, ‘Your Behaviour Creates Your Gender’ (Big Think, 3 minutes) * <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Bo7o2LYATDc&t=4s&ab_channel=BigThink>   Optional Reading:   * Butler, ‘Performative Acts and Gender Constitution’ (13 pages) * Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, ‘Feminist Perspectives on Sex and Gender’, section 3.1.2: ‘Normativity Argument’ |
| **Lesson 12** | Dates | ***Post-Structuralism: Jean-Francois Lyotard, The Differend***  Compulsory Reading:   * Lyotard, ‘The Differend’: * Preface: Reading Dossier (6 pages) * Sections 1-2, 7, 9, 22-24, 27, 94 (5 pages)   Optional Reading:   * Stuart Sim, ‘Lyotard Dictionary’, entries on ‘Auschwitz’, ‘Differend’, ‘Grand Narrative’, ‘Phrase, Phrasing’ (2 pages each) |