

**Continental Philosophy of Religion**  
**Reading Irigaray Reading**  
REL 660 | Fall 2013

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**Approaches and Aspirations**

Continental philosophy of religion (CPR) is a way. It offers ways of living in language(s). It offers ways of living with others. It opens for us ways of being, ways of thinking, ways of relating, by opening ways of interpreting. Ways of interpreting open onto intertwining ways of being and relating. Hermeneutics is a threshold. It makes way for ontology and ethics, entwined. This threshold is translational. Hermeneutic ways are of translation: ways of relating to and through differences. They are pedagogical ways: practices of formation, deformation, reformation, transformation. Hermeneutic ways are in-formation.

Our seminar moves in hermeneutic thresholds. It investigates intertwining ways of being and relation, of ontology and ethics, by passing through hermeneutic thresholds. Framing these thresholds are the readings and writings of Luce Irigaray. Her writings are readings of authoritative texts in CPR's canon. We will read these texts and her readings of them, which focus on sexual difference(s) as originary differences. Reading Irigaray's readings will increase our acuities of recognizing, respecting, and relating across differences: sexual, linguistic, religious, philosophical, cultural, animal, angelic, divine. Reading her readings will help us to read and think other-wise.

As we explore these hermeneutical, ethical, ontological ways, we will engage vital texts, by Irigaray and others, in CPR's corpus. In doing so, we will work methodologically to discern (1) CPR's hermeneutic techniques, (2) ontology's and ethics's imports for CPR, and (3) CPR's uses as a method for the study of religion. We will also work substantively to analyze differential domains inhabited by "religion": of life and language, existence and embodiment, sexuality and materiality, immanence and transcendence.

**Texts**

Sophokles, *Antigone*  
Angela of Foligno, *Memorial*  
G.W.F. Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*  
Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Gay Science*  
Sigmund Freud, *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*  
Luce Irigaray, *Speculum of the Other Woman*  
Luce Irigaray, *Marine Lover*  
Luce Irigaray, *Thinking the Difference*  
Luce Irigaray, *I Love To You*

Additional texts by Irigaray and others will be available on Blackboard.

## Activities and Responsibilities

Imaginative sympathy, hermeneutic charity, close reading, critical acumen, inventive analysis, conceptual precision, linguistic clarity, punctual attendance, active participation, sustained engagement, communal respect, academic integrity

## Achievement and Assessment

In addition to participation in our seminar meetings, we will perform the following activities that afford opportunities to deepen and to assess your learning:

### Expert testimony

Because this seminar interacts with so many thinkers, texts, times, and intellectual terrains, each of us might not apprehend each of these domains as fully as we might. We will need the help of experts. You will become one—on Freud, Nietzsche, Hegel, Angela, or Sophokles—by developing expertise on this writer's oeuvre: its contours and concepts, layers and textures, scope and stakes, peaks and pitfalls. Doing so will require reading and research beyond our seminar's readings. We will then offer expert testimony on "our" writers: sharing our findings, guiding our readings and discussions, and enriching our understandings. This testimony might take many forms, so long as it realizes these aims.

### Seminar notebook

This course stages a series of conversations: among Luce Irigaray and the authors she reads, among Luce Irigaray and us, and among ourselves. As an ongoing response to or commentary on these conversations, and as a means of intervention, you will keep a seminar notebook. There you will record your reactions, reflections, refractions, questions, objections, and other responses to the texts we read and to our readings of them. Your notebook need not be formal, so I encourage you to make way for spontaneity, creativity, passion, wonder. It will be a valuable resource as you write essays and as a record of this seminar.

### Analytic essays

Analysis's ancestor is *analuô*: to unloose, undo, release. Analysis undoes. It unloosens texts from their discursive sedimentations, releasing their potentials to mean, to signify, to address texts and readers. Each of these essays gives you an opportunity to unloosen a portion of a seminar text by reading it very carefully and by developing an analysis-argument based on that reading and supported by that text. Your essays should be approximately 1200 and 1800 words, respectively.

### Synthetic essay

Synthesis's ancestor is *suntithêmi*: to put together, frame, compose. This essay gives you an opportunity to put together course texts by different writers, to frame a site of investigation or intervention, and then to compose a constructive essay. Your essay should be analytically rigorous and imaginatively insightful, offering new ways of reading and thinking with and through the texts it engages. It may draw upon secondary resources or remain focused on the course texts. Your essay should be approximately 4000 words.

These assessed opportunities for learning and achievement (i.e., assignments) will translate into your course grade based on the following weighted valuations:

Active participation	12%	Analytic essay #1	12%
Expert testimony	9%	Analytic essay #2	18%
Seminar notebook	9%	Synthetic essay	40%

Assignments are due by 6:45 p.m. on the assigned days. Late work will not be accepted.

### Words for Thought

"I'm really trying to make people's minds move, which is not something they're naturally inclined to do. But it's really important to get somehow into the mind and make it move somewhere it has never moved before. That happens partly because the material is mysterious or unknown, but mostly because of the way you push the material around from word to word in a sentence. It's more like: given whatever material we're going to talk about, and we all know what it is, how can we move within it in a way we've never moved before, mentally? That seems like the most exciting thing to do with your head. I think it's a weakness to fall back into merely mystifying the audience, which anybody can do. You know, throw in a bit of Hegel. Who knows what that means? But to actually take a piece of Hegel and move it around in a way that shows you something about Hegel is a satisfying challenge." —Anne Carson

### Schedule of Readings and Assignments

26 August	Introduction Luce Irigaray, "Any Theory of the 'Subject' Has Already Been Appropriated by the 'Masculine'" Luce Irigaray, "Sexual Difference" Luce Irigaray, "A Chance to Live"
2 September	Labor Day
9 September	Freud–Irigaray Sigmund Freud, <i>Beyond the Pleasure Principle</i> Luce Irigaray, "Belief Itself" Seminar notebook due
16 September	Freud–Irigaray Sigmund Freud, <i>Beyond the Pleasure Principle</i> Luce Irigaray, "Belief Itself"
20 September	Analytic essay #1 due
23 September	Nietzsche–Irigaray Friedrich Nietzsche, <i>The Gay Science</i> Luce Irigaray, <i>Marine Lover</i>
30 September	Nietzsche–Irigaray Friedrich Nietzsche, <i>The Gay Science</i> Luce Irigaray, <i>Marine Lover</i> Seminar notebook due

- 7 October Hegel–Irigaray  
G.W.F. Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*  
Luce Irigaray, *I Love To You*
- 14 October Hegel–Irigaray  
G.W.F. Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*  
Luce Irigaray, *I Love To You*  
Seminar notebook due
- 21 October Hegel–Irigaray  
G.W.F. Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*  
Luce Irigaray, *I Love To You*
- 25 October Analytic essay #2 due
- 28 October Angela–Irigaray  
Angela of Foligno, *Memorial*  
Luce Irigaray, “La Mystérique”
- 4 November Antigone–Irigaray  
Sophokles, *Antigone*  
Luce Irigaray, “Eternal Irony of the Community”  
Luce Irigaray, “Questions”
- 11 November Antigone–Irigaray  
Sophokles, *Antigone*  
Luce Irigaray, “An Ethics of Sexual Difference”  
Luce Irigaray, “Civil Rights and Responsibilities for the Two Sexes”
- 18 November Antigone–Irigaray  
Sophokles, *Antigone*  
Luce Irigaray, “The Forgotten Mystery of Female Ancestry”  
Luce Irigaray, “Between Myth and History”  
Seminar notebook due
- 25 November Thanksgiving break
- 2 December Conclusion  
Luce Irigaray, “Volume—Fluidity”  
Luce Irigaray, “When Our Lips Speak Together”  
Luce Irigaray, “At the Crossroads—The Encounter”
- 13 December Synthetic essay due