

SYLLABUS-IN-PROGRESS

Religious Studies 4N03 (Winter 2010)

Topics in Western Religious Thought: Phenomenology and Theology

This syllabus is posted at <http://socserv.mcmaster.ca/danahol/4n03> and is also accessible by way of my home page (see below) and the Dept. of Religious Studies website. It will be updated periodically, and students in the class are asked to consult it regularly during the semester.

 updated March 25, 2010

CLASS MEETINGS: Wednesdays, 7-10 p.m., University Hall 122

INSTRUCTOR:

Dana Hollander, [Department of Religious Studies](#), University Hall 109. ☎ (905) 525-9140, ext. 24759*
✉ danahol@mcmaster.ca* 🏠 <http://univmail.cis.mcmaster.ca/~danahol/>

*in your phone and e-mail messages, please let me know how I can reach you by phone

Office Hours: Mondays, 3:15-4:15 p.m. (No office hours on February 15 [Reading Week] and March 29 [Passover])

[Course Description](#) / [Course Readings](#) / [Course Requirements](#) | SCHEDULE: [January](#) / [February](#) / [March](#) / [April](#)

Course Description and Objectives

The works we will study are by recent philosophers working in, or in the wake of, the "phenomenological" tradition in 20th-century philosophy. We will study some works by Martin Heidegger that represent his thinking about and approach to phenomenology. We will then turn to some works that specifically involve questions concerning God or transcendence by three thinkers who have been informed in some way by Heidegger's philosophy: Jean-Luc Marion, Emmanuel Levinas, and Jacques Derrida.

A core objective of this class is to develop skills of close reading, textual analysis, and strong writing. The assignments are designed for students to use and improve those skills. The course is structured in a way that encourages students to approach their education as a process that both requires and rewards active engagement. Because the course presupposes that successful education requires the active, informed participation of students, participants are required to complete assigned readings prior to the course meeting at which they will be discussed, to attend all sessions, and to participate actively in class meetings. **Preparation for, attendance at, and participation in class meetings are required and will count toward the final grade.**



Course Readings

See details for each title on the syllabus regarding how to obtain the reading.

- **Books** for this course have been ordered with [Titles](#) (visit the "Tank": TSH B203). In addition to the books that contain course readings - one of which is a "required" purchase, and the rest of which are "recommended" for purchase - I am asking you to purchase a writing reference book: Diana Hacker, *A Pocket Style Manual*, 5th ed. (Bedford/St. Martin's, 2008); and have also ordered Gordon Harvey,

Writing with Sources: A Guide for Students (Hackett) as a "recommended" title.

- As indicated below, all the readings are also on **reserve** at Mills Library. Look up the [Mills Library reserve lists](#) under "Hollander" in MORRIS.
- For some readings - including for those that are contained in the "recommended" books - you will be asked to make your own copy from a book/photocopy on reserve, or from a master copy in the course file in the department office (UH 104), or from an online resource.
- Original German-language and French-language versions of all the works to be studied will be placed on reserve, and students with even rudimentary knowledge of German/French are encouraged to consult the English and the German/French versions in parallel. Please let me know if you would like help locating a particular title, and also whether you would like some support from me for your German- or French-language reading.

You *must* have your own copy of all the texts to be discussed--with the same pagination as the edition selected for the class--whether in book or xeroxed form, so that you can mark them as you read and be prepared to refer to specific passages in class and tutorial, and when you write the exams.



Course Requirements

- one **Text Summary** (2-3 pages) - sign up for Text Summary assignments 1, 2, or 3 below, on the readings assigned for January 13, 20, or 27, and due in class on those dates.
- one **Text Preparation** (2-3 pages) from among Text Preparation assignments 1, 2, or 3 (specific assignments will be posted).
- sign up for EITHER of the following:
 - a second **Text Preparation** (2-3 pages) - Text Preparation assignments 4, 5, or 6
 - a 10-minute **Oral Presentation** on an aspect of the assigned reading (details to be worked out in advance with me), to be given in class on March 17, 24, or 31, or April 7.

The purpose of the Text Summary and the Text Preparation assignments is (1) to encourage you to read carefully and reflect on issues that come up in the reading, so that you are in a position to participate knowledgeably and actively in class and tutorial; and (2) to give you feedback on your writing and on working with primary texts, in preparation for writing the final paper for this class.

- **Final Paper** (~~10-12~~ **NEW 8-10** pages) - see [Final Paper Assignment](#).
- **Attendance** is mandatory, since participating in in-class work is crucial to successful completion of this course. If you need to be absent from a class session, please notify me, preferably by e-mail, and be sure to ask a classmate to fill you in on what you missed.
- **Participation** includes: reading the material carefully ahead of time and raising points and questions about it in class, taking part in in-class group assignments, communicating with the instructor outside of class, etc.

In preparing the written assignments, you are encouraged to use the resources of the [Writing Clinic at the Center for Student Development](#), and to consult the writing guide by Hacker.

Grades will be based on Text Summary (10%), Text Preparations/Oral Presentation (15% each), Attendance/Participation (25%), Final Paper (35%). Failure to complete any of the assignments, or 4 unexcused absences from class, constitute sufficient grounds for earning an "F" in the class.



deception or by other fraudulent means and can result in serious consequences, e.g., the grade of zero on an assignment, loss of credit with a notation on the transcript (notation reads: "Grade of F assigned for academic dishonesty"), and/or suspension or expulsion from the university.

It is your responsibility to understand what constitutes academic dishonesty. For information on the various kinds of academic dishonesty please refer to the [Academic Integrity Policy, specifically Appendix 3](#).

The following illustrates only three forms of academic dishonesty: 1. Plagiarism, e.g., the submission of work that is not one's own or for which other credit has been obtained. 2. Improper collaboration in group work. 3. Copying or using unauthorized aids in tests and examinations."

Please let me know if you have any questions on how this policy applies to your work for this course.

Privacy of Information. Some of the communications among the instructor and the students in this course will be over e-mail. As a result, private information such as first and last names and e-mail addresses may become apparent to all other students in the same course. Continuation in this course will be deemed consent to this disclosure. If you have any questions or concerns about such disclosure please discuss this with the course instructor.

You are advised to **retain copies** of any written work you submit for this class, and all your research notes, until you have received an official grade.



SCHEDULE

The instructor and university reserve the right to modify elements of the course during the term. The university may change the dates and deadlines for any or all courses in extreme circumstances. If either type of modification becomes necessary, reasonable notice and communication with the students will be given with explanation and the opportunity to comment on changes. It is the responsibility of students to check their McMaster email accounts (as well as the e-mail you receive at the addresses you have communicated to me for course correspondence - D.H.) and course websites (=this online syllabus) weekly during the term and to note any changes.

January 6

INTRODUCTION

January 13

Martin Heidegger, "Phenomenology and Theology" (1927), trans. James Hart and John C. Maraldo in *Pathmarks*, ed. William McNeill [make personal copy from book on reserve / master copy in UH 104] (Note: we will not be looking at the "Appendix" from 1964.)

[Text Summary 1](#) due in class from some students (sign-up in class on Jan. 6)

Background Reading on Heidegger and on "Phenomenology":

[Jane Howarth, "Phenomenology, epistemic issues in" \(1998\)](#), *Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy** [online / Mills Reference]

[Thomas Sheehan, "Heidegger, Martin" \(1998/2003\)](#), in *Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy** [online / Mills Reference]: sections 1, 2, and 3

S. J. McGrath, *Heidegger. A (Very) Critical Introduction* (2008), pp. 27-37 and pp. 56-67 [book on reserve / master copy of selection in UH 104]

Richard Kearney, "Martin Heidegger," in *Modern Movements in European Philosophy* (1986) [book on reserve]

Steven Galt Crowell, "Heidegger and Husserl: The Matter and Method of Philosophy," chap. 4 of [A Companion to Heidegger, ed. Dreyfus/Wrathall](#) (2005) [online edition]

*NOTE: To view the "Bibliography" portion of REP articles, click on "Bibliography" on the blue bar above the article heading.



January 20

Martin Heidegger, *History of the Concept of Time: Prolegomena*, trans. Theodore Kisiel [purchase book / make personal copy from book on reserve]: ♠♠19, 20, 21, and 22 to p. 183 top (i.e., pp. 156-83 top [German pagination: 210-47]) [[Google Books Preview*](#)]

*Note that even when Google Books has made available a book only as a "Limited Preview," this can be used to search for terms in the book as a whole. For best results, select "Order by pages" at the top.

[Text Summary 2](#) due in class on January 20 from some students.

January 27

Heidegger, *History of the Concept of Time*: ♠♠22 and 23 to p. 200 top (i.e., pp. 183-200 top [German pagination: 247-71])

[Text Summary 3](#) due in class on January 27 from anyone who has not yet completed a Text Summary assignment.

Background Explanations re. Heidegger, *History of the Concept of Time*, ♠22:

- on Descartes:

Daniel Garber, "Descartes, Ren♠" (1998/2003) in *Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy* [online /Mills Reference]: [section 8: "Mind and Body"](#)

[Edwin Curley, "Descartes, Ren♠ \(1596♠1650\),"](#) in *Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, 2nd ed. (2006) [online]: see p. 741 on Second Meditation, esp. paragraph beginning "Toward the end of the Second Meditation..." (on the wax example)

John Cottingham, *A Descartes Dictionary*, s.v. "substance," 160-61 [handout]

- on Kant's "antinomy of freedom":

Paul Guyer, "Kant, Immanuel" (1998/2004) in *Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy* [online /Mills Reference]: [section 8: "The illusions of theoretical reason"](#) - see paragraph 6, beginning "In the four 'dynamical antinomies'..."



February 3

Special Session on Library Research (with [Rick Stapleton](#), Mills Library)

Location: Wong e-Classroom, Room L-107, First Floor, Mills Library

Heidegger, *History of the Concept of Time*, cont'd

~~**REMOVED FROM SCHEDULE:** Heidegger, "The Thing" (1950), trans. Albert Hofstadter, in *Poetry, Language, Thought* [purchase book / make personal copy from book on reserve]~~



February 10

selection from: Jean-Luc Marion, *God Without Being: Hors-texte* (1982), trans. Thomas A. Carlson

[purchase book / make personal copy from book on reserve or from master copy of reading selection in UH 104]

Original French edition: *Dieu sans l'être* [book on reserve]

excerpt from Heidegger, "The Onto-Theo-Logical Constitution of Metaphysics," in *Identity and Difference* (1957) trans. Joan Stambaugh [purchase book / make personal copy from book on reserve or from master copy of selection in UH 104]

Details on these reading selections were communicated in class on February 3. No Text Preparation due today.

Further Reading on Marion:

Robyn Horner, *Jean-Luc Marion. A Theo-logical Introduction* (2005) [book on reserve]



February 24

Jean-Luc Marion, cont'd

~~[REMOVED FROM SCHEDULE: Jean-Luc Marion, "The Formal Reason for the Infinite," chap. 23 in Graham Ward (ed.), *Blackwell Companion to Postmodern Theology* (2001) [print out personal copy from [online edition](#)]]~~

[Text Preparation 1](#) due in class from some students.



March 3

selection from: Emmanuel Levinas "Philosophy and the Idea of the Infinite" (1957), trans. Alphonso Lingis, in Adriaan Peperzak, *To the Other. An Introduction to the Philosophy of Emmanuel Levinas* [purchase courseware from Titles / make copy from book on reserve or from master copy in UH 104]: *details communicated by e-mail*

Original French edition: "La philosophie et l'idée de l'infini" in Peperzak, *To the Other* [book on reserve / master copy of selection in UH 104]

March 10

Emmanuel Levinas, *Ethics and Infinity. Conversations with Philippe Nemo* (1982), trans. Richard A. Cohen: 21-25, 75-77, 85-92, 95-101*, 105-110 [purchase book / make copy from book on reserve or from master copy in UH 104]

**if possible! I know some people might have difficulties accessing this part of the text on time (details by e-mail)*

Original French edition: *Ethique et infini* [book on reserve]

[Text Preparation 2](#) due in class on March 10 from some students.

Background Reading on Levinas:

[Robert Bernasconi, "Levinas, Emmanuel,"](#) in *Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (1998)* [online / Mills Reference]

Dana Hollander, "[Levinas, Emmanuel](#)," from [The Johns Hopkins Guide to Literary Theory and Criticism](#), 2nd ed., 2005 [handout / online (Note that the online version contains some errors.)]

Further Reading on Levinas:

Adriaan Peperzak, *To the Other. An Introduction to the Philosophy of Emmanuel Levinas* (1993) [book on reserve]

Edith Wyschogrod, *Emmanuel Levinas. The Problem of Ethical Metaphysics*, 2nd ed. (2000) [book on reserve]



March 17

Emmanuel Levinas, cont'd:

Ethics and Infinity, 113-122

selection from "Revelation in the Jewish Tradition" (1977), in *Beyond the Verse. Talmudic Readings and Lectures*, trans. Gary D. Mole [make copy from book on reserve or from master copy of essay in in UH 104]:

- 141 - 147 ("...philosophical profession today")
- 148 (section II.3) - 150

Original French edition: "La Révélation dans la tradition juive," in *L'Au-delà du verset* [book on reserve]

[Text Preparation 3](#) due in class from any students who have not yet submitted a Text Preparation.

March 22:  [Final Paper Assignment](#) posted/distributed (see also "[Tips for Writing an Effective Paper](#)")



March 24

Emmanuel Levinas, cont'd: *please review readings assigned for last time*

Jacques Derrida, "How to Avoid Speaking: Denials" (1986), trans. K. Frieden and E. Rottenberg, in *Psyche. Inventions of the Other, Volume II* (Stanford UP, 2008) [purchase book / make copy from book on reserve / make copy from master copy in UH 104]: pp. 143-155 top

Original French edition: "Comment ne pas parler: Dénégations" in *Psyché. Inventions de l'autre* [book on reserve]

Background Reading:

[David Braine, "Negative Theology" \(1998\)](#), in *Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy* [online / Mills Reference]: esp. the introductory section (sections 1 and 4 are also relevant)

[Leonard Lawlor, "Jacques Derrida" \(2006/2008\)](#), *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* [online]: esp. introductory section, section 1, section 3

Further Reading on Derrida:

Geoffrey Bennington, "Derridabase," in Bennington/Derrida, *Jacques Derrida* [ book on reserve]

Jacques Derrida, "Letter to a Japanese Friend" (1985), trans. D. Wood and A. Benjamin, in *Psyche. Inventions of the Other, Volume II*



NEW March 31, April 7

Derrida, cont'd:

- 176 middle - 178 middle
- 181, para. 2, line 2: "However, at the opening..." - 182
- 183, para. 1: "Thus an event prescribes..." - 184: "...and finally to be silent"
- 186: "C. I had therefore decided..." - 187 top
- 188 line 8: "A Christian philosophy..." - 195

