

Lingnan University
Department of Philosophy

Course Title	: Contemporary Continental Philosophy
Course Code	: PHI4261
Recommended Study Year	: 3 rd Year
No. of Credits/Term	: 3
Mode of Tuition	: Lecture and Tutorial
Class Contact Hours	: 1.5 hours Lecture/week; 1.5 hours Tutorial/week
Category in Major Programme	: Programme Elective –Continental Philosophy Profile
Recommendation(s)	: At least one course in History of Western Philosophy <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. PHI2113 History of Western Philosophy: Ancient Greek Philosophy2. PHI2117 History of Western Philosophy: From Descartes to Kant
Co-requisite(s)	: N/A
Exclusion(s)	: N/A
Exemption Requirement(s)	: N/A

Brief Course Description

This course provides an overview of continental philosophy in the 20th century. 'Continental philosophy' designates less a school of thought than a patchwork of diverse philosophical movements which differ widely among themselves as to their method of inquiry and to their object of philosophical concern. But what they share in common is a radical questioning of the metaphysical foundation of thought. A re-thinking of human existence, of consciousness, of meaning and truth, of history and culture, constitute some of their major themes. This course will focus on some of the major figures in Phenomenology, Existentialism and Critical Theory.

Aims

To inform students of some modern trends of European thoughts and to provide them with the theoretical background necessary for understanding various new models of thinking in the human sciences.

Learning Outcomes

On completion of the course, students will:

1. be acquainted with the major trends of philosophical thinking in the first half of the 20th century in continental Europe.
2. grasp the phenomenological way of thinking.
3. understand the importance of phenomenology in opening up new realms of investigation for Western philosophy.
4. be able to read texts in continental philosophy and to use this language to express their own thoughts correctly.

Indicative Content

1. Husserl and Phenomenology
 - a. Husserl's critique of psychologism
 - b. Intentionality
 - c. *Epoche* and phenomenological reduction
 - d. Transcendental subjectivity
 - e. Phenomenological constitution

- f. Intersubjectivity
- 2. Heidegger and the Question of Being
 - a. Being and Time
 - b. Overcoming metaphysics
 - c. The essence of technology
 - d. Language
- 3. Sartre and Existentialism
 - a. Sartre's phenomenological ontology
 - b. Consciousness and nothingness
 - c. The other
 - d. Facticity and human freedom
- 4. Benjamin and Critical Theory
 - a. Benjamin's theory of language
 - b. Allegory and modernity
 - c. The concept of history
 - d. Art and politics

Teaching Method

Lectures and tutorial discussions.

Measurement of Learning Outcomes

1. Tutorial presentation and class participation: (LO1, LO2, LO4)
Students will do a presentation on a given text of a continental philosopher. They will explicate the text, discuss the meaning of the inquiry and comment on the significance of that text in the wider context of contemporary philosophy.
2. Term paper: (LO1, LO2, LO3, LO4)
Students will write a final paper that demonstrates their mastery of the language and vocabulary of continental philosophy. They will engage themselves with the thoughts of an individual philosopher, rethinking the path that has been undertaken and furthering themselves in that path of thinking.
3. Final examination: (LO1, LO2, LO4)
The final examination will assess students' understanding of the basic thoughts and ideas of individual continental philosophers as well as their affinities and differences. Students should be able to express their thoughts adequately and systematically.

Assessment

30% Tutorial presentation and participation in class discussions

30% Term paper

40% Final examination

Required Readings

Kearney, R. & Rainwater, M. eds., *The Continental Philosophy Reader*, London: Routledge, 1996.

Supplementary Readings

Benjamin, Walter, *Selected Writings, Vol. 1, 1913-1926*, M. Bullock & M. W. Jennings eds., Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press, 1996.

Critchley, S. & Schroeder, W. eds., *A Companion to Continental Philosophy*, Malden, Mass.: Blackwell, 1998.

D'Amico, Robert, *Contemporary Continental Philosophy*, Oxford: Westview, 1999.

Ferris, David S. ed., *The Cambridge Companion to Walter Benjamin*, Cambridge: Cambridge

- University Press, 2004.
- Haar, Michel, *The Song of the Earth*, trans. R. Lilly, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1993.
- Heidegger, Martin, *Being and Time*, trans. J. Stambaugh, New York: State University of New York, 1996.
- Heidegger, Martin, *On Time and Being*, trans. J. Stambaugh, New York: Harper and Row, 1972.
- Heidegger, Martin, *Pathmarks*, W. McNeill ed., Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998.
- Kearney, Richard ed., *Continental Philosophy in the 20th Century*, London: Routledge, 1994.
- Kearney, Richard, *Modern Movements in European Philosophy*, 2nd edn., Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1994.
- May, Todd ed., *Twentieth Century Continental Philosophy*, New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1997.
- Pattison, George, *The Later Heidegger*, London: Routledge, 2000.
- Polt, Richard, *Heidegger: An Introduction*, Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1999.
- Rochlitz, Rainer, *The Disenchantment of Art: the Philosophy of Walter Benjamin*, trans. J.M. Todd, New York: The Guilford Press, 1996.
- Warnock, Mary, *Existentialism*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1970.
- Zahavi, Dan, *Husserl's Phenomenology*, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2003.

Important Notes

- (1) Students are expected to spend a total of 9 hours (i.e. 3 hours of class contact and 6 hours of personal study) per week to achieve the course learning outcomes.
- (2) Students shall be aware of the University regulations about dishonest practice in course work, tests and examinations, and the possible consequences as stipulated in the Regulations Governing University Examinations. In particular, plagiarism, being a kind of dishonest practice, is “the presentation of another person’s work without proper acknowledgement of the source, including exact phrases, or summarised ideas, or even footnotes/citations, whether protected by copyright or not, as the student’s own work”. Students are required to strictly follow university regulations governing academic integrity and honesty.
- (3) Students are required to submit writing assignment(s) using Turnitin.
- (4) To enhance students’ understanding of plagiarism, a mini-course “Online Tutorial on Plagiarism Awareness” is available on <https://pla.ln.edu.hk/>