

PHIL*3200-01

CONTEMPORARY EUROPEAN PHILOSOPHY [0.50]

Instructor: J. Lampert

Brief course synopsis:

This course introduces a wide range of 20th Century philosophical movements, from phenomenology and existentialism, to critical theory and hermeneutics, to semiotics and structuralism, to deconstruction and postmodernism and philosophies of difference. We will read a number of philosophers, but at the centre of the course we will spend five weeks on a single text: Martin Heidegger's Being and Time.

Being and Time (1927) draws together themes of phenomenology (consciousness, intentionality, interpretation, temporality, Being-in-the-world, intersubjectivity) with foundations of existentialism (authenticity, care, freedom, anxiety, destiny, and death). This is one of the most brilliant and influential books of the 20th Century. Our study of it will give us a chance to develop our own rigorous analyses of what it means to be the kind of being who can ask about our own being.

Following our study of Heidegger, we will look at later movements in 20th Century philosophy (each of which has some roots in phenomenology). First, we will read a major essay by Jacques Derrida to introduce deconstruction. Second, we will read a collection of essays by Helene Cixous and Catherine Clement. Cixous and Clement draw together concepts from semiotics (the theory of signs), psychoanalytic theory, deconstruction, cultural critique, and Feminist philosophy. Feminist philosophy, by developing a general theory of difference in opposition to traditional essentialisms, has frequently been at the forefront of movements in 20th Century philosophy. Third, we will read What is Philosophy? by Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari. Taking the theme of free difference to its logical conclusion, Deleuze describes a new kind of concept formation in the life of the schizo-nomad.

Texts:

- Heidegger, Being and Time
- Cixous and Clement, The Newly Born Woman
- Deleuze and Guattari, What is Philosophy?

Grading scheme:

One textual explication, Feb 5 (4 pages)	25%
Group presentation on Cixous/Clement	15%
Term paper, 2800 words, Mar 29	50%
Class participation	10%