

Point Loma Nazarene University

Contemporary Voices in Philosophy, Theology and Ethics

PHL 401(3) and PHL 490(1)

SPRING 2018

MW 10:45-12:30

Instructors: Heather K. Ross and Robert J. Thompson

Offices: Smee Hall #204 and #207

Office Phones: 849-2357 (Ross) and 849-2930 (Thompson)

E-mails: hross@pointloma.edu, robertthompson@pointloma.edu

Office Hours: by appointment

PLNU MISSION:

Point Loma Nazarene University exists to provide higher education in a vital Christian community where minds are engaged and challenged, character is modeled and formed, and service becomes an expression of faith. Being of Wesleyan heritage, we aspire to be a learning community where grace is foundational, truth is pursued, and holiness is a way of life.

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

The goal of this class is to explore issues related to philosophical, theological and ethical discourse, with an emphasis on the limitations of language about God, the world, and ourselves. The class will be centered around 20th century philosophers who are themselves exploring the role of linguistic systems and meaning formation. We will engage with significant texts and figures that question some fundamental assumptions of the Western philosophical tradition. Our hope is that we will acquire a basic understanding of the views held by many of the more important philosophers in the contemporary period, and that we will be able to reflect on some of the most significant topics within philosophical and theological discourse, like ontology, immanence/transcendence, one's ethical obligation to the neighbor, gender performance, hospitality, hermeneutics, realism, truth, corporate responsibility, and so on.

LEARNING OUTCOMES:

1. Students will engage in the disciplined practices of asking questions about God, the world, and of themselves, including questions for which there may be no easy answers. (Learning, Growing)
2. Students will differentiate among interrelated movements or figures in the history of philosophy. (Learning)

3. Students will evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of human reasoning or experience to provide adequate accounts of significant issues that relate to our human condition, the world, ethics and Christian life. (Learning, Growing, Serving)

COURSE OBJECTIVES:

1. To study 20th century western philosophy and critically reflect upon those trajectories of thought that arise out of and respond to the philosophical work of the Western philosophical tradition as a whole.
2. To examine the philosophical impact of *temporality*, understood with a gaze toward the future.
3. To examine the philosophical significance of *language* to metaphysical and epistemological engagement.
4. To study historically significant figures in the history of philosophy in order to enrich our engagement with the discourse within western philosophy.
5. To reconsider the term ‘philosophy’ in light of these thinkers.
6. To read some really good but difficult texts that question some ‘fundamental’ assumptions of the Western philosophical tradition.
7. To acquire a basic understanding of the views held by many of the more important philosophers in the contemporary period, as well as the primary philosophic movements, and major themes that make up the intellectual climate of that period.
8. To critically engage the philosophers of the contemporary period and evaluate their views and the impact of their views on contemporary thought and culture.
9. To study and critically evaluate the relationship between discourse, theology and human thought.
10. To wait in hopeful anticipation for that *impossible possibility*...

ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATIONS:

Please see us in order to discuss any accommodations you may need. All students are expected to meet the minimum standards for this course as set forth by the instructor. Students with learning disabilities who may need accommodations should first discuss options and services with the Academic Support Center (ASC) during the first two weeks of the semester. Approved documentation must be provided by the student and placed on file in the ASC prior to the beginning of the semester. If you have a diagnosed disability, please contact PLNU’s Disability Resource Center (DRC) within the first two weeks of class to demonstrate need and to register for accommodation by phone at 619-849-2486 or by e-mail at DRC@pointloma.edu. See [Disability Resource Center](#) for additional information.

INCLUSIVE LANGUAGE:

The School of Theology and Christian Ministry is committed to the equality of women and men. Recognizing that people often use language in ways that imply the exclusion or inferiority of women, the School strongly urges students to join faculty and staff in avoiding any sexist language in public discourse, in classroom discussions and in writing.

TEXTBOOKS:

Required:

1. Wittgenstein, Ludwig, *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* (C.K. Ogden trans.) ISBN-13: 978-0486404455 or ISBN-10: 0486404455
2. Heidegger, Martin, *Being and Time* (Stambaugh trans) ISBN-10: 1438432762 or ISBN-13: 978-1438432762
3. Wittgenstein, Ludwig, *Philosophical Investigations* (G.E.M. Anscombe trans.), ISBN-10: 1405159286 or ISBN-13: 978-1405159289
4. Wittgenstein, Ludwig, *On Certainty*, (G.E.M. Anscombe and G.H. von Wright, trans.) ISBN: 0-06-131686-5
5. Levinas, Emmanuel, *Totality and Infinity* ISBN-10: 0820702455

PROCEDURE/REQUIREMENTS:

The format of the class will be seminar style. It will be team-taught by Rob Thompson and Heather Ross. Both of us will be present each day for the class discussion unless one of us has lost her or his voice. There will be class presentations by students, small and large writing assignments and two exams--one written and one oral. In order to take the class you must register for both PHL 401 (3 units) and PHL 490 (1 unit). You will need to be cleared by Rob Thompson or Heather Ross for the PHL 490 portion of the class. (this should already be done).

1. We will be reading from some of the most significant **texts** in the history of western thought. You must be reading the edition of these texts indicated above. It is vitally important that you become acquainted with the material in order that you get a feel for not simply what the writer says, but how she or he makes you think. We want you to be thoughtful and critical of what each of the thinkers writes, as well as of what we say in class. A significant portion of your grade will be based upon the amount of reading you do. You will be asked to give a verbal report each day on your **reading** progress (scale of 0-10). For example, an 8.5 means that you read carefully and thought about carefully 85% of the assigned reading for that day.

2. Regular and punctual **attendance** is required for the full benefit of this class. If you are late, it is your responsibility to see one of us after class in order that your attendance may be recorded. Any three tardies will be recorded as one absence. Dialogue tends to spawn new ideas and creativity, so discussion will also be extremely important. Therefore, *each* student will be expected to enter into class discussion. The extent to which this occurs, along with attendance will be considered in your final grade. *You cannot pass the class* if you miss more than three weeks of class (six sessions). See the catalogue.

3. There will be one **paper proposal/bibliographic assignment**--the topic will be due initially March 14th and the final proposal/bibliographic assignment will be due March 19th. The purpose of the latter is to familiarize you with our library's database holdings in philosophy -specifically journal articles -and standard methods of philosophical research. We will be spending one class session in the library in preparation for this assignment (March 14th--meet outside Ryan Library). For this assignment, you must provide three bibliographic references -complete with abstracts -to full text journal articles, including the database in which you found each article. The articles themselves should be related to your research proposal figure for the final term paper (see section 4 below), which is included in this assignment. In other words, the bibliographic assignment should be related to this paper and specifically to the figure you will be focusing on from the latter half of the semester (neither Wittgenstein or Heidegger). If it turns out that no abstract is provided by the database, you must provide your own brief summary. No more than a paragraph is required in this case. You will also need to present a final paper proposal, complete with a thesis statement and paragraph explaining your project, to us as a part of this assignment. Note: While important, secondary source research should never be used in lieu of careful engagement with primary sources. Careful scrutiny of the primary text(s) is always the first step in serious philosophical research.

4. The **final paper** is due Friday, April 27th at noon -Smee Hall mailboxes (15 pages). The paper will be a summative project. It will be your responsibility to come up with a paper topic. It will make use of the research and reading you have done all semester. You will need to choose either Ludwig Wittgenstein or Martin Heidegger (or both) as a focus for your paper. In addition, you must choose another figure on which to focus from the material we will cover after the mid-term. This figure must be integral to your project. This second figure will be the object of study for your bibliographic assignment mentioned above (section 3). In partial preparation for your final paper, you will make use of the research accomplished with your **library/bibliographical work assignment**. You will need to present a first-draft thesis statement/paper proposal to us (March 14th) as a part of your bibliographic assignment (see above). The final proposal will be due March 19th and must include an explicit thesis statement. You will be required to work on several drafts of your papers throughout the end of the semester. The first draft will be due April 4th. Comments will then be given by your peer reviewer no later than April 9th. Your second draft will then be due April 16th. Rob and Heather will return your drafts with comments to you by April 23th. Your final draft will then be due April the 27th. The papers are formal and will need to include formal citation (any manual of style is acceptable). Plagiarism will not be tolerated and will result in either zero credit for the assignment(s) and minimally a full grade reduction for the class or failure of the course (this is up to our discretion). Both will result in a letter to the Provost to be placed in your academic record.

5. Throughout the term each of you will do one in-class **presentation**. Please provide around a 150 word general introduction to the work to be covered for that day. This should be in your own words. If it is the first day discussing a figure, there should be general philosophical introduction to the figure covered during that session. It may include cultural analyses elucidating the time period surrounding the figure/work. The presentation should mainly be an outline of the text for the day. The person presenting should have in mind teaching the material and facilitating discussion at a seminar level and for the time allotted for the material. Students must provide an outline and bibliography for *each member of the class* and should provide a complete copy of their presentation outline and notes to either Heather or Rob prior to the start of class. You should reference 10-12 significant portions of the text to be covered in class. You must provide a detailed list of quotations and bibliographic citation/reference for each member of the class (be discerning in your use of sources, especially electronic ones). Please also include a picture that has not been used by prior presenters. We expect you to be lively and engaged with the work you are presenting. If you are interested, we will be interested. We expect you to be(come) generally familiar with the figure's work. You must have the same edition of the material as the class as a whole (see ISBNs listed above). (NB: the goal is both to move through the salient elements of the reading for the day and to engage in critical discussion on the reading, so the presentations should reflect an effort to accomplish both elements.)

6. There will be **two exams**. The mid-term will be written (essay and matching) and the final will be a combination of matching and group oral examination. The oral portion will include an extended group oral dialogue preceded by a matching portion. The first exam will be the length of the class period (March 12th -immediately after Spring Break) . The second exam will be approximately 2 1/2 hours (the final exam period). The final exam is Friday, May the 4th at 10:30-1:00 in a galaxy far, far away.

7. We will require you to do **daily class writing** in preparation for our discussion each class session. Either Rob or Heather will give you a prompt for explication each day. You will explicate the text for 15 minutes and will then receive at least two comments of feedback from one of your peers. We will provide 5 minutes for review and commenting. Please have a distinct notebook for this assignment as we will collect and evaluate them several times throughout the semester as part of your final grade.

8. The **grades** are based on all of these mentioned assignments. All outside assignments are due at the beginning of class. We will not accept late work. We will give no make-up exams unless you have an excused absence AND have notified either of us in advance. All make-up exams must be taken within one week of the exam. Do not expect to be able to make-up the exam unless one of us has written or spoken this to you explicitly.

Reading	15%
Daily Writing	12%
Bibliographic Assignment	5%
Presentations	10%
Written Mid-term	17%
Final Paper	24%
<u>Oral and Matching Final</u>	<u>17%</u>
TOTAL	100%

100-94% A	79-77% C+	63-60% D-
93-90% A-	76-74% C	59-0% F
89-87% B+	73-70% C-	
86-84% B	69-67% D+	
83-80% B-	66-64% D	

PLNU POLICIES:

FINAL EXAMINATION POLICY:

Successful completion of this class requires taking the final examination on its scheduled day. The final examination schedule is posted on the [Class Schedules](#) site. No requests for early examinations or alternative days will be approved.

PLNU COPYRIGHT POLICY:

Point Loma Nazarene University, as a non-profit educational institution, is entitled by law to use materials protected by the US Copyright Act for classroom education. Any use of those materials outside the class may violate the law.

PLNU ACADEMIC HONESTY POLICY:

Students should demonstrate academic honesty by doing original work and by giving appropriate credit to the ideas of others. Academic dishonesty is the act of presenting information, ideas, and/or concepts as one's own when in reality they are the results of another person's creativity and effort. A faculty member who believes a situation involving academic dishonesty has been detected may assign a failing grade for that assignment or examination, or, depending on the seriousness of the offense, for the course. Faculty should follow and students may appeal using the procedure in the university Catalog. See [Academic Policies](#) for definitions of kinds of academic dishonesty and for further policy information.

PLNU ATTENDANCE AND PARTICIPATION POLICY:

Regular and punctual attendance at all classes is considered essential to optimum academic achievement. If the student is absent from more than 10 percent of class meetings, the

faculty member can file a written report which may result in de-enrollment. If the absences exceed 20 percent, the student may be de-enrolled without notice until the university drop date or, after that date, receive the appropriate grade for their work and participation. See [Academic Policies](#) in the Undergraduate Academic Catalog.

GUIDELINE:

1/9 Introduction to the Course
1/10 Willie Jennings Video and Open discussion of language, etc.
["Can 'White' People Be Saved?"](#)
1/15 No class, M.L.K.jr Day
1/17 Frege, Sense and Reference; Russell, Descriptions (167-180)*
1/22 Wittgenstein, *Tractatus* (Preface; 1-4.1)
1/24 Wittgenstein, *Tractatus* (4.1-5.5)*
1/29 Wittgenstein, *Tractatus* (5.5-7)*
1/31 Heidegger *Being and Time* pp. 63-99
2/5 *Being and Time* pp. 99-138*
2/7 *Being and Time* pp. 138-173*
2/12 Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations* (2-31 Paragraph 63)*
2/14 Attend Wiley Lecture -Rambo
2/19 Wittgenstein, *PI* (31-61 Paragraph 155)*
2/21 Heidegger *The Way to Language* (from Basic Writings text, pp. 397-426) PDF*
2/26 Moore, In Defence of Common Sense (32-59) PDF*
2/28 Wittgenstein, *On Certainty* (171-184, 28-40 Paragraphs 1-316)*
3/5-3/10 Spring Break
3/12 **Mid-Term -Essay/Matching**
3/14 Library Day (Meet outside Ryan Library) **Initial Paper Proposal/Thesis Due**
3/19 Foucault [Subjectivity and Power](#) **Paper Topic with Thesis/Bibliographical Assignment Due***
3/21 Quine, (450-462); Quine, (45-61) PDF*
3/26 Levinas *Totality and Infinity* pp. 21-52
3/28 Levinas *Totality and infinity* pp. 53-81*
3/29-4/2 Easter Break
4/4 Kripke (72-89) PDF **1st draft of final paper due***
4/9 Derrida *Differance* pp. 396-420 PDF **comments on 1st draft due back***
4/11 Putnam PDF*
4/16 Butler [Performative Acts and Gender Constitution](#) **2nd draft due***
4/18 Spillers [Mama's Baby, Papa's Maybe](#)*
4/23 Marion *God Without Being* pp. xix-24 PDF **2nd draft returned with comments***
4/25 Flex
4/27 **Final Paper due by noon (hardcopy in mailbox)**
5/4 **Final Oral/Matching Exam, 10:30am-1pm**