

Continental Philosophy

Academic Program:

[Master of Arts in Philosophy \(1 year\)](#)

[Master of Arts in Philosophy \(2 years\)](#)

Course Requirement Areas:

History of Philosophy

Instructor:

[Nenad Miscevic](#)

Term:

Winter

Credits:

2.0

Level:

Master's

Type:

Core

Course Description:

The course addresses both low-profile but very important strands in continental philosophy, like mainstream phenomenology and early hermeneutics, and the high-profile tradition marked by a sharp contrast with analytic approaches. The former tradition will be represented by the work of E. Husserl, in particular his *The Crisis of European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology*. The later will be represented by its historically central figure, Heidegger, and then by the work of Judith Butler, combining philosophy of language and feminist political theory.

Finally, the work of J. Habermas will be presented, in particular his „Knowledge and human interest“, straddling the divide between Marxism and hermeneutics.

Learning Outcomes:

By the end of the course students will be expected to understand the main trails of continental philosophy. They will probably choose the ones they think to be most plausible, and will be able to defend their choices.

Assessment:

Discussion in the class-roughly 10 %

Presentation in the class – roughly 30 %

Final paper – roughly 60 %

Additional Information:

Mandatory for 2 yr MA in 1st yr

1. Introduction: characterizing continental philosophy

We start by looking at some general characteristics of continental philosophy. Then we introduce the distinction between high-profile and low-profile continental philosophy, the former sharply contrasting with the analytic style, and the later showing lots of similarity with it.

Obligatory reading:

Miscevic The Continental-Analytic Rift: A Guide For Travellers And Bridge-Builders
Miscevic: History as the fundamental reality-limning the continental-analytic divide

Additional readings

Gary Gutting: What Is Continental Philosophy of Science?

2. The birth of continental philosophy

The issue of the “divorce” of analytic and continental philosophy is analysed. The main circumstances of it are described, and reasons for separation analysed.

Obligatory reading:

Selections from Critchley: *Continental philosophy*
Miscevic: Philosophy of science, continental and analytic

Additional reading

Babette E. Babich: Philosophies of science: Mach, Duhem, Bachelard
Michael Friedman and Thomas Ryckman. Analytic and continental traditions: Frege, Husserl, Carnap, and Heidegger

3 Husserl between science and philosophy

Husserl as a typical philosopher combining „continental“ and „analytic“ features, before the time of the divorce.

Obligatory reading:

Edmund Husserl: From Introduction to the Logical Investigations and from
The Crisis of European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology 113

Additional reading:

Selections from Richard Tieszen: Science as a Triumph of the Human Spirit
and Science in Crisis: Husserl and the Fortunes of Reason 93

4. Husserl's historical turn

Husserl's turn to more „continental“ topics, but still in a very rationalist tradition: history of science rethought in very general philosophical framework.

Obligatory reading:

Selections from E. Husserl: *The Crisis of European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology*

Additional reading:

Sean D. Kelly: Edmund Husserl and Phenomenology

5. Heidegger – *Being and Time*

Heidegger's master work is discussed, in relation to Husserl, and in its main outlines.

Obligatory reading:

Selections from Heidegger: *Being and Time*

Additional reading:

Jeff Malpas: Martin Heidegger

Martin Kusch: Winner takes all, Lebensphilosophie and the triumph of phenomenology

6. Heidegger, science and art:

Heidegger's rather negative attitude towards science (and contemporary formal logic), and his enthusiasm for art as the model of authentic creativity is presented, and its key role in the formation of second half of 20th century continental philosophy discussed.

Obligatory reading:

From Heidegger On "Time and Being"

Heidegger: The Essence of the work of art

Selections from Fay: *Heidegger's critique of logic*

Additional reading:

Joseph Rouse: Heidegger on Science and Naturalism

Miscevic: Heidegger on art

Miscevic: Abolishing philosophy

7. Habermas 3 kinds of interest

Habermas' first mature synthetic work is discussed, and placed within the development of continental philosophy.

Obligatory reading:

selections from Habermas: *Knowledge and Human Interests*

Additional reading:

Axel Honneth: Bisected Rationality: The Frankfurt School's Critique of Science 295

Christopher F. Zurn: Jürgen Habermas

8. Habermas technical interest and hermeneutical interest

Habermas put in the context, with relation to history of hermeneutics.

Obligatory reading:

selections from Habermas: *Knowledge and Human Interests*

Additional reading:

David Ingram: Jürgen Habermas and Hans-Georg Gadamer

9. Habermas: emancipatory interest

Habermas idea of emancipatory interest, and its later development in the emancipatory theory of communicative action is discussed.

Obligatory reading:

J. Habermas: Towards a Communication-Concept of Rational Collective Will-Formation. A Thought-Experiment

Additional reading:

Selections from J. Habermas: *The theory of communicative action*

10. Judith Butler language

Judith Butler is presented as a typical high-profile continental philosopher, but with interest in performative analysis.

Obligatory reading:

Selections from: J. Butler: Excitable speech

Additional reading:

Judith Butler and Rosi Braidotti: Out of bounds: philosophy in an age of transition 307

11. Judith Butler political theory

Performative analysis is for Butler the foundation of political philosophy.

Obligatory reading:

Selections from: J. Butler: *Notes Toward a Performative Theory of Assembly*

Additional reading:

Gayle Salamon: Rethinking gender: Judith Butler and feminist philosophy

12. Conclusion

We discuss the extreme high-profile continental philosophy of history (Lyotard), and the issue of global characterization of continental philosophy

Obligatory reading:

Miscevic: Continental Philosophy-Trails and Family Resemblances

J.F. Lyotard: *The post-modern condition*

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