

Prospectus

Husserl's phenomenology is central to the study of contemporary continental thought. Virtually every major thinker from Heidegger to Jacques Derrida has passed through the doorway of the phenomenological method. His theories of intentionality, internal time consciousness, the theory of constitution, the pure and the empirical ego, active and passive genesis, the natural attitude, the epoche and the reduction, noesis and noema, perception, and his idea of experiential "reason" are groundbreaking openings which provide the entryway to continental thought in the 20th century. He is also the most scientific and epistemological of the continental philosophers—having begun his work in the foundations of mathematics and logic (which included an exchange with Frege—and thus has often attracted the interest of analytic philosophers. In this course we will study three major texts, which take up three central themes and represent three characteristic stages in the development of Husserl's thought. We will begin with the "transcendental turn" taken by Husserl in *Ideas I* (1916), which gave the "descriptive psychology" of *Logical Investigations* (1900-1901) a fundamentally new epistemological status. *Ideas I* was also of foundational importance for Jean-Paul Sartre. Then we will turn to the central issue of an "intersubjective phenomenology," raised in the *Cartesian Meditations* (1929), which includes the famous account of constitution of the alter ego, which was the point of departure for Levinas's work in ethics. We will conclude with the well known "Life-world phenomenology" in the *Crisis* (mid-1930s), which was of decisive importance to Merleau-Ponty and to existential phenomenology generally. With the exception of *Cartesian Meditations*, we cannot read these books in their entirety, but we will nonetheless gain a substantial sense of the movement and range of Husserl's thought.

Texts

Ideas Pertaining to a Pure Phenomenology and a Phenomenological Philosophy: First Book: General Introduction to a Pure Phenomenology, trans. Fred Kirsten (Springer/Kluwer paperback)

Cartesian Meditations, trans. Dorian Cairns (Springer Classic Titles in Philosophy)

Crisis of European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology, trans. David Carr, Northwestern UP paperback

Reserve Room

If you are newcomer to Husserl, some good places to get some background are:

- (1) Caputo, *Radical Hermeneutics*, ch. 2 (IUP), which will outline my approach;
- (2) Maurice Natanson, *Husserl: Philosopher of Infinite Tasks* (Northwestern); very good intro.
- (3) Robert Solomon, *From Rationalism to Existentialism*, the chapter on Husserl is the best intro of its length to Husserl that I know. (Littlefield Adams, 1992). Good place to start.