

**PHI 600: Heidegger**  
**Syracuse University - Fall, 2008**  
**Dr. John D. Caputo**

The thought of Martin Heidegger is the basic presupposition of virtually everything that has happened in continental philosophy, and a good deal else, since the first appearance of *Being and Time* in 1927 to today—everything in existentialism, phenomenology, hermeneutics and deconstruction, everything in contemporary “theory.”

In the first half of the course we will devote the first six sessions to reading key selections from *Being and Time*—on the question of the meaning of being, being-in-the-world, the “they,” authenticity and inauthenticity, being-unto-death, temporality and historicity. This is arguably the most important work in continental philosophy to appear in the 20<sup>th</sup> century and was at first blush taken as a masterpiece of “Existentialism.” (I will use the older Macquarrie-Robinson translation from HarperOne, 1962).

In the second half of the course we will take up the so called “later” Heidegger. I will begin with a session on the famous re-reading or “repetition” that Heidegger made of *Being and Time* after World War II in the well known 1947 *A Letter on Humanism* which tried mightily to dispel any association of the text with Existentialism. This text introduced post-war readers to what came to be known as the “later Heidegger,” with all the controversy that surrounds the famous “turn” or “reversal” (*Kehre*) in Heidegger’s thought, with the characteristic ideas of Being, language, the destiny of being, poetry and thought. Here his claim that the dignity of the human lies in what is more than human was the first major installment in the “end of man” debates which persists to this day under the name of “post-humanism.” Then we will look into his famous redescription of the “essence of truth” in an essay published in 1947 but showing signs of an early draft from the 1930s.

Then we turn to two of the most important motifs in these later writings, “the essence of technology” and the “destiny of Being.” In *The Question of Technology and other Essays* (Harper Perennial paperbacks, 1982) Heidegger explicates his notion of the essence of technology as something more than a turn in human affairs, and hence as an “event” (*Ereignis*) or movement of Being itself, a “turning” in which the world and humankind are turned into the raw material of unleashed production. These essays have had an impact on deep ecology and they pose the question of technology as a mode of being which distorts “poetic dwelling.” Nonetheless, while depriving us of “building dwelling thinking,” the “essence” of technology enigmatically poses a “danger” in which, if it is thought through, the “saving” is also nurtured. I will conclude the course with *The Principle of Reason* (1956) (Indiana University Press, ppbk., 1996). Here Heidegger makes a most enlightening and comprehensive presentation of his thought of the “destiny of Being”—as opposed to the “history of humankind”—from its dawn in early Greek thinking to the darkening of the “atomic” age in the “*Abend-land*,” the west or “evening land.” Presented in his 67<sup>th</sup> year, he here provides some of his most striking formulations of early Greek thinking and the thought of *physis*, of the idea of “modernity” as the age of principles come to a head in Leibniz, along with providing a suggestive account of “thinking” beyond the “principle of sufficient reason,” even suggesting a kinship with the mysticism of Meister Eckhart and Angelus Silesius.

### *Required Texts*

Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, trans. Macquarrie and Robinson, Paperback (Blackwell Publishers, 1978) ISBN-10: 0631197702 or ISBN-13: 978-0631197706

[I am not using the SUNY Press translation by Joan Stambaugh but you might want to pick it up for comparison.]

*Martin Heidegger: Basic Writings*, ed. David Krell, revised edition, ppbk, (HarperSanFrancisco, 1993).

Martin Heidegger, *The Question of Technology and other Essays* (Harper Perennial paperbacks, 1982)

Martin Heidegger, *The Principle of Reason* (Indiana University Press, ppbk., 1996)

### *Reserve Room*

- (1) Heidegger, *Being and Time*, Joan Stambaugh translation (SUNY Press)
- (2) Theodore Kisiel, *The Genesis of "Being and Time"* (University of California Press)
- (3) John van Buren, *The Young Heidegger* (Indiana University Press)
- (4) John D. Caputo, *Radical Hermeneutics* (Indiana University Press)
- (5) \_\_\_\_\_. *Demythologizing Heidegger* (Indiana University Press)
- (6) \_\_\_\_\_. *The Mystical Element in Heidegger's Thought* (Fordham UP)
- (7) Hubert Dreyfus, *Being-in-the-World: A Commentary on Being and Time* (MIT ppbk.)
- (8) Otto Poeggeler, *Martin Heidegger's Path of Thought*
- (9) Albert Borgmann, *Technology and the Character of Contemporary Life* (U Chicago P)

### *Office Hours (HL 506)*

I have scheduled office hours—Tuesday, 3:45-5:30, Wednesday, 1:00-4:15—but you should, for safety's sake, make an appt in advance by email at [johncaputo@comcast.net](mailto:johncaputo@comcast.net).

### *Course Requirements*

- (1) Seminar Participation (20%)
- (2) 2 Research Papers (40% each) (4,000-4,500 words each):

#### *Paper #1: Being and Time*

It may make more sense to stick to texts or issues taken up in class, but if you have any other special interests in this book feel free to pursue them.

October 1: Statement of topic due

Oct. 29: Paper due

#### *Paper #2: The Later Heidegger*

You may take up any of the texts or issues taken up in class or look into other works if you have special interests in the later Heidegger. The essay on the "Origin of the Work of Art" (*Basic Writings*) is justly famous but omitted from my lectures.

Nov. 12 Statement of topic

Dec. 12 Paper due

## *Syllabus*

August 27	Orientation <i>Being and Time</i> , “Introduction” (§§1-8)
September 3	<i>Being and Time</i> , “World” (§§9, 12-18)
10	<i>Being and Time</i> , “Being-with (Others)” (§§ 25-27) “Being-in (Existential)” (§§28-29, 31-32, 34)
17	<i>Being and Time</i> , “Being-in (Everyday)” (§§35-38) “Care” and “Disclosedness” (§§40-41, 44)
24	<i>Being and Time</i> , “Being-unto-Death” (§§46-53)
October 1	Statement of Topic, Paper #1
October 8	<i>Being and Time</i> , “Guilt and Resoluteness” (§§55-58) “Temporality” (§§62-65) “Historicality” (§74)
15	“A Letter on Humanism” (1947) in <i>Basic Writings</i> , 213 ff.
22	“On the Essence of Truth” (1947) in <i>Basic Writings</i> , 111 ff.
29	“The Age of the World Picture” (1938) in <i>QCT</i> , 115-154 “Nietzsche’s Word: God is Dead” (1943) in <i>QCT</i> , 53-112 (Paper # 1 due)
November 5	“The Question Concerning Technology” (1955) in <i>QCT</i> , 3-35
12	“Building Dwelling Thinking” (1950) in <i>Basic Writings</i> , 347-63 “The Turning” (1950) in <i>QCT</i> , 36-49 (Statement of topic, Paper #2) <i>Public Lecture</i> : David Wills, “Derrida’s <i>The Animal That I Am</i> ,” 5:00pm
19	<i>The Principle of Reason</i> (1955-56), pp. 3-58
26	Thanksgiving
December 3	<i>The Principle of Reason</i> , pp. 59 - end
12	Paper #2 Due