

FLORIDA INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY
Department of Religious Studies
REL 4461 Husserl's Ideas: General Introduction
to Pure Phenomenology
Fall 2015

Instructor: Mr. Daniel Alvarez
Office Hours: T/TH, 11:15 a.m.-12:00 p.m.
DM 304A

Class Days & Times: MWF 11:00 - 11:50- a.m.
Class Room: DM 323 (Conference Room)
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COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course examines a specific topic in the philosophy of religion, such as faith and reason, religious experience, or an important thinker. It may be repeated with permission of the instructor. This semester the course will focus on the work of Edmund Husserl (1859-1938), the founder of Phenomenology.

TEXTBOOK

Edmun Husserl, *Ideas: General Introduction to Pure Phenomenology*, revised and expanded edition (Harper, 2008). ISBN

INSTRUCTIONAL OBJECTIVES AND COURSE STRUCTURE

In this course we will attempt a close reading of Husserl's *Ideas: General Introduction to Pure Phenomenology* [Part I of a work of three parts]. As most of you know by now, my approach is textual and focused on primary sources. We are going to wrestle with the text, as Jacob wrestled with God at Bethel, and perhaps we will wrest enough "blessings" from the text to leave satisfied at the end of the term.

Our goal is to read as much of the book as possible. If time permits we will also look at the Introduction (and perhaps beyond) to Husserl's last (unfinished) work, *The Crisis of the European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology* (1936). We will not feel obligated to read through the *Ideas*, but we will try to read as much as time permits. One reason for not rushing through the texts is that Husserl's work can be quite difficult, not only for the fact that he is establishing a new philosophical method, but also because he introducing concepts that are defined for the first time in this work. But that **is our task**. In terms of number of pages, if I have an implicit goal, it is to read most of the book.

In terms of context, it is clear that Husserl was indebted to Kant's Transcendental philosophy, as well as Franz Brentano (1838-1917), and, unbeknownst to many, Gottlob Frege (1848-1925). In fact, it was Frege's scathing review of Husserl's *Philosophy of Arithmetic* (1891) that brought his sudden conversion to a logical (logicistic), anti-psychologicistic understanding of mathematics, and later, phenomenology. It is the goal, shared henceforth, of Frege and Husserl to banish once and for all psychology (psychologism) from logic, mathematics, and ultimately philosophy. Whether Husserl (and Frege) and his epigone have succeeded in carrying out the master's final intention is a matter of controversy. Heidegger certainly deviated from the master in significant ways, creating his own version of phenomenology, Interpretive (or Hermeneutic) Phenomenology. Sartre, Merleau-Ponty, the first at least in his early work, tried not to stray from Husserl too far; Derrida, whose early work was on Husserl, represents perhaps the most significant departure of repudiation of Husserlian transcendentalism and a priorism. It is in the study of religion in particular where the phenomenological approach has proved most fecund, where the study of other cultures and religious practices and beliefs requires a degree of detachment and observation that phenomenology

encourages.

It is worth bearing in mind that the view of philosophy inaugurated by Frege and Bertrand Russell has taken a most decidedly naturalistic and psychologistic turn since the demise of Logical Positivism, particularly since the 1960s through the work of W. V. Quine (1908-2000). Perhaps Derrida and Foucault, via Heidegger, represent the psychologistic-naturalistic turn in the phenomenological tradition. However, there is no question that the later Heidegger, in *What is Metaphysics?*, *Letter on Humanism*, *On the Essence of Truth*, *inter alia*, was working on a recovery of the sacred and the transcendent, both against naturalism, and beyond the standard metaphysical and transcendentalist accounts that we find from Kant to Husserl. (The same can be said for the later Wittgenstein, *mutatis mutandis*.) Whether any kind of logical or transcendental philosophy in the classical sense can be revived remains to be seen, but the contribution and influence of Husserl and phenomenology, regardless of its estimate now or in the future, cannot be ignored and must be, at the very least, understood.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND GRADES

1. One research 12-15 research paper on a topic provided by the instructor (70% of final grade).
2. Class Presentation (based on the reading assignment for each week): Two (2) pages, orally delivered in class (30% of final grade).

GRADE DISTRIBUTION

A	95-100	C	70-74
A-	91-94	C-	68-69
B+	88-90	D+	66-67
B	83-87	D	63-65
B-	79-82	F	0-62
C+	75-78		

COURSE OUTLINE

Week 1

Introduction: Syllabus, Requirements, Textbooks, Overview of course

Ideas, “Preface to the English edition”; “Introduction”

Week 2

FIRST SECTION: The Nature and Knowledge of Essential Being

Ideas, First Section, Chapter 1: “Fact and Essence”

Week 3

Chapter 2: “Naturalistic Misconstructions”

Presentation: _____

Week 4

SECOND SECTION: The Fundamental Phenomenological Outlook

Chapters 1 and 2: “The Thesis of the Natural Standpoint and its Suspension” and “Consciousness and Natural Reality”

Presentation: _____

Week 5

Chapters 3 and 4: “The Region of Pure Consciousness” and
“The Phenomenological Reductions”

Presentation: _____

Week 6 **THIRD SECTION:** Procedure of Pure Phenomenology in Respect of Methods
and Problems

Chapter 1: “Preliminary Considerations of Method”

Presentation: _____

Week 7

Chapter 2: “Structures of Pure Consciousness”

Presentation: _____

Week 8

Chapter 3: “Noesis and Noema”

Presentation: _____

Week 9

Chapter 4: “Theories of the Noetic-Noematic Structures”

Presentation: _____

Week 10

FOURTH SECTION: Reason and Reality [Wirklichkeit]

Chapter 1: “Noematic Meaning and Relation to the Object”

Presentation: _____

Week 11

Chapter 2: “Phenomenology of Reason”

Presentation: _____

Week 12

Chapter 3: “Grades of Generality in the Ordering of Theoretical Reason”

Presentation: _____

Week 13

The Crisis of the European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology

Presentation: _____

Week 14

The Crisis of the European Sciences, continued

Presentation: _____

Week 15

Crisis of the European Sciences, concluded

Presentation: _____

LAST DAY OF CLASSES, RESEARCH PAPERS DUE