

Continental Philosophy

Kent State University Course Syllabus:

PHIL 41076/001/16272 Fall 2024
TR: 12:30-1:45 pm Location: BOW 315
Instructor: Dr. Matthew Coate
Office: BOW 320 F
Office hours: T 10-11 am; 2-5 pm
 R 2-3 pm (or by appointment)
Contact: mcoate@kent.edu (330) 672-3965

Course Description:

Course Description for PHIL 41076/51076 in Fall 2024:

This course will constitute an examination of the tradition of 20th-21st continental philosophy. We will begin by studying some of the key texts of Husserl, who as much as anyone can be understood as the founding figure in this tradition, and we will then embark on a survey of major texts of canonical 20th and 21st century continental thinkers, such as Heidegger, Derrida, Arendt, and Foucault. Along the way, we will reflect on questions about the nature of the subject, its ground or groundlessness, and its relation to others and to its sociocultural and historical context, as well as the ethical and political implications of the way this is understood.

Course objectives:

Students will be required

- to learn about and demonstrate, in both discussion and writing, an understanding of the texts that we will be studying, including their central ideas and argumentation;
- to develop the ability to formulate, explicate, and defend theses about the themes of these texts in written essays; and
- to increase their own ability to reflect on the nature of our existence through a reflection on these texts.

Course requirements:

Required text:

- All reading assignments will be made available on Canvas

Grading:

- Written Essays 2 @ 35% 70%
- Weekly Summary Writing Assignments 10 @ 3% 30%

Written Essays:

Two papers of 2500-3000 words will be required from each student, one due at the end of week 8 (Friday, 10/11) and the other at the end of the semester on the day officially reserved for our class final (Wednesday, 12/11). Later in the semester, I will go over the expectations for the two papers. Please note, though, that in each of the two papers you will have to clearly state, and provide an argument for, a central thesis, as well as raise an objection to your argument that you must ultimately address.

Each of the two papers will both be worth 35% of your final grade, for a total of 70% of your semester grade between the two.

Weekly Writing Assignments:

Beginning with week 2, each student will have to turn in a written summary of about 500 words, due by 11:59 every Sunday night, on one of the two reading assignments for the upcoming week of the student's choosing. These writing assignments must describe, in detail, at least three of the major claims that the student finds central to the reading assignment in question and must summarize the arguments or evidence provided to support each of these claims. In addition, the student should provide an objection to at least one of these arguments—likely, one that appears tenuous by the student's own lights—and afterwards, should respond to the objection raised in some way. Thoughtful summaries will receive full credit, while less than adequate ones will receive only half credit for that week's work.

There will be twelve such assignments due over the course of the semester, with the lowest two scores being dropped for each student. Each of these assignments will count for 3% of your final grade, so a total of 30% of your overall final grade will come from the ten counted.

University services and policies:

Enrollment and registration statement:

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The course withdrawal deadline is 9/1/24. The last day to drop without a "W" being assigned will be 10/27/24.

University Requirements:

For undergrads and philosophy majors and minors, this course may be used to satisfy upper division hours for university requirements.

Student Accessibility Services statement:

Kent State University is committed to inclusive and accessible education experiences for all students. University Policy 3-01.3 requires that students with disabilities be provided reasonable accommodations to ensure equal access to course content. Students with disabilities are encouraged to connect with Student Accessibility Services (SAS) as early as possible to establish accommodations. If you anticipate or experience academic barriers based on a disability (including mental health, chronic medical conditions, or injuries), please let me know immediately.

SAS can be reached at (330) 672-3391. Please visit www.kent.edu/sas for more information.

Personal responsibility and academic integrity statement:

University policy 3-01.8 deals with the problem of academic dishonesty, cheating, and plagiarism. None of these will be tolerated in this class. The sanctions provided in this policy will be used to deal with any violations. If you have any questions, please read the policy at <http://www2.kent.edu/policyreg/chap3/index.cfm> and/or ask.

Please note that any instances of plagiarism will be reported and dealt with in accordance with the policies stipulated in section 3-01.8. Sanctions for a “traditionally” plagiarized assignment will, at the very least, include receiving a 0% on the plagiarized assignment, but may also include more severe consequences as the situation warrants. Sanctions for assignments plagiarized using AI text-generating apps will be more severe and will result in an automatic grade of “F” for the semester. Text-generating apps may not be used in any way for written assignments under any circumstances.

Attendance Policy:

Attendance is mandatory. Any student missing a class will receive an unexcused absence, unless they inform the professor of the absence and provide legitimate reason for it, including any relevant documentation. After 3 unexcused absences, a student will lose a full letter-grade from his or her final grade for each additional absence.

Given H.B. 353, which took effect this past Spring 2023 Semester, students need to be reasonably accommodated in regard to academic requirements, including exams and academic absences, for sincerely held religious beliefs and practices. Under this bill, it is required that students be permitted up to three days of absence per semester, without penalty, for religious holidays or to participate in organized activities conducted under the auspices of any religious or spiritual organization. To ensure compliance with H.B. 353, Kent State University adopted a new administrative policy regarding accommodations for student religious and spiritual beliefs (3-01.14). Under current guidance, students need to submit a request in writing to the instructor within 14 days after the first day of instruction. To review the current policy, see [the relevant webpage for the Office for the Provost](#).

Electronic device policy:

Cel phones and smart phone devices may not be used in class at any time. Laptops or tablets are also prohibited, except if a student has received prior permission from me for their use in class (for note-taking or other academic purposes only, of course). If you would like to use an electronic device for such purposes, please let me know so I can give you clearance for this.

Grade scale:

A =	92-100%	4.0 per credit hour
A- =	90-92%	3.7 per credit hour
B+ =	88-90%	3.3 per credit hour
B =	82-88%	3.0 per credit hour
B- =	80-82%	2.7 per credit hour
C+ =	78-80%	2.3 per credit hour
C =	72-78%	2.0 per credit hour
C- =	70-72%	1.7 per credit hour
D =	68-70%	1.3 per credit hour
D+ =	60-68%	1.0 per credit hour
F =	0 - 60%	0.0 per credit hour

Schedule is subject to change!!! Readings are due on the day listed!
 (Please note: all readings are from the required text)

□ week 1:			
Tuesday 8/20	Class Introduction		
Thursday 8/22	Introductory Lecture		
□ week 2:			
Tuesday 8/27	Husserl <i>Cartesian Meditations</i>	read: p. 1-26	Writing Assignment #1 Due: Sunday, 8/25
Thursday 8/29	<i>Crisis of European Sciences</i>	read: p. 3-24	
□ week 3:			
Tuesday 9/3		read: p. 103-123	Writing Assignment #2 Due: Sunday, 9/1
Thursday 9/5		read: p. 167-172, 178-186	
□ week 4:			
Tuesday 9/10	Heidegger <i>Basic Problems...</i>	read: p. 158-187	Writing Assignment #3 Due: Sunday, 9/8
Thursday 9/12	“What is Metaphysics?”	read: p. 89-101	
□ week 5:			
Tuesday 9/17		read: p. 102-111	Writing Assignment #4 Due: Sunday, 9/15
Thursday 9/19	“Building Dwelling Thinking”	read: p. 347-353	Discussion of Paper #1
□ week 6:			
Tuesday 9/24		read: p. 353-363	Writing Assignment #5 Due: Sunday, 9/22
Thursday 9/26	Levinas “The I and the Totality”	read: p. 13-17	Selection of Paper #1 Topic Due: Friday 9/27
□ week 7:			
Tuesday 10/1	“Nonintentional Consciousness”	read: p. 122-132	Writing Assignment #6 Due: Sunday, 9/29
Thursday 10/3	No Class: Fall Break!		
□ week 8:			
Tuesday 10/8	Derrida “Signs and the Blink of an Eye”	read: p. 60-69	
Thursday 10/10	“Force of Law”	read: p. 3-23	Midterm Paper! Due: Friday 10/11
□ week 9:			
Tuesday 10/15	Lyotard “What is Postmodernism?”	read: p. 71-82	
Thursday 10/17	No Class: Study Day!		

□ week 10:			
Tuesday 10/22	Marcuse "Repressive Tolerance"	read: p. 81-99	Writing Assignment #7 Due: Sunday, 10/20
Thursday 10/24		read: p. 99-117	
□ week 11:			
Tuesday 10/29	Foucault "The Subject and Power"	read: p. 777-795	Writing Assignment #8 Due: Sunday, 10/27
Thursday 10/31	Butler <i>Bodies That Matter</i>	read: p. ix-xii, 27-36	
□ week 12:			
Tuesday 11/5		read: p. 36-55	Writing Assignment #9 Due: Sunday, 11/3
Thursday 11/7	Deleuze and Guattari "How Do you Make...?"	read: p. 149-158	
□ week 13:			
Tuesday 11/12		read: p. 158-166	Writing Assignment #10 Due: Sunday, 11/10
Thursday 11/14	Arendt <i>Origins of Totalitarianism</i>	read: p. vii-ix, 389-419	Discussion of Paper #2
□ week 14:			
Tuesday 11/19		read: p. 460-479	Writing Assignment #11 Due: Sunday, 11/17
Thursday 11/21	Bauman <i>Postmodern Ethics</i>	read: p. 62-81	Selection of Paper #2 Topic Due: Friday 4/19
□ week 15:			
Tuesday 11/26		read: p. 37-61	Writing Assignment #12 Due: Sunday, 11/24
Thursday 11/28	No Class: Thanksgiving!		
□ week 16:			
Tuesday 12/3	TBA	read: TBA	
Thursday 12/5	TBA	read: TBA	
□ Finals week:			
Monday-Friday 12/9-12/13			Final Paper! Due: Wednesday 12/11

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Grading:

- | | | |
|---|---------|-----|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Term Paper | 1 @ 40% | 40% |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Midterm Papers | 2 @ 20% | 40% |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Presentation | 1 @ 20% | 20% |

Term Paper:

A term paper of 4000-5000 words (roughly 15-20 double-spaced pages) will be required from each graduate student. The topic will be of your choosing, although before the end of Week 12, I expect each grad student to meet with me to discuss their paper topic. The term paper will be worth 40% of your final class grade and will be due on Wednesday, 12/11, which is the day officially scheduled for our final exam.

Midterm Writing Assignments:

In addition to the final term paper, grad students will have to complete two midterm writing assignments of 1500-2000 words (roughly 6-8 double-spaced) pages. In these shorter papers, you'll have to explicate one of the accounts presented in one of our reading assignments along with the main evidence, analyses, or arguments presented to support it, and you'll then have to evaluate the account, presenting at least one strong objection before providing a possible response to this objection. One of the two midterm writing assignments that you complete may be used as the basis of your final term paper. Each will be worth 20% of your grade, for a total of 40%, and will be due on the dates indicated in the class schedule that I have provided below.

Presentation:

Each grad student will be required to give a 30-minute presentation on one of our readings. You will have to select a presentation date by the end of Week 2; more information about the assignment, which will count for 20% of your final grade, will be provided by me at that time.

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I really don’t really expect to discover plagiarism in any grad student’s work, in particular, because I know that as grad students you are ultimately here because you love studying philosophy for its own sake. Nevertheless, time constraints and a felt need to submit “perfect” work occasionally might lead even some grad students into temptation, and because of this I should note that the sanctions for academic dishonesty for any grad student who commits such a violation are especially severe, given the absolute severity of the violation when it’s a graduate student who commits it. Please remember that you aren’t expected to produce “perfect” work, here or anywhere, but only to complete all of your assignments and express your understanding of the material and your passion for it to the best of your ability.

Attendance Policy:

Grad students are expected to attend every class and should never miss class for anything but the most unavoidable circumstance. Any grad student missing more than two classes will have to speak to me personally about the reason for their absences and will risk whatever penalty that I deem appropriate given the circumstances, up to and including failure of the class.

Please note that given H.B. 353, which took effect this past Spring 2023 Semester, students must be reasonably accommodated in regard to academic requirements, including exams and academic absences, for sincerely held religious beliefs and practices. Under this bill, it is required that students be permitted up to three days of absence per semester, without penalty, for religious holidays or to participate in organized activities conducted under the auspices of any religious or spiritual organization. To ensure compliance with H.B. 353, Kent State University adopted a new administrative policy regarding accommodations for student religious and spiritual beliefs (3-01.14). Under current guidance, students need to submit a request in writing to the instructor within 14 days after the first day of instruction. To review the current policy, see [the relevant webpage for the Office for the Provost](#).

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Tuesday 9/3		read: p. 103-123	
Thursday 9/5		read: p. 167-172, 178-186	
□ week 4:			
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Thursday 9/19	“Building Dwelling Thinking”	read: p. 347-353	
□ week 6:			
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Thursday 9/26	Levinas “The I and the Totality”	read: p. 13-17	Due: Sunday, 9/29 Midterm Paper #1
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Thursday 11/14	Arendt <i>Origins of Totalitarianism</i>	read: p. vii-ix, 389-419	Due: Friday, 11/15 Selection of Macro topic
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□ week 15:			
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□ week 16:			
Tuesday 12/3	TBA	read: TBA	
Thursday 12/5	TBA	read: TBA	
□ Finals week:			
Monday-Friday 12/9-12/13			Due: Wednesday, 5/11 Final Term Paper!