

# Phenomenology Syllabus

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## 1 “To the things themselves!”

Our experiences and thoughts present us with a whole world. Our experiences are experiences of things: brown desks, tall palm trees, graffitied electrical boxes. Our thoughts are thoughts about things: presidential elections, passive aggressive neighbors. The world “shows up” in our sensations, experiences, and thoughts.

Phenomenology offers one way to study how the world is presented to us through our experiences and thoughts. The phenomenologist suggests that things (including material objects like computers and trees, and social categories like race and gender) have a nature that can only be revealed by reflecting on how those things show up to us—how we encounter them—in the course of our lives. Empirical sciences, which look for the hidden causal structure underlying things, supposedly can’t touch on this nature of things. What we must do, according to the phenomenologist, is reflect on our basic encounters with those things.

We will try to understand different conceptions of phenomenology and what they offer to reveal about our experiences and thoughts, about the material and social worlds in which we live, and about how we come into cognitive contact with those worlds. Throughout we will ask: How do our experiences and thoughts present us with things in the world? What role should the way we experience and think about things play in our understanding of the nature of those things? We will be reading selections of works from important figures in phenomenology: Edmund Husserl, Martin Heidegger, Maurice Merleau-Ponty, Simone de Beauvoir, and Frantz Fanon.

## 2 Coursework

**Texts** All texts will be made available online through the CCLE course website. I do not presuppose any prior familiarity with the assigned materials or other philosophical texts.

This is a readings-heavy course (avg.  $\approx$  60 pgs./week). The Thu readings can be longer than the Tue readings. Try to complete most of the reading for a given week by the Tue of that week.

**Turnitin** Your final paper must be submitted to Turnitin. A link to the Turnitin submission page will appear on the CCLE course website.

### Graded Coursework

10% Attendance and Participation

45% Reading Responses (1 pg. max; every Thu at end of class in hard copy)

45% Final Paper (12–14 pgs.; July 20 @ 11:59pm on Turnitin)

**Attendance and Participation** Attend classes, make comments, ask questions, and be engaged!

**Reading Responses** Every Thursday at the end of class you will hand in a hard copy response to some part of the readings for that week (maximum of 1 page, single spaced). If you cannot make it to class one day, e-mail me your response. Reading responses will each be graded out of 5pts.

The response should be a brief, organized summary of a reading or presentation of a thought, question, or criticism you had in response to some point that was raised in that week's readings. The goal of the reading responses is to encourage you to engage critically with the reading.

**Final Paper** At the end of Week 6 you will submit a 6–8 page paper. I will provide prompts beforehand. This paper will be graded on the standard letter scale.

The goal of the final paper is to write a *clear, concise, well-organized, substantive* paper in which you deal with a topic of the course. I want you to write a paper that *you are proud of*.

### 3 Academic Integrity

You are expected to know and comply with University regulations regarding academic integrity. A student guide to academic integrity can be found here: <http://deanofstudents.ucla.edu/Portals/16/Documents/StudentGuide.pdf>. Simply put:

- **Do not** plagiarize (present others' work without citing them); fabricate (make up quotations or data); re-submit work you have already written; collaborate with others without your instructor's permission; help others do any of these things. In addition, please do not be mean or disrespectful to your classmates or disruptive to the class.
- **Do** cite your sources. Please be respectful to yourself, your peers, and your instructor; inform your instructor of any concerns you have about the classroom environment.

### 4 Accessibility

Students needing accommodation based on a disability should notify the Office for Students with Disabilities (OSD) located at (310) 825-1501 or A255 Murphy Hall. When possible, students should contact the OSD within the first two weeks of the quarter, as reasonable notice is needed to coordinate accommodations. For more information visit [www.osd.ucla.edu](http://www.osd.ucla.edu).

### 5 Tentative Schedule

- **Week 1 - What are we talking about?**
  - *T: The possibility of logic and mathematical physics—back to the things themselves*
    - \* Galileo Galilei: *The Assayer* (1623), Selections
    - \* David Hilbert: *Geometry and the Imagination* (1932), Preface
    - \* Edmund Husserl: *The Crisis of European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology* (1936), §9g and §9k
  - *R: An introduction to “intentionality”—the directedness of mental states*
    - \* Franz Brentano: *Psychology from an Empirical Standpoint* (1874), Book Two §I.5

\* John Searle: *Intentionality* (1983), Ch. 1 pp. 1–22

● **Week 2 - Husserl's study of *things as given***

– T: *Phenomenological method*

\* Edmund Husserl: *Ideas: General Introduction to Pure Phenomenology* (1931), §27, §32, §89–§91, §94, §129 – §132.

– R: *The Discoveries of Phenomenology*

\* Martin Heidegger: *History of the Concept of Time* (1925), Ch. 2 pp. 27–51, 75–79

● **Week 3 - Heidegger asks what the meaning of “is” is**

– T: *The question of “being”*

\* Martin Heidegger: *Being and Time* (1927), §1 – §4, §7

– R: *Being-in-the-world*

\* Martin Heidegger *B&T*, §14 – §21, §31 – §33

● **Week 4 - Merleau-Ponty on body image**

– T: *M-P's take on phenomenology*

\* Maurice Merleau-Ponty: *The Phenomenology of Perception* (1945), Preface

– R: *The body*

\* Maurice Merleau-Ponty: *PoP*, Part I Ch. 3

● **Week 5 - de Beauvoir on women**

– T: *What is a woman?*

\* Simone de Beauvoir: *The Second Sex* (1949), Introduction

– R: *Childhood*

\* Simone de Beauvoir: *SS*, Part IV Ch. 1

● **Week 6 - Fanon on blackness**

– T: *The fact of blackness*

\* Frantz Fanon: *Black Skin, White Masks* (1952), Ch. 5

– R: *Synopsis of the course*

SUBMIT FINAL PAPER: Fri. July 29 @ 11:59pm
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