

SYLLABUS: Fall, 2007
Major Author Seminar: Paul Ricoeur
Phil. A493

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Office Hours: Tues. & Thurs. 10:30-11:00 and 12:30 - 2:00; and 3:15.

DESCRIPTION OF COURSE AND GOALS

This course aims to stimulate and nurture critical philosophical reflection by focusing on the philosophical writing of Paul Ricoeur, one of the giants of contemporary continental philosophy and philosophical theology. It will focus first on several essays that cover Ricoeur's philosophy of the will and philosophical anthropology, existential phenomenology, language and hermeneutics, and religion and faith. Then it will focus on Ricoeur's extremely important later development of a theory of self identity and self as another.

Ricoeur is a master of the history of philosophy and is among the best interpreters of the major historical figures, employing a viable and balanced theory of interpretation, as will be seen throughout this course. He does not interpret others as Heidegger does, i.e., from his own quasi absolute stance. [This will be explained in the course.] His hermeneutics is far more balanced than that of Heidegger. It will not be difficult to relate Ricoeur to many other thinkers in both the contemporary era as well as in the history of philosophy.

The aim in the course is to have the students get familiar with his writings by studying parts of three books. The first is an anthology: *The Philosophy of Paul Ricoeur: An Anthology of His Work*, from which readings on his philosophy of will, existential phenomenology, and language and hermeneutics will be chosen.

The second book is a short series of lectures that he gave at Texas Christian University, *Interpretation Theory: Discourse and the Surplus of Meaning*. This series, four lectures, goes at some depth into his philosophy of language. This serves to put him in dialogue with other movements, such as structuralism and deconstruction, as well as manifests his interest and expertise in analytical philosophy. He is one of the few European [Continental] philosophers who has mastered the analytical tradition. This fact will come to light in the third book that this course will look at: *Oneself as Another*. The first four studies of this book on the self are mainly in the tradition of language analysis. Then he renders a more full account of the self in language and action, leading to three main studies on ethics, where he presents an integrated contemporary view by bringing Aristotle's and Kant's ethics together, after a critique of each.

Goals and Objectives: Please consult the Department of Philosophy: Goals and Learning Objectives [http://cas.loyno.edu/philosophy/intronet/documents/goalsmajors_000.PDF].

This authors course on Paul Ricoeur aims to satisfy the following: Goal 1, objectives 1 and 4; Goal 2, objective 4; Goal 3, objective 1-3; Goal 4, objective 1, 3, and 4.

GENERAL INFORMATION—POLICIES

Make-up tests and exams: only for extremely good reason will make-up tests be given. These will all be given at the end of the course on the day of the final exam, or through the administrative assistant's office of the Philosophy Department.

Tests and Research Paper: There will be three grades for the course from the following: one mid-term test; a final exam; and a 10-12 page paper. If a student is assigned a research paper in another course, he/she will be allowed to combine the papers: e.g., Ricoeur and Kant; or Ricoeur and Wittgenstein; or etc...The professor will meet with each student individually any number of times to help them with the paper. It is important that he meet each student quite early to help them pick a topic along lines of interest to the student. That is an extremely important phase of the paper for the precise formulation of a thesis. Then the student will be

directed to some of the necessary readings for the paper. The intent is to teach a student how to write a serious research paper.

Availability of Professor: Appointments will be set up for the research papers. For additional appointments, see the professor before or after class and an appointment can be set up (to ensure that I am in my office when you come by).

Attendance: since every student has the responsibility to contribute to the class, attendance at all classes is mandatory. After missing five classes, a student is liable to receive one letter grade lower for the final grade per class missed. The students are responsible for everything taught in class, even if they are not able to attend, and thus must make up the work from other students.

Exam schedule for this course: Tuesday, December 11, 11:30-1:30.

However, students in this course can take the final exam with my other class. The final exam for the other course is: December 13, 2:00-4:00.

TEXTS

1. *Paul Ricoeur: An Anthology of His Work*, Ed. By Charles E. Reagan and David Stewart (Boston: Beacon Press, 1978).
2. Paul Ricoeur, *Interpretation Theory: Discourse and the Surplus of Meaning* (Fort Worth: Texas: Texas Christian University Press, 1976).
3. Paul Ricoeur: *Oneself as Another*, translated by Kathleen Blamey (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1992).

CLASSES AND TOPICS:

1. Introduction to the Course and to Ricoeur's Philosophy
2. "The Unity of the Voluntary and the Involuntary" [Philosophy of Will: first phase] This reading and those for six of the following readings are from the anthology of Ricoeur's works.
3. "The Antinomy of Human Reality" [Philosophy of Will: second phase]
4. "Existential Phenomenology," Ricoeur's Interpretation
5. "Existence and Hermeneutics"
6. "Existence and Hermeneutics".
7. Ricoeur's hermeneutics and the hermeneutic tradition
8. Hermeneutics and Phenomenology
9. Hermeneutic Phenomenology
- 10-11. The Linguistic Turn [*Interpretation Theory: Discourse and the Surplus of Meaning*]. The next four classes will focus on parts of this series of lectures.
12. "Speaking and Writing"
13. "Metaphor and Symbol"

14. "Explanation and Understanding"
15. *Oneself as Another: Introduction: "The Question of Selfhood"*. The remainder of the course will focus on parts of chapters from this book:
16. *First Study [part of it]. "'person' and Identifying Reference: A Semantic Approach"*
17. *Second Study: "Utterance and the Speaking Subject: A Pragmatic Approach"*
18. *Third study: "An Agentless Semantics of Action"*
19. *Fourth Study: "From Action to the Agent"*
20. *Fifth Study: "Personal Identity and Narrative Identity"*
21. *Sixth Study: "The Self and Narrative Identity"*
22. *Seventh Study: "The Self and the Ethical Aim"*
23. *Seventh Study* continued.
24. *Eighth Study: "The Self and the Moral Norm"*
25. *Eighth Study continued* and introduction to the *Ninth Study*.
26. *Ninth Study* and conclusion to course.