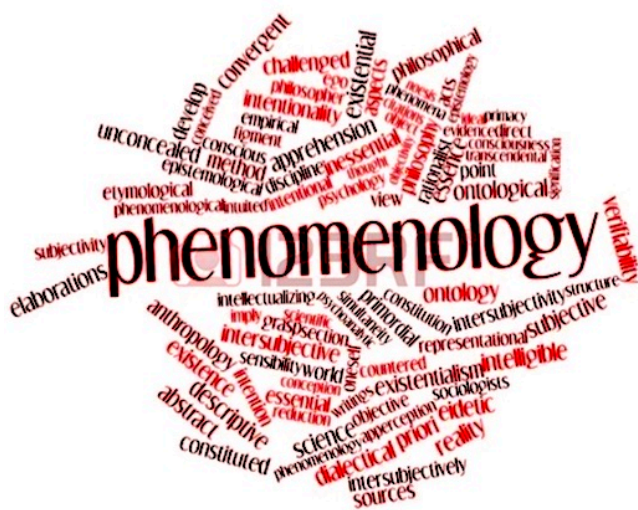


Phenomenology and Existentialism

Jerry Piven, Ph.D.

In case of *emergencies*, I can be reached at (201) 936-5843, or email me at jerry.piven@rutgers.edu

Phenomenology is the study of conscious experience, intention, and meaning. It's the study of the way we experience things, the way we make sense of them, the way we perceive, comprehend, imagine, feel, respond, and desire. Phenomenology studies structures of conscious and lived experience, how we interpret those experiences, the hermeneutic elucidation of how we endow experience and perception with meaning. Existentialism is concerned with the human condition, the purpose of life, authenticity in one's purpose and being, the attempt to find meaning amidst the absurdity and finitude of existence. Philosophers have asked how life can be meaningful in the face of death, and whether life matters. This course presumes a basic knowledge of phenomenology and existentialism, and explores innovations in the phenomenology of evil, religion and racism, along with existential dread as it pervades belief, identity, politics, and pathology.



Required Texts:

Winqvist: *Desiring Theology*
 Westphal: *God, Guilt, and Death*
 Aho: *Existentialism* (2nd edition)

(pdfs to be uploaded)

Davis: *Inwardness and Existence / Deracination*
 Warren: *Ontological Terror*
 Baldwin: *The Fire Next Time*
 Beauvoir: *The Second Sex*
 Abe: *Zen and Comparative Studies*
 Nishitani: *Religion and Nothingness*
 Ricoeur: *The Symbolism of Evil*
 Zahavi: *Phenomenology*
 Moran and Moody: *The Phenomenology Reader*

Assignments and Grading:

In *addition* to the required reading, the students will be assigned:

1) Midterm Essay

6-8 pages
 (40 % of total grade)

2) Final Essay

of 8-10 pages
 (40% of total grade)

3) Participation

You are expected to participate regularly and assiduously in online forum discussions
 (20% of total grade)

* **Grading** will be determined by the effort of the student, her/his evidence of having carefully read and contemplated the material, and her/his expression of independent thought on the ideas. Late assignments will suffer penalties as follows: the subtraction of one grade increment per day the assignment is late.

* **Readings** consist of the required texts and uploaded assignments. There will also be a number of *optional* handouts supplied to help students understand the primary readings and provide perspective. Suggested readings appear below the required & optional handout readings and are for your interest and edification only.

COURSE OUTLINE:**I. INTRODUCTION TO PHENOMENOLOGY AND EXISTENTIALISM**

Overview and Course Goals

The Chiasmic Relation Between Existentialism and Phenomenology

Radical Differences & Central Concepts

Readings:

- Zahavi: *Phenomenology* (upload)
- Aho: *Existentialism*

Suggested Readings:

Gallager: *Phenomenology*

Moran: *Introduction to Phenomenology*

Marino: *Existentialism*

II. EPOCHÉ & NOETICS

Phenomenology from Sextus to Kant to Husserl

To the Things Themselves

The Phenomenological Reduction

Noesis & Noema

Epoché & Ataraxia

Readings:

- Husserl: *Cartesian Meditations* (selections, upload)
- Moran and Moody: *The Phenomenology Reader*, selections from Husserl, Heidegger, Arendt, Sartre, Merleau-Ponty, & Levinas (II: 1, 5, 6; VI: 1, 2; VIII: 1; IX: 1, 2; X: 2; XII: 1, 2)
- Wilson: What is Phenomenology? (*The New Existentialism*)
- Levinas: Reality and its Shadow (*Collected Philosophical Papers*, upload)
- Kersten: The Transcendental Phenomenological Reduction (upload)
- Mortari & Tarozzi: Phenomenology as Philosophy of Research
- Gadamer: Philosophical Foundations / The Phenomenological Movement (upload)
- Hill: Husserl and Phenomenology (Tymieniecka, vol. 1, upload)
- Natanson: The Empirical and Transcendental Ego (upload)

Suggested Readings:

Gadamer: *Philosophical Hermeneutics*

Natanson: *Phenomenology and the Social Sciences*

Cassirer: *The Philosophy of Symbolic Forms, Volume 3: The Phenomenology of Knowledge*

Natanson: Phenomenology: A Viewing / Phenomenology and Existentialism: Husserl and

Sartre on Intentionality, in *Literature, Philosophy, and the Social Sciences*

Dreyfus & Wrathall: *A Companion to Phenomenology and Existentialism*

Kersten: *Phenomenological Method: Theory and Practice*

III. LIFE, DEATH, AND EVIL

Symbols: Eidetic, Oneiric, Cosmic

Radical & Religious Evil

Othering & Ontological Evil

Projection & Embodiment

Readings:

- Ricoeur: *The Symbolism of Evil* (upload)
- De Beauvoir: *Myths (The Second Sex)*, upload)
- Warren: *Ontological Terror* (upload)
- Baldwin: *The Fire Next Time* (upload)
- Davis: *Existentialism: The Once and Future Philosophy (Inwardness & Existence)*
- Davis: *The Psyche That Dropped the Bomb (Deracination)*, upload)
- Wyschgod: *Kingdoms of Death (Spirit in Ashes)*, upload)
- Bartlett: *The Phenomenology of Hatred (The Pathology of Man)*, upload)
- Levinas: *Transcendence and Evil (Collected Philosophical Papers)*, upload)
- Levinas: *What Do We Know of Death? / Dasein and Death / Death, Anxiety, and Fear / How to Think Nothingness? / To Think God on the Basis of Ethics / Transcendence, Idolatry, and Secularization / Don Quixote: Bewitchment and Hunger / A God “Transcendent to the Point of Absence” (God, Death, and Time)*, upload)

Suggested Readings:

Ellison: *Invisible Man*

Fanon: *Black Skin, White Masks*

Davis: *Death’s Dream Kingdom*

Levinas: *God, Death, and Time*

Bartlett: *The Pathology of Man*

IV. BEYOND THE DEATH OF GOD

Fear, Dread, & Existential Guilt

The Death of God

Faith vs Belief

A/theistic Theology

Hauntology & Hauntotheology

Readings:

- Westphal: *God, Guilt, and Death*
- Winquist: *Desiring Theology*
- Caputo: *God is Not a Supreme Being / The Unconditional (Folly of God)*, upload)
- Nishitani: *Religion and Nothingness* (upload)
- Abe: *Zen and Comparative Studies* (upload)

Suggested Readings:

Levinas: *God, Death, and Time*

Schrijvers: *Between Faith and Belief*

Taylor: *Erring: A Postmodern A/theology*
 Miller: *The New Polytheism*
 Winquist: *The Transcendental Imagination*
 Unamuno: *The Tragic Sense of Life*
 Tillich: *The Courage to Be*
 Kaufmann: *The Faith of a Heretic*
 Louchakova-Schwartz: *Religious Experience, Adumbrated*
 Cioran: *The Temptation to Exist*
 Miron: *The Guilt Which We Are* (in Tymieniecka, vol. 3, upload)
 Kwan: *Unamuno as "Pathological" Phenomenologist* (in Tymieniecka, vol. 1., upload)
 Caputo: *The Folly of God*

V. OUR EXISTENTIAL PAST AND FUTURE

Atrocity & History

Despair, Disengagement & Distraction

Detachment vs Apathy

Deracination & Engagement

Readings:

- Becker: *The Birth and Death of Meaning* (upload)
- Loy: *The Meaning of It All (Lack and Transcendence)*, upload)
- Bamyeh: *Of Death and Dominion* (upload)
- Wilson: *Introduction to the New Existentialism*
- Tymieniecka: *Heralding the New Enlightenment* (upload)
- Bruzina: *Phenomenology in a New Century* (upload)
- Cozma: *On the Meaningfulness of Man's Existence: from the Existentialist Thinking to Phenomenology of Life* (upload)
- Teloni: *The Phenomenological Way: A Philosophical View on the Vitality of Being* (upload)
- Mrotz: *What Does it Mean to be an Existentialist Today?* (upload)
- Solomon: *The Worm at the Core*
- Piven: *An A/theistic Defense of Faith*

Suggested Readings:

Heinämaa: *Feminism (A Companion to Phenomenology and Existentialism)*

Becker: *The Denial of Death*

Lifton: *The Broken Connection*

Kaufmann: *Existentialism, Religion, and Death*

Piven: *Death and Delusion*

Firestone & Catlett: *Beyond Death Anxiety*

Davis: *Art and Politics* (sections on the existentializing process and active reversal)

Tymieniecka: *Phenomenology and Existentialism in the Twentieth Century*

Natanson: Existential Categories in Contemporary Literature, in *Literature, Philosophy, and the Social Sciences*

Kaufmann: *Nietzsche, Heidegger, and Buber*

Loy: *Lack and Transcendence: The Problem of Death and Life in Psychotherapy, Existentialism, and Buddhism*

Thompson: *The Death of Desire*

