

Course Syllabus



Course	PHIL 6322 – 001
Course Title	Continental Philosophy (Derrida and Deconstruction)
Professor	Dr. Humberto González-Núñez
Term	Spring 2025
Meetings	T 7-9:45pm

Professor's Contact Information

Office Location	JO 4.120
Email Address	humberto.gonzaleznunez@utdallas.edu
Office Hours	TR 4-5:30pm (in-person)/By appointment (virtual)

Pre-requisite

None.

Course Description

The aim of this course is to provide students with a broad survey of Jacques Derrida's writings. We will begin by situating the origins of deconstruction within the early texts (i.e., *Speech and Phenomena* and *Of Grammatology*) where Derrida begins to develop key notions such as the trace, arche-writing, *différance*, which will become crucial in the later development of his texts. We will continue our overview by tracing how these quasi-concepts appear throughout several decisive essays such as "Différance," "Signature Event Context," and readings of Plato, Stéphane Mallarmé, Martin Heidegger, and Sigmund Freud. Our reading of these essays will focus on a series of motifs that are central to Derrida's writings, such as the relationship between philosophy and its other (e.g., literature and sexual difference), the relationship between philosophy and language, deconstruction as a form of affirmative thought, and, finally, the relationship between philosophy and politics/ethics. Our broader goal in this seminar is to determine the extent to which Derrida's deconstructive project maintains a continuous link between the early texts and the later seemingly political/ethical turn.

Learning Outcomes

1. Obtain familiarity with the major texts and debates concerning Jacques Derrida and the role of deconstruction within the Continental tradition.
2. Develop the ability to understand, interpret, and critically engage philosophical texts, ideas, and arguments.
3. Develop the ability to formulate and defend philosophical ideas and concepts in class discussions.

Required Texts

1. Derrida, Jacques. *A Derrida Reader: Between the Blinds*. Edited by Peggy Kamuf. New York: Columbia University Press, 1991. [ISBN: 978-0-231-06659-4] [Abv.: ADR]
2. Derrida, Jacques. *Jacques Derrida: Basic Writings*. Edited by Barry Stocker. London and New York: Routledge, 2007. [ISBN: 978-0-415-36643-4] [Abv.: BW]

NB: While we will be focusing primarily on the excerpts included in these readers, students are encouraged to read the full versions of the texts discussed. Additionally, although knowledge of French is not required for this course, our discussions will often focus on Derrida's use of untranslatable idioms, and it would be helpful to follow along with the original French texts. PDFs to the full-length versions of the texts discussed and the original French versions will be included in a shared Box folder for our course. Our shared Box folder will also include relevant texts discussed by Derrida in his writings in both the original language and translation to facilitate our discussion of his readings.

Select Recommended Secondary Texts

1. Baring, Edward. *The Young Derrida and French Philosophy, 1945-1968*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011.
2. Bennington, Geoffrey, and Jacques Derrida. *Jacques Derrida*. Translated by Geoffrey Bennington. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999.
3. Caputo, Jack, ed. *Deconstruction in a Nutshell*. New York: Fordham University Press, 1997.
4. Cixous, Hélène. *Insister of Jacques Derrida*. Translated by Ernest Pignon-Ernest and Peggy Kamuf. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2007.
5. ———. *Portrait of Jacques Derrida as a Young Jewish Saint*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2004.
6. Colebrook, Claire, ed. *Jacques Derrida: Key Concepts*. London: Routledge, 2014.
7. Direk, Zeynep, and Leonard Lawlor, eds. *A Companion to Derrida*. Malden, MA: Wiley Blackwell, 2014.
8. Douzinas, Costas, ed. *Adieu Derrida*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007.
9. Nancy, Jean-Luc. *Derrida, Supplements*. Translated by Anne O'Byrne. New York: Fordham University Press, 2023.
10. Peeters, Benoît. *Derrida: A Biography*. Translated by Andrew Brown. Malden, MA: Polity Press, 2013.
11. Wood, David, ed. *Derrida: A Critical Reader*. Malden, MA: Blackwell, 1992.
12. ———, ed. *Of Derrida, Heidegger, and Spirit*. Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1993.
13. Wood, David, and Robert Bernasconi, eds. *Derrida and Différance*. Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1988.

Assignments

1. Protocol – 10%
Each student will be required to give one brief protocol of no more than 1000 words. The purpose of the protocol is to keep a record of our in-class discussion of the material, which will give students an opportunity to synthesize and practice a hermeneutics of generosity. When signing up for a protocol, note that you will be responsible for writing up an account of what transpired in class the previous week and you are expected to make a copy available to each of the members of the seminar prior to the beginning of class. The protocol for a particular week will be discussed at the outset of the seminar and will help us maintain a record of the discussion and to raise any lingering issues or topics that were not sufficiently treated when first presented. Students must turn in the protocol 24 hours before class on eLearning.
2. Presentation – 15%
Each student will be required to give a brief presentation of no more than 2000 words. The purpose of the presentation is to offer a concise critical summary of the reading

that concludes with several key questions you would like to submit for in-class discussion. While you should feel free to include quotations from the texts, please note that the presentation is an exercise in your ability to synthesize the main argument of the reading. Students must turn in the presentation 24 hours before class on eLearning.

3. Final Paper Proposal – 25%

In preparation for the final paper, each student will be required to submit a proposal of no more than 1000 words that includes the following four items: 1) a clear statement of the main argument of your proposed paper topic, 2) a description of the general aim and potential contribution of your proposed paper topic, and 3) an annotated bibliography of the primary and secondary texts you plan to use for the paper. Students must turn in the proposal by 11:59pm on 4/21. Students will continue working and then give a 5-10 minute presentation during the final week of class.

4. Final Paper – 50%

Each student will be required to write a final paper for this course of no more than 6000 words. The purpose of this assignment is to thoroughly explore one or more themes across Derrida’s texts. Regardless of the theme, the final paper should engage with both Derrida’s early and later writings, while also taking a position on the degree of continuity or discontinuity that exists between these two periods.

Grading Policy and Criteria

A	94-100	C+	77-79.99	A = excellent and outstanding work
A-	90-93.99	C	73-76.99	B = very good work
B+	87-89.99	C-	70-72.99	C = satisfactory work
B	83-86.99	D	60-69.99	D & F = unsatisfactory work
B-	80-82.99	F	0-59.99	

Comet Creed

“As a Comet, I pledge honesty, integrity, and service in all that I do.”

Following the commitment to honesty and integrity found in UTD’s Comet Creed, the expectation for this course is that students will engage in cordial, polite, independent, and original scholarly thought and expression. Neither disrespect for others nor plagiarism (including the use of AI-generated content) will be tolerated. Please be aware that **any** submission of AI-generated content constitutes a **serious** violation of academic integrity and honesty. Writing is a difficult skill that is developed through practice and work. The use of AI tools seriously hinders you from perfecting this skill and valuable practice.

If you are concerned that your use of sources and/or AI might result in plagiarism, please come meet with me and I would be more than happy to discuss any concerns you might have. Remember, it is always best to have a frank conversation with me than to potentially submit AI-generated work in lieu of your own.

Any student who decides to submit plagiarized or AI-generated work for this course will be reported to the UTD Office of Community Standards and Conduct for further disciplinary sanctions. For this course, any submission of plagiarized or AI-generated work will result in an automatic F for said assignment. There is a **zero-tolerance** policy for plagiarism in this

course. For more information on UTD’s policy regarding academic dishonesty, see <https://conduct.utdallas.edu/dishonesty/>.

Academic Support Resources

Please familiarize yourself with the various resources that UT Dallas provides to ensure your academic success: <https://oisds.utdallas.edu/syllabus-policies/#academic-support-resources>.

UTD is also committed to aiding students who require accommodations to succeed in this course. If you would like to discuss such matters, please contact me during the first week of class. According to UTD policy, a student must register with Student AccessAbility for an accommodation to be officially considered. For further information, please see <https://accessability.utdallas.edu>.

Course Schedule

Week 1	1/21	Introductions/Syllabus From <i>Speech and Phenomena</i> , pp. 6-30 (ADR) <i>Speech and Phenomena</i> : ‘Meaning as soliloquy’, pp. 85-104 (BW) <i>Speech and Phenomena</i> : ‘The supplement of origin’, pp. 137-156 (BW) <i>Introduction to Origin of Geometry</i> , pp. 183-209 (BW)
Week 2	1/28	From <i>Of Grammatology</i> , pp. 31-58 (ADR) <i>Of Grammatology</i> : ‘Exergue’ and ‘The end of the book and the beginning of writing’, pp. 27-55 (BW)
Week 3	2/4	From “Différance,” pp. 59-79 (ADR)
Week 4	2/11	From “Signature Event Context,” pp. 80-111 (ADR)
Week 5	2/18	From “Plato’s Pharmacy,” pp. 112-142 (ADR) <i>Dissemination</i> : ‘The <i>pharmakon</i> ’, pp. 56-82
Week 6	2/25	“Tympan,” pp. 146-171 (ADR)
Week 7	3/4	From “The Double Session,” pp. 172-199 (ADR)
Week 8	3/11	“Letter to a Japanese Friend,” pp. 269-276 (ADR)
Week 9	3/17-3/23	NO CLASSES—SPRING BREAK
Week 10	3/25	From <i>Spurs: Nietzsche’s Styles</i> , pp. 353-377 (ADR)
Week 11	4/1	“ <i>Geschlecht</i> : Sexual Difference, Ontological Difference,” pp. 378-402 (ADR)
Week 12	4/8	From “To Speculate—on ‘Freud’,” pp. 516-568 (ADR)
Week 13	4/15	“Hostipitality,” pp. 237-264 (BW) Final Paper Proposal due by 4/21 11:59pm

Week 14	4/22	From <i>Politics of Friendship</i> : “Oligarchies: naming, enumerating, counting,” pp. 265-296 (BW)
Week 15	4/29	“Onto-theology of national-humanism (Prolegomena to a hypothesis),” pp. 299-323 (BW)
Week 16	5/6	Concluding Remarks and Student Presentations Final Paper due by 05/16 11:59pm

Please note: this schedule is subject to modification as the semester progresses. If there are any changes to the syllabus, I will make a note in-class and provide an updated syllabus