

PHIL 6322: Spring Semester 2026  
Class Meetings: Wednesdays 10am-12:45pm  
Class Location: JO 4.504

Professor: Dr. Katherine Davies  
OH: Wednesdays, 2-3pm and by appt.  
OH Location: JO 5.104  
Email: [katherine.davies@utdallas.edu](mailto:katherine.davies@utdallas.edu)

## Continental Philosophy: (Critical) Phenomenology

### Seminar Description

The seminar offers an intensive overview of the still-evolving continental philosophical field of (critical) phenomenology, which centers theorizing from lived experience. Contending with issues of analysis and method, this seminar explores phenomenological concepts and topics such as intentionality, appearance, perception, embodiment and gender, the politics of public space, the ethics of alterity, and consciousness at the crossroads of identity through selections of primary texts by Husserl, Heidegger, Merleau-Ponty, Beauvoir, Arendt, Levinas, Fanon, and Anzaldúa, accompanied by related secondary scholarship. Furthermore, we will grapple with the recent “critical” turn in phenomenology through the work of Ahmed, Ortega, Al-Saji, Ngo, Toombs, and Pitts, which raises questions about the salience of phenomenological inquiry for social, political, and ethical issues.

This course fulfills the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> Century Philosophy historical distribution requirement for the PHIL MA program.

### Course Materials

#### Required Texts for Purchase

*The Phenomenology Reader*, edited by Dermot Moran and Timothy Mooney (Routledge, 2002).

All other required and suggested materials will be provided electronically

#### Suggestions for Further Reading

##### Synthetic Scholarly Overviews of Phenomenology

All titles are available through (and linked to) the UTD library

[\*Phenomenology: The Basics\* by Dan Zahavi](#)

[\*Introduction to Phenomenology\* by Dermot Moran](#)

[\*The Routledge Companion to Phenomenology\* by Sebastian Luft and Søren Overgaard](#)

[\*A Companion to Phenomenology and Existentialism\* by Hubert L. Dryfus and Mark A. Wrathall](#)

##### Academic Journals Currently Publishing (Critical) Phenomenological Scholarship

[\*Research in Phenomenology\*](#)

[\*Puncta: Journal of Critical Phenomenology\*](#)

## Course Particulars

### Learning Outcomes:

By the end of this course, the student will have gained: (1) a working knowledge of historical and contemporary philosophical issues pertaining to phenomenology and critical phenomenology (2) opportunities to develop and respond to scholarly presentations on topics related to phenomenology and critical phenomenology; (3) and individualized guidance in learning how to produce a final seminar paper approaching publishable quality.

### Organization:

#### Box Folder

All assignments and electronic materials will be collected and disseminated via a shared UTD-provided Box folder. Electronic access to the Box folder will be provided during the first week of the semester.

### Mechanics:

#### Assignment Due Dates

Assignments are due at the time and date specified in the seminar requirement descriptions or on the seminar schedule. Assignments are to be submitted to the appropriate Box sub-folder. Students are encouraged to review each other's work.

#### Recording Policy and AI Policy

Recording (audio or visual) of seminar sessions without advance, written permission and consent of all seminar participants is strictly prohibited. Any AI use must be cited or otherwise indicated in submitted assignments. Content that is uncited is presumed to be the original work of the student and subject to UTD's policies on plagiarism and academic integrity:

<https://www.utdallas.edu/conduct/dishonesty/>

### Resources:

#### AccessAbility

This course is designed with all students in mind, but we are not all the same. The professor would like to work with each student so that the course and its requirements fit with their abilities. If you would like to discuss such matters, please contact the instructor. Under UTD policy, for an accommodation to be officially considered, students must register with the AccessAbility Resource Center: <https://www.utdallas.edu/studentaccess/>

## Requirements:

### (1) Participation 10%

Rigorous and careful discussion aimed at developing our understanding of the assigned texts will make up the bulk of our weekly seminar meetings. Thorough preparation, punctual attendance, and consistent participation is expected of all students, though this will look different for each seminar participant. This will likely include balancing contributions appropriately, neither remaining too quiet nor speaking over others. Active listening and speaking—responding to the ideas of others and helping to develop them—will form the *ethos* of the seminar. Ideally, we will assist one another in elaborating our ideas-in-progress regarding the text(s).

### (2) Reading Reflections 15%

Due each Tuesday at 1pm, each student must submit a Reading Reflection. This reflection should be one substantial paragraph long and should take the form of an extended comment or question pertaining directly to the assigned reading for the upcoming meeting. The instructor will review this in advance of the meeting and students should be prepared to discuss the content of these reflections in class. No Reading Reflection is due the week a student gives a Seminar Presentation or Response to a Seminar Presentation (see below). Students may also elect to skip submitting a Reading Reflection twice without penalty.

### (3) Seminar Presentation 20%

Every enrolled student will prepare a seminar presentation. Depending on class size, enrolled students may be invited to present more than once, or auditors may be welcome to offer presentations. Presentations offer the opportunity to develop a philosophical analysis of assigned texts beyond the brief constraints of the Reading Reflections. This assignment should pursue an argumentative thesis concerning the text(s) assigned for the week of the presentation and may draw from additional relevant scholarly research at the presenter's discretion. The presentation should be 2000-2500 words in length and will be read aloud during the seminar meeting, with another student offering a Response to the Seminar Presentation, followed by general discussion. Complete texts of the presentations are due at 1pm on the Monday before the presentation will take place, allowing for both instructor review and for the assigned respondent to compose their Response. Sign-ups for presentations will take place in the first week(s) of the semester.

### (4) Response to a Seminar Presentation 5%

In conjunction with each Seminar Presentation, a Response from another seminar participant will be prepared in advance and delivered at the presentation's conclusion. This Response pursues two tasks. First, the respondent will briefly summarize the main argument of the seminar presentation and the philosophical terrain it covers. Second, the respondent will raise a

substantive, developed question for the presenter. This Response should be approximately 500 words in length and will be read aloud at the conclusion of the Seminar Presentation. The presenter will respond to this Response before general Q&A. Responses are due at 8am Wednesday, on the morning of the presentation, to Box. Sign-ups for Responses will also take place in the first week(s) of the semester.

(5) Final Paper Proposal 10%

In advance of the final seminar paper, students will submit an approximately 750-word proposal (excluding bibliography) for the final paper. The proposal may build upon a previous assignment: Reading Reflection, Seminar Presentation, or Response. The narrative proposal must elaborate 1) the proposed argumentative thesis of the final paper, 2) the structure (e.g. subsections or major premises) that will advance the paper's thesis, and 3) the rationale for engaging with particular texts/readings assigned in this seminar for this project. Following the narrative paragraphs comprising the proposal, a short bibliography of primary and secondary sources must be provided. Proposals are due on Monday April 27<sup>th</sup> at 1pm to Box. At the end of that week (April 30<sup>th</sup> or May 1<sup>st</sup>), each student will have a 15-minute meeting with the instructor to discuss the proposal. Students may revise the proposals considering instructor feedback. At our final seminar meeting, each student will offer a brief (5 minute) informal presentation of their final seminar paper project.

(6) Final Seminar Paper 40%

At the end of term, students will submit a final seminar paper of approximately 5000 words, inclusive of notes, references, and bibliography. This paper must heavily engage with one or more of the assigned readings in this seminar, though it may include independent research into phenomenological scholarship or a closely related field. The final paper may build upon a previous assignment (Reading Reflection, Seminar Presentation, or Response) or it may develop separately. The topic, direction, and sources for this paper will attain instructor approval through the proposal requirement (above). Each student will also receive feedback from peers through the informal presentations during the last meeting of the term. The Final Seminar Paper is due Wednesday, May 13<sup>th</sup> at 1pm in Box.

(7) Extra Credit

Your final grade may be raised by 1% for attending and writing a report on, a scholarly, philosophical talk (e.g. a symposium presentation, departmental/program colloquium, a talk at a conference, etc.). In Box, you will find instructions for completing this voluntary assignment. This assignment may be completed up to five times for credit.

## Meeting Schedule:

This schedule may be modified as the semester progresses. Updated versions will be made available should such changes be deemed necessary.

\*= reading found in *The Phenomenology Reader*  
All other readings are found in pdf form in Box

January 21: Course Introduction and Syllabus Overview

Suggested: “The Phenomena” chapter 1 of *Phenomenology: The Basics* by Dan Zahavi

January 28: Edmund Husserl “Introduction to the *Logical Investigations*,”\* “Consciousness as Intentional Experience,”\* and “The Phenomenology of Internal Time Consciousness”\* in *The Phenomenology Reader*

Suggested: René Descartes “First Meditation” and “Second Meditation” from *Meditations on First Philosophy*

February 4: Edmund Husserl “Pure Phenomenology, its Method, and its Field of Investigation,”\* “Noesis and Noema,”\* and “The Way into Phenomenological Transcendental Philosophy by Inquiring back from the Pregiven Life-World”\* in *The Phenomenology Reader*

Suggested: Dan Zahavi “Husserl’s Turn to Transcendental Philosophy: Epoché, Reduction, and Transcendental Idealism”

February 11: Martin Heidegger “My Way to Phenomenology,”\* “The Fundamental Discoveries of Phenomenology, Its Principle, and the Clarification of Its Name,”\* and “The Phenomenological Method of Investigation”\* in *The Phenomenology Reader*

Suggested: William McNeill “‘To the Things Themselves!’ Heidegger’s Early Confrontation with Husserl’s Phenomenology”

February 18: Martin Heidegger “The Worldhood of the World”\* in *The Phenomenology Reader* and “What is Metaphysics?”

Suggested: Calvin Warren “The Free Black Is Nothing”

February 25: Hannah Arendt “What is Existenz Philosophy?,”\* “Labor, Work, Action”\* in *The Phenomenology Reader*, and “We Refugees”

Suggested: Susan Bickford “In the Presence of Others: Arendt and Anzaldúa on the Paradox of Public Appearance”

March 4: Maurice Merleau-Ponty “The Body as Object and Mechanistic Physiology”\* and “The Primacy of Perception and its Philosophical Consequences”\* in *The Phenomenology Reader*

Suggested: Helen Ngo “Racist Habits: Bodily Gesture, Perception, and Orientation”

March 11: Simone de Beauvoir “Destiny”\* and “Woman’s Situation and Character”\* in *The Phenomenology Reader* and “Throwing Like a Girl: A Phenomenology of Feminine Body Comportment Motility and Spatiality” Iris Marion Young

Suggested: Bonnie Mann “The Difference of Feminist Phenomenology: The Case of Shame”

March 18: *No Class (Spring Break March 16-20)*

March 25: Emmanuel Levinas “Ethics and the Face”\* and “Beyond Intentionality”\* in *The Phenomenology Reader* and Lisa Guenther “Six Senses of Critique for Critical Phenomenology”  
Suggested: Lisa Guenther “Introduction: The Gift of the Other”

April 1: Franz Fanon “Introduction,” “The Black Man and Language,” and “The Lived Experience of the Black Man” from *Black Skin, White Masks* and Audre Lorde “Poetry is Not a Luxury” from *Sister Outsider*

Suggested: Paget Henry “Gender and Africana Phenomenology” and Lisa Guenther “Critical Phenomenology” (pp. 11-16) from *50 Concepts for a Critical Phenomenology*

April 8: Gloria Anzaldúa “Atravesando Fronteras/Crossing Borders” from *Borderlands/La Frontera*  
Suggested: Mariana Ortega “Being-between-Worlds, Being-in-Worlds”

April 15: Sara Ahmed “Orientations Toward Objects” and Mariana Ortega “Critical Impurity and the Race for Critical Phenomenology”

Suggested: Gayle Salamon “What’s Critical about Critical Phenomenology?”

April 22: Alia Al-Saji “A Phenomenology of Hesitation: Interrupting Racializing Habits of Seeing” and Helen Ngo “The Lived Experience of Racism and Racialized Embodiment”

Suggested: Mariana Ortega “Affected by the Eye”

April 27: **Final Paper Proposal Due at 1pm in Box**

April 29: S. Kay Toombs “The Lived Experience of Disability” and Andrea J. Pitts “Examining Carceral Medicine through Critical Phenomenology”

Suggested: Joel Reynolds “A Phenomenology of Multiple Sclerosis”

May 6: Presentations of Final Paper Proposals

May 13: **Final Paper Due at 1pm in Box**