PHIL 196: The Experience of Crisis in Twentieth Century Philosophy
Syllabus, Fall Term 2006, Section 1001

MWF, 10-10:50, Lalumiere Language Hall, R. 222

Course Description:
Many people in the first half of the twentieth century experienced their time as that of a deeply felt Crisis. This crisis was brought about, essentially, by the two World Wars that occasioned, among other things, fascism and catastrophes in culture, science and economy in the interwar period as well as after the Second World War. This Crisis, however, did not only effect politicians, writers, artists and normal citizens; indeed, it also profoundly impacted most major philosophers. One can rightly say that the experience of Crisis was for many philosophers of the last century the driving force in developing, modifying or even radically changing their thought. This course will deal with the question of how some of these decisive figures in twentieth century thought perceived this Crisis, how they explained its origins and how they thought there could be, if at all, remedies to and ways of overcoming the Crisis. These questions have a broad scope, as they concern the entire project of modern philosophy in the spirit of Enlightenment. The Enlightenment allegedly placed Reason above other human capacities to overcome all human ailments and to help humanity reach a state, in which all problems could be eradicated and overcome. After experiencing Crises in the twentieth century many maintained that such a belief in Reason could no longer be held naively. Not surprisingly, reflections turned back on the role and status of Reason itself and, henceforth, philosophy as rational enterprise within the overall framework of human culture. The crisis of Culture was in effect a crisis of Reason. In questioning Reason, some claimed that it needed to be revived in exploring new shapes and forms it could take on. Others believed that Reason and its capacity to solve problems had been irremediably compromised in light of the catastrophes of the twentieth century. Some even went so far as to hold Reason responsible for the contemporary Crisis. The discussions concerning these issues, thus, cut right to the core of the meaning and purpose of philosophy in modernity. Indeed, hardly any thinker from diverse schools of thought remained indifferent to this question. As a consequence, some of the writings dealing with the Crisis of modernity have become key texts of twentieth century philosophy and would not have been possible without these traumatic experiences. Acknowledging the importance that the Crisis had for those thinkers who shaped philosophy in the twentieth century, this course will also offer a general introduction into some classical philosophical texts of the last century, by authors such as Ortega y Gasset, Husserl, Cassirer, Adorno/Horkheimer and Heidegger. Since our twenty-first century is also beset with traumatic experiences due to terrorism, religious fundamentalism and the “clash of cultures,” we will address the question whether these important philosophers of the twentieth century can still offer remedies or inspirations that can help address the challenges of our century.

Learning Objectives:
This class provides an intensive study of important philosophical texts of the Twentieth Century. In this capacity as senior seminar, it is also intended to give students of senior standing an idea of research as it will be pursued in graduate school and in academia at large. For this reason, students will be engaged to a higher extent than in other classes. This means, the seminar will ask a great deal of responsibility and commitment on the part of students, being proactive about pursuing their research projects independently, being outspoken in the classroom, and being in touch with me regularly over the course of the semester either in my office hours or by email. Keep in mind that I will hold you to these expectations at all times. At the end of the seminar, students should have an idea of what “real” research looks and feels like.
Texts:
E. Husserl, *The Crisis of European Sciences* (Northwestern)
E. Cassirer, *The Myth of the State* (Yale)
Th. W. Adorno/M. Horckheimer, *Dialectic of Enlightenment* (Stanford)
M. Heidegger, *Letter on Humanism* (and other selections) in *Basic Writings* (Harper)
(All books available at Bookmarq.)

Method of Evaluation:
The final grade will be determined most importantly through the quality and originality of your writing. This concerns the midterm take-home exam (30%) and the research paper (60%), which will be expected to be a length of 10-15 pages (double-spaced, 12 point font). The topic/author/problem of the research paper is to be chosen by you and is expected to be discussed at several points throughout the semester and its preliminary results presented in class. It is expected that participants in this course work consistently on this research paper throughout the semester. Participation in class, including volunteering to take over presentations, is expected and will count 10%. Please come to class only if you are prepared. Tips and instructions on how to plan, prepare and draft a research papers will be given throughout the semester.

Statement on Academic Integrity:
Marquette University promotes academic integrity and in turn does not tolerate academic misconduct or dishonesty, such as cheating, plagiarizing or the illegitimate use of materials during a quiz or examination, etc. Any misconduct of these types will be reported immediately to the Department Chair and can result in a penalty of the grade of F. (See also Marquette’s College of Arts and Sciences Policy on Academic Dishonesty and the Philosophy Department Academic Dishonesty Policy.)

Course Schedule (Subject to Change)

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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
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<tr>
<td>August 28</td>
<td>First Day of Class, Technicalia, Meeting One Another, Class Expectations etc.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Aug. 30</td>
<td>Introductory Lecture</td>
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<tr>
<td>September 1</td>
<td>How to Write a Research Paper, Part I: The Nature of Research in the Humanities</td>
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<td>Sept. 4</td>
<td>Labor Day, No Class</td>
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<td>Sept. 6</td>
<td>Ortega y Gasset, <em>The Revolt of the Masses</em>, Chs. 1-2</td>
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<td>Sept. 8</td>
<td>Ortega, cont., Chs. 3-4, Presenter:</td>
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<td>Sept. 11</td>
<td>Ortega, cont., Chs. 5-6, Presenter:</td>
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<td>Sept. 13</td>
<td>Ortega, cont., Chs. 7-8, Presenter:</td>
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<td>Sept. 15</td>
<td>Ortega, cont., Chs. 9-10, Presenter:</td>
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<td>Sept. 18</td>
<td>Ortega, cont., Chs. 11-13, Presenter:</td>
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<td>Sept. 20</td>
<td>Ortega, cont., Chs. 14-15, Presenter:</td>
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<td>Sept. 22</td>
<td>How to Write a Research Paper, Part II: Finding a Topic &amp; Researching Literature</td>
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<td>Sept. 25</td>
<td>Husserl, <em>The Crisis of European Sciences</em>, Intro</td>
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<td>Sept. 27</td>
<td>Husserl, cont., The Vienna Lecture, Presenter:</td>
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<td>Sept. 29</td>
<td>Husserl, cont., Vienna Lecture, Presenter:</td>
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<td>October 2</td>
<td>Husserl, <em>Crisis</em>, Part I, Presenter:</td>
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<td>Oct. 4</td>
<td>Husserl, Part I cont., Presenter:</td>
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<td>Oct. 6</td>
<td>Husserl, Part I cont., Presenter:</td>
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*Syllabus – Phil196 – Luft*
Oct. 11: Cassirer, cont., Chs. III-IV, Presenter:
Midterm Exam. Bibliography Due (Take Home Exam, due Oct. 18)
Oct. 16: Cassirer, cont., Ch. XV, Presenter:
Oct. 18: Cassirer, cont., Ch. XVI, Presenter:
Oct. 19-22: **Midterm Break**
Oct. 23: Cassirer, cont., Ch. XVII, Presenter:
Oct. 25: Cassirer, cont., Ch. XVIII + Conclusion, Presenter:
Oct. 27: **No Class, but attendance at American Society for Aesthetics Conference, Oct. 25-28**  
See www.aesthetics-online.org for conference program.
Oct. 30: **Presentations of Papers Attended at ASA.**
November 1: Adorno/Horkheimer, *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, The Concept of Enlightenment
Nov. 3: Adorno/Horkheimer, Concept of Enlightenment cont., **Paper Topics Due.** Presenter:
Nov. 6: Adorno/Horkheimer, cont., Excursus I, Presenter:
Nov. 8: Adorno/Horkheimer, cont., Excursus II, Presenter:
Nov. 10: Adorno/Horkheimer, cont., Culture Industry, Presenter:
Nov. 13: Adorno/Horkheimer, cont., Culture Industry, Presenter:
Nov. 15: Adorno/Horkheimer, cont., Elements of Anti-Semitism, Presenter:
Nov. 17: Adorno/Horkheimer, cont., Elements of Anti-Semitism, Presenter:
Nov. 20: **Presentation of Paper Topics. Outline of Research Paper Due.**
Nov. 22-26: **Thanksgiving Break**
Nov. 27: **Heidegger, Letter on Humanism**
Nov. 29: Heidegger, Letter on Humanism cont., Presenter:
December 1: **How to Write a Research Paper, Part IV: Students’ Questions**
Dec. 4: Heidegger, cont., *The End of Philosophy and the Task of Thinking*, Presenter:
Dec. 6: Heidegger, cont., End of Philosophy, Presenter:
Dec. 8: **Last Day of Class, Final Discussion**
Dec. 11: **Research Papers Due (12 noon)**