Phil 301 – Phenomenology and Ethics
Syllabus, Spring Term 2007, Section 1001

MW 9:35-10:50, David Straz Hall, R. 488

An online version of this syllabus can be found at http://academic.mu.edu/phil/lufts/Teaching1.htm.

Content:
In this course, we will study a selection of phenomenologists who have made a significant contribution to moral philosophy. These include some of the most creative and innovative thinkers of the Phenomenological Movement—Franz Brentano, Edmund Husserl, Max Scheler, Edith Stein, and Robert Sokolowski—who conceived equally novel and exciting new approaches concerning ethics and applied the phenomenological method to moral philosophy in general. In studying these texts, we will attempt to assess where and how phenomenology can make an original contribution to problems in contemporary ethics, and to foundations and specifically phenomenological conceptions of moral philosophy at large. Since this topic has been of emerging interest in a considerable amount of contemporary phenomenological literature, this seminar should both provide the systematic and historical backdrop that help make these attempts better understandable and connect us to contemporary trends in phenomenology. This class requires a basic understanding of phenomenology and the phenomenological tradition. Knowledge of German will be an asset for working especially on Husserl’s moral phenomenology, but is not required otherwise.

Objectives:
This course offers a general advanced introduction to phenomenology on the graduate level with a focus on phenomenological contributions to ethics and moral philosophy. We will attempt to understand these approaches in their foundations, scope and larger implications. Studying these texts will not only give us a deeper understanding of the range and breadth of phenomenology, it will also help connect phenomenology’s achievements to systematic and current issues in ethics, moral philosophy and metaethics. The course will also attempt to hone graduate students’ exegetical and interpretative skills through a close and careful reading of the texts, as well as develop and further the capacity to formulate students’ own questions and to challenge a philosopher’s claims, presuppositions, and approaches to timeless philosophical questions. At the end of the semester, students will be able to articulate, appreciate and critically evaluate the achievements of several approaches the Phenomenological Movement has produced with respect to moral philosophy and ethics.
Texts:

Texts will be made available in electronic format, though you are free to hunt them down on the internet and used book stores (though mostly costly).

Helpful Secondary Sources:
An excellent overview is provided by: John J. Drummond, ed., *Phenomenological Approaches to Moral Philosophy. A Handbook*, Dordrecht/Boston/London: Kluwer, 2002. Since this volume is prohibitively expensive, I have made some texts available on reserve and D2L.
I will point you to secondary literature on the authors we are reading over the course of the semester. Here are names of some contemporary authors dealing with moral issues in phenomenology: John J. Drummond, James Hart, Ullrich Melle, James R. Mensch, Henning Peucker, Robert Sokolowski.
There are several other items on Electronic Reserve and on D2L, to which I will direct you over the course of the semester, though I also expect you to do research independently.

Method of Evaluation:
The final grade will be calculated as follows: Midterm Exam (take home) 25%; Response Papers 25%; Research Paper 50%.
The *Midterm Exam* will consist of an exam with essay questions in take-home format (handed out on March 7, due on March 19).
There will be altogether 10 Response Papers of max. 500 words (please add word count) to be handed in on Mondays (see the Course Schedule for the due dates). Their purpose is to formulate problems/issues/reactions/questions in clear prose relating to the reading assigned (what I do not want is a summary!). Incorporating secondary sources is not expected. Each will reach a total of up to 10 points for a maximum total of 100 points overall. Points will be given on the basis of lucidity, insight, originality, and clarity. The grading scale here is, as in all other grading for written work: 100-93 A, 92-87 AB, 86-83 B, 82-77 BC, 76-73 C, 72-67 CD, 66-50 D, 50-0 F.
The *Research Paper* is due on May 7 and is expected to have a length of 15-20 pages (double-space) and is to incorporate at least five secondary sources (books or articles). The idea is to prepare and work on this paper over the course of the semester. This entails that each student is required to come up with a research topic on his/her own and should discuss this with me at different points during the semester. The due date for a topic (this includes the anticipated title of the paper and an abstract of ca. half a page) is April 25. At that time, you should have a clear idea of what you want to work on, have done research on it, and have it ready for approval. I expect you to be in touch with me at several occasions throughout the semester (during my office hours or via email) to discuss ideas that you are entertaining and problems that you are wrestling with.

D2L: I intend to make use of D2L extensively (e.g., I will post my lecture notes) and expect you to check it regularly and contribute to it with postings of your own. The discussion forum is intended to further the classroom discussion. There will be no oral presentations; however, each Wednesday class will be opened by a short introductory statement by a student. In this statement (ca. 5-10 minutes) the student assigned to this task will give a short summary of the reading, highlight questions, concerns or problems he/she had with the reading. Moreover, I will assign someone each class meeting who has the task of taking notes on the classroom discussion and post a summary of the discussion on D2L (up to ca. 500 words). I intend the class to be primarily discussion-based, not lecture-format. So please come prepared and ready to participate. I do not have an attendance policy. If you are not well prepared, do not bother showing up. Please try to be punctual.
Course Schedule (Subject to Change)

January 17:  First Day of Class, Technicalia
Jan. 22:  Introductory Lecture

Franz Brentano
Jan. 24:  Brentano, Introduction
Jan. 29:  The Origin of Our Knowledge of Right and Wrong (1889), RESPONSE PAPER [RP] 1
Suggested Reading: W. Baumgartner, “Brentano: The Foundation of Value Theory and Ethics” (on reserve)
Jan. 31:  The Origin Cont.

Edmund Husserl
Feb. 5:  Husserl, Introduction, RP 2
Suggested Reading: U. Melle, “The Development of Husserl’s Ethics” (on reserve)
Feb. 7:  Lectures on Ethics and Value Theory: The Parallelism Between Logic and Ethics (1914 Lecture, §§ 1-8)
Suggested Reading: Logical Investigations, I (Prolegomena), §§ 13-16
Feb. 12:  Lectures, cont.: Formal Axiology (1914 Lecture, §§ 9-12), RP 3
Suggested Reading: U. Melle, “Zu Husserls und Brentanos Ethikansatz” (on reserve)
Feb. 14:  Lectures, cont.: Formal Practology (1914 Lecture, §§ 18-21)
Feb. 19:  Lectures, cont.: Theoretical and Axiological Reason (1908/09 Lecture, §§ 3-7), RP 4
Suggested Reading: U. Melle, “Objektivierende und Nicht-Objektivierende Akte” (on D2L)
Feb. 21:  Lectures, cont.: Theoretical and Axiological Reason and Problems with the Analogy (1908/09 Lecture, § 12)
Feb. 26:  3rd Kaizo-Article, “Renewal as Individual-Ethical Problem” (1922), RP 5
Suggested Reading: U. Melle, “Edmund Husserl: From Reason to Love” (on reserve)
Feb. 28:  Kaizo cont.

March 5:  4th Kaizo Article, “Renewal and Science” (1922), RP 6
March 7:  Kaizo cont., MIDTERM EXAM (Take Home, due March 19)

March 12-16:  Spring Break

Max Scheler
March 19:  The Formalism in Ethics and Non-Formal Ethics of Values (1913/16), Ch. I, “Non-Formal Value-Ethics…”
Suggested Reading: Ph. Blosser: “Max Scheler: A Sketch of His Moral Philosophy” (on reserve)
March 21:  The Formalism, cont., Ch. II, “Formalism and Apriorism,”
March 26:  The Formalism, cont., Ch. III, “Non-Formal Ethics and Ethics of Success,” RP 7
March 28:  The Formalism, cont., Ch. III, cont.
April 2:  , The Formalism, cont., Ch. VI B, “The Person in Ethical Contexts,” RP 8
April 4:  The Formalism, cont., Ch. VI B, cont.
April 5-9:  Easter Break

Edith Stein
Suggested Reading: K. Haney & J. Valiquette, “Edith Stein: Woman as Ethical Type” (on D2L)
April 18:  Empathy, Ch. IV, “Empathy as the Understanding of Spiritual Persons”

Robert Sokolowski
Suggested Reading: J.C. McCarthy, “Keeping Up Appearances: The Moral Philosophy of Robert Sokolowski” (on D2L)
April 25:  Moral Action, Ch. 3, “Moral Action”
April 30:  Moral Action, Ch. 7, “The Being of Human Agents,” RP 10
May 2:  Last Day of Class, Final Discussion
May 7:  FINAL PAPERS DUE

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