

### *Description*

This course serves as an introduction to the philosophical movements known as phenomenology and existentialism. The term “phenomenology” denotes a particular methodological and thematic approach to philosophical reflection involving a concern with examining the ways in which meaning is disclosed to an experiencing agent. The term “existentialism” denotes neither a particular philosophical approach nor a particular philosophical theory but a concern with a cluster of issues that arise in and help to define human existence as it is lived. These issues include, among others, the human as individual, human estrangement from the world and from others, and freedom and responsibility. These common concerns underlie an identifiable perspective that can properly be called “existentialist.”

The first part of the course considers two post-Hegelian and anti-Hegelian thinkers: Kierkegaard and Nietzsche. Both react to what they take to be Hegel’s excessively rationalistic and systematic philosophy. The former believes that Hegel fails to allow for an adequate understanding of both subjectivity and religion, while the latter believes that Hegel fails to acknowledge the limitations of reason and the importance of the will.

The second part of the course examines Husserl’s transcendental phenomenology. Husserl adopts a methodology that allows him to explore the role of subjectivity in the experience of objects just as they are experienced, i.e., as they are experienced as possessing a certain significance for the experiencing agent(s). His stress is on the correlational character of a subject’s experience of the world in all experiential domains: cognitive, affective, and volitional.

The third part of the course focuses on “existential phenomenology.” It considers the work of Heidegger and Sartre, two phenomenological thinkers who emphasize existential themes found in Kierkegaard and Nietzsche.

### *Texts*

Guignon, Charles and Derek Pereboom (eds.), *Existentialism: Basic Writings*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed.  
(Indianapolis: Hackett, 2001). ISBN: 9780872205956

Welton, Donn (ed.), *The Essential Husserl: Basic Writings in Transcendental Phenomenology*  
(Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1999). ISBN: 9780253212733