

**PHIL 325 Contemporary Philosophy (3 units)**  
**Azusa Pacific University, Spring 2008**  
 MWF 1:00-1:55 in Duke 120

- Instructor:** John McAteer, filmphilosopher@gmail.com
- Office Hours:** By appointment in Duke 262
- Course Description:** This course offers a study of philosophical movements and thinkers since the 19th century. Movements such as idealism, naturalism, analytical philosophy, continental philosophy, postmodern philosophy, and feminism, and major thinkers such as Hegel, Marx, Nietzsche, Heidegger, Wittgenstein, Derrida, Levinas, and Rorty are examined.
- Course Objectives:**
1. Through the assigned reading and class lectures students will acquire a basic comprehension of the major figures in contemporary philosophy; through in class discussion and the final exam, students will demonstrate their understanding of these figures.
  2. Through the essay questions students will learn to analyze philosophical texts, to reconstruct philosophical arguments and to express these ideas in written form.
  3. Through group presentations and class discussion students will learn to articulate and evaluate philosophical arguments in order to develop their own reasoned opinions on the major issues in philosophy.
- Grading:**
- Essay Questions = 10% each, 40% total  
 Group Presentation = 30%  
 Final Exam = 20%  
 Attendance and Participation = 10%
- Essay Questions:** Answer the following questions in a 1000 word essay (about 3 pages in double-spaced 12 point font). **NB: your answers should be based on the assigned reading for this class. Do not do any outside research.** Defend your own interpretation from a close reading of the primary text, making sure to explain the author's technical terminology in your own words as clearly and simply as you can. It might help to imagine that you are explaining these texts to a friend or roommate who has never taken a philosophy class.
1. What does Heidegger mean by "authenticity"? *Due February 6.*
  2. What does James mean by his claim that truth is what "works"? *Due February 22.*
  3. What is Wittgenstein's *argument* for the conclusion that there can be no "private language"? *Due April 2.*
  4. What does Lyotard mean by "metanarrative"? *Due April 11.*
- Group Presentation:** This course will focus on four major contemporary philosophical viewpoints: existentialism, pragmatism, Wittgensteinianism, and postmodernism. Because Azusa Pacific University is an evangelical Christian institution that encourages students to develop a Christian perspective of truth and life, students will give in-class group presentations explaining and evaluating recent attempts to integrate each of these viewpoints with Christian theology. These presentations should last 45-55 minutes and should include four parts: (1) A summary of the argument of the book, detailed enough to allow classmates who have not read the book to engage in fruitful conversation (2) an explanation of exactly how the author is integrating Christianity with the relevant philosophical viewpoint: what does he borrow and what does he reject? (3) an evaluation, from the student's own view, of the book: what do you find helpful? what do you find problematic? what do you think evangelical theologians can learn from this book? (4) a student-led class discussion of the topics from the presentation.

*Presentation Schedule:*

1. Paul Tillich's Christian Existentialism: *February 13*
2. William James's Christian Pragmatism: *March 7*
3. D.Z. Phillips's Christian Wittgensteinianism: *April 4*
4. James K.A. Smith's Christian Postmodernism: *Due April 25*

**Required Texts:**

Guignon, Charles and Derk Pereboom, eds. *Existentialism: Basic Writings*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed (Hackett, 2001); ISBN: 0872205959  
 Kenny, Anthony. *The Wittgenstein Reader*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Blackwell, 2006); ISBN: 1405135840  
 Lyotard, Jean-François. *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge*. (University of Minnesota, 1984); ISBN: 0816611734  
 Menand, Louis, ed. *Pragmatism* (Random House, 1997); ISBN: 0679775447

Choose **one** of the following for an in-class group presentation:

James, William. *The Varieties Of Religious Experience*. (Random House, 1999); ISBN 0679640118 [or Dewey, John. *A Common Faith* (Yale, 1960); ISBN: 0300000693]  
 Phillips, D.Z. *Wittgenstein & Religion*. (St Martins, 1994); ISBN: 0312123000  
 Smith, James K.A., *Who's Afraid Of Postmodernism?* (Baker, 2006); ISBN: 080102918X  
 Tillich, Paul. *The Courage To Be*, Tillich, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Yale, 2000); ISBN: 0300084714

**Additional Reading:** (Required reading available online)

Ayer, A.J. *Language, Truth and Logic* (Dover, 1946), Abridged version and excerpt from Ch. 6  
<http://www.btinternet.com/~glynhughes/squashed/ayer.htm>  
[http://www.stephenjaygould.org/ctrl/ayer\\_metaphysics.html](http://www.stephenjaygould.org/ctrl/ayer_metaphysics.html)  
 Feuerbach, Ludwig. *The Principles of the Philosophy of the Future* (1843), §31-65  
<http://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/feuerbach/works/future/future2.htm>  
 Derrida, Jacques. *Of Grammatology* (Johns Hopkins, 1974), Ch 2  
<http://www.marxists.org/reference/subject/philosophy/works/fr/derrida.htm>  
 Foucault, Michel. *The Archeology of Knowledge* (Routledge, 1972), Chs 1-3  
<http://www.marxists.org/reference/subject/philosophy/works/fr/foucault.htm>  
 Hegel, G.W.F. *The Phenomenology of Spirit*. (1807), excerpt from Ch. 4  
<http://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/hegel/works/ph/phba.htm>  
 Kuhn, Thomas. *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (University of Chicago, 1962), Ch. 9  
<http://www.marxists.org/reference/subject/philosophy/works/us/kuhn.htm>  
 Quine, W.V.O., "Two Dogmas of Empiricism" *The Philosophical Review* 60 (1951), §5-6  
<http://www.marxists.org/reference/subject/philosophy/works/us/quine.htm>  
 Russell, Bertrand. *The Problems of Philosophy* (Holt, 1912)  
[http://en.wikisource.org/wiki/The\\_Problems\\_of\\_Philosophy](http://en.wikisource.org/wiki/The_Problems_of_Philosophy)  
 Solomon, Robert C. *From Rationalism to Existentialism* (University Press of America, 1972), Chs 1-2  
<http://online.apu.edu/>

**Schedule:**

Wed Jan 9 Intro to Course

*Part I: Modernism*

Fri Jan 11 The Kantian Background (Online reading: Solomon p. 9-25)

Mon Jan 14 Hegel on the Absolute (Online reading: Solomon p. 39-67)

- Wed Jan 16 Hegel on the Master-Slave Dialectic (Online reading from *The Phenomenology of Spirit*)  
 Fri Jan 18 Feuerbach and Marx (Online reading from *The Principles of the Philosophy of the Future*)  
 Mon Jan 21 *No Class: MLK Day*

*Part II: Existentialism*

- Wed Jan 23 Kierkegaard on Despair and Subjectivity (Guignon & Pereboom, p. 85-92 and 78-84)  
 Fri Jan 25 Kierkegaard on Faith and Resignation (Guignon & Pereboom, p. 26-77)  
 Mon Jan 28 Nietzsche's Perspectivism (Guignon & Pereboom, p. 119-142)  
 Wed Jan 30 Nietzsche's Aestheticism (Guignon & Pereboom, p. 142-171)  
 Fri Feb 1 Heidegger on the Question of Being (Guignon & Pereboom, p. 211-219)  
 Mon Feb 4 Heidegger on Human Being (Guignon & Pereboom, p. 219-246)  
 Wed Feb 6 Heidegger on Temporality (Guignon & Pereboom, p. 246-254)  
*Essay Question:* What does Heidegger mean by "authenticity" and how does he think we can become authentic?  
 Fri Feb 8 Sartre on Existentialism (Guignon & Pereboom, p. 290-328)  
 Mon Feb 11 Sartre on Bad Faith (Guignon & Pereboom, p. 328-362)  
 Wed Feb 13 Presentation: Tillich  
 Fri Feb 15 *No Class: Presidents' Day*

*Part III: Pragmatism*

- Mon Feb 18 Peirce on Pragmatism (Menand, p. 7-48)  
 Wed Feb 20 James on Belief (Menand, p. 60-92)  
 Wed Feb 22 James on Truth (Menand, p. 93-131)  
*Essay Question:* What does James mean by his claim that truth is what "works"?  
 Mon Feb 25 Mead the Social Self (Menand, p. 288-299)  
 Wed Feb 27 Dewey on Knowledge (Menand, p. 205-232)  
 Fri Mar 1 Dewey on Experience (Menand, p. 233-264)  
 Mon Mar 3 Dewey on Democracy (Menand, p. 182-204)  
 Wed Mar 5 *No Class: Common Day of Learning*  
 Fri Mar 7 Presentation: James

*Part IV: Analytic and Post-Analytic Philosophy*

- Mon Mar 10 Russell on "Sense Data" (Online reading from *The Problems of Philosophy*)  
 Wed Mar 12 Ayer on Religious Language (Online reading from *Language, Proof and Logic*)  
 Fri Mar 14 Quine on Semantic Holism (Online reading from "Two Dogmas of Empiricism")  
 Mar 17-21 *No Class: Holy Week*  
 Mon Mar 24 *No Class: Easter Monday*  
 Wed Mar 26 Wittgenstein on Philosophy (*The Wittgenstein Reader*, p. 46-69)  
 Fri Mar 28 Wittgenstein on Meaning and Understanding (p. 70-83)  
 Mon Mar 31 Wittgenstein on Following a Rule (p. 99-119)  
 Wed Apr 2 Wittgenstein on Private Language (p. 144-171)  
*Essay Question:* What is Wittgenstein's argument for the conclusion that there can be no "private language"?  
 Fri Apr 4 Presentation: Phillips

*Part V: Postmodernism*

- Mon Apr 7 Kuhn on Paradigm Shifts (Online reading from *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*)  
 Wed Apr 9 Lyotard on Narratives and Legitimation (*The Postmodern Condition*, p. 3-36)  
 Fri Apr 11 Lyotard, continued (p. 37-70)  
*Essay Question:* What does Lyotard mean by "metanarrative"?  
 Mon Apr 14 Foucault (Online reading from *The Archeology of Knowledge*)  
 Wed Apr 16 Foucault, continued  
 Fri Apr 18 Derrida (Online reading from *Of Grammatology*)  
 Mon Apr 21 Derrida, continued

Wed Apr 23 Rorty on Kantian vs. Hegelian Approaches to Philosophy (Menand, p. 304-336)  
Fri Apr 25 Presentation: Smith  
Wed Apr 30 Final Exam: 12:15 to 2:15pm