Phil 396C: Continental Philosophy

CSUN Fall, 2018

Prof. Robin M. Muller

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Office: Sierra Tower 506

Office Hours: Tuesdays & Thursdays, 1:30–2:30 or by appointment

**1. Course Description**

This seminar is an overview of Continental Philosophy, with an emphasis on conceptions of subjectivity, identity, and political recognition.

**2. Course Materials**

All readings will be made available via the course Canvas site. In addition, students are required to purchase the following text from the retailer of their choice.

 Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality,* vol. 1 (Vintage, 1990).

**3. Course Schedule and Outline**

I. Introduction: What Is Continental Philosophy?

8/28: Course Outline and Overview

II. The Legacy of Hegel and Marx

III.1 Desire and Recognition: Reading Continental Philosophy

8/30: G.W.F. Hegel, “Lordship and Bondage,” excerpt from *Phenomenology of Spirit*

9/4: Alexandre Kojève, “In Place of an Introduction,” from *Introduction to the Reading of Hegel*

9/6: Kojève, cont’d.

9/11: Kojève, cont’d.

II.2 Marx and the Critical Perspective

9/13: Karl Marx, “For A Ruthless Criticism of Everything Existing,” letter to Arnold Ruge (September, 1843)

9/18: Simone de Beauvoir, “Childhood,” from *The Second Sex*

9/20; Beauvoir, cont’d.

9/25: Beauvoir, cont’d.

9/27: Franz Fanon, “On the So-Called Dependency Complex of the Colonized,” from *Black Skin, White Masks.*

10/2: Fanon, cont’d.

III.3 Recognition, Culture, and Politics

10/4: Franz Fanon, “Racism and Culture”

10/9: Fanon, cont’d.

10/11: Hannah Arendt, “On the Perplexities of the Rights of Man,” from *Origins of Totalitarianism*

10/16: Arendt, cont’d.

10/18: Midterm Exam

III. The Legacy of Nietzsche

III.1 Nietzsche, Language, and the Genealogical Tradition

10/23: Nietzsche, §13 of *The Genealogy of Morals*, Essay 1

10/25: Nietzsche, “On Truth and Lies in a Nonmoral Sense”

10/30: Nietzsche, cont’d.

III.2 Discourse and the Creation of the Subject

11/1: Michel Foucault, pt 1. of *History of Sexuality*, vol. 1*.*

11/6: Foucault, pt. 2 of *History of Sexuality*

11/8: Foucault, pt. 2, cont’d.

11/13: Foucault, pt. 3 of *History of Sexuality*

11/15: Foucault, pt. 3, cont’d.

11/20: Judith Butler, chap. 1 of *Gender Trouble*

11/27: Butler, cont’d.

11/29: Butler, cont’d.

IV. Borders and Borderlands: Returning to the First-Person

12/4: Gloria Anzaldua, chaps. 1 and 2 of *La Frontera/Borderlands*

12/6: Anzaldua, chap. 5 of *La Frontera*

12/11: Anzaldua, chap. 7 of *La Frontera*

4. Grading System

This course utilizes a plus/minus grading system. You are graded on a 100-point scale. The grade breakdown is as follows:

 Attendance and Participation: 20%

 Reading Worksheets 30%

 Midterm Exam 25%

 Final Exam 25%

5. Course Requirements

Attendance and Participation

A successful seminar experience depends upon the regular attendance and participation of each student. You are expected to be present and on time for each class session, to have completed the reading and any assignments, and to be ready to discuss the text.

Reading Worksheets

Starting on 9/13, each assigned text will have an accompanying reading worksheet, which you are responsible for completing prior to class discussion. The worksheets will be posted on the Canvas site and are graded on a scale of 0-2. Complete, thoughtful, and grammatical responses received a score of 2. A grade of 1 reflects failure to evidence sufficient engagement with the text. A grade of 0 reflects a failure to complete the assignment. No late assignments are accepted. Worksheets must be uploaded to the Canvas site prior to each class meeting. You may drop your three lowest worksheet grades.

Exams

There will be one midterm exam and one final exam, each graded on a 100-point scale.

6. Course Policies

Absences

In this course, attendance will account for 20% of your final grade. You are responsible for handing in completed worksheets even if you will be absent from class. It is not possible to make up assignments or exams, except in documented cases of extreme medical emergency discussed with and cleared by me. If religious observation will cause you to miss an class, you should see me in the beginning of the semester to discuss a plan. *Per CSUN policy, all planned absences for religious observation must be noted during the first week of the semester.*

Your final attendance grade for the course will be calculated according to the following scale:

A (100) 0 absences

A (95) 1–2 absences

B+ (88) 3 absences

B (85) 4 absences

C (75) 5 absences

D (65) 6 absences

F (0) 7 absences

More than 7 absences may result in failure of the course

Please note that, for purposes of your attendance grade, I do *not* distinguish excused from unexcused absences, except in extraordinary circumstances. If documentable circumstances will cause you miss class for an extended period of time, you should see me well in advance to discuss possible solutions.

Regular, constructive, thoughtful, and respectful participation will result in an increase to your attendance grade, with a maximum increase of 5%.

Tardiness

Tardiness is disruptive to the classroom and disrespectful of me and of your fellow students. I will take attendance during the first minutes of class, and if you are not present by the end of this time, your tardiness will be calculated in your attendance grade according to the following scale:

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 5–10 minutes late Half absence

More than 10 minutes late Full absence

You may not leave class in the middle, except in the case of a medical emergency. Leaving class early will count as a full absence.

Electronics

You are permitted to use a tablet during class time only to access required readings. All other electronic devices must be turned off (not just set to vibrate!) during class time and kept in your bag. The use of laptop computers is prohibited, unless you have a documented reason for needing one in the classroom. If you use your phone or other unapproved electronic device during class time, I reserve the right to ask you to leave for the remainder of class, in which case you will accrue an absence for that day.

Written Work

All written work must be typed, and handed in on time. All written assignments must be handed in via the course Canvas site. Please note that I do not accept work submitted via e-mail.

Correspondence

You are welcome to e-mail me any questions you have about the course (or about philosophy more broadly) and I will do my best to respond, where appropriate, in a timely manner. Note, however, that I will not respond to e-mails if the question you’re asking is clearly answered on the syllabus. If you need to miss class for any reason, you’re under no obligation to let me know, but you should make sure you follow up with a classmate to learn what you missed; I won’t fill you in over e-mail. If you have more substantive questions or are concerned about your progress, the appropriate way to discuss these is in person, during my office hours.

Assignments and Grading

I’ll provide detailed instructions for your class assignments, as well as grading rubrics. My intention is to demystify the grading process as much as possible. When I calculate a grade, however, that grade is non-negotiable except in demonstrated cases of an error.

You’re responsible for keeping track of your own progress, and should be able to provide evidence if you believe my grade was calculated in error. If you have concerns or want to discuss your progress with me, I’m happy to chat with you during office hours. Please note that I do not offer extra credit assignments, and do not accept rewrites. However, I am more than happy to read drafts and offer feedback on your work up to a week before the assignment is due or according to a schedule announced in class.

Statement on Disabilities

If you need special accommodations (note taker, interpreter, extended time), please make sure to make me aware of these during the first weeks of the semester so that we can make the classroom experience productive. Please also reach out to the office of Disability Resources and Educational Services if you have any questions about available accommodations.

Academic Honesty

Academic dishonesty is a serious offense, a violation of academic integrity, and a violation of the trust of professors and fellow students. It will not be tolerated. Violations of academic honesty include plagiarism, cheating, dishonest communication about timely assignment completion, or other violations of community trust. Plagiarism of any assignment will result in a 0 on the assignment or failure of the course and will be reported to the University. Instances of cheating or other violations of academic integrity will result in a penalty at my discretion, ranging from a 0 on the assignment to failure of the course. All instances of plagiarism or academic dishonesty will be reported to the University.

The CSUN statement on academic honesty states:

*The maintenance of academic integrity and quality education is the responsibility of each student within this University and the CSU system. Cheating or plagiarism in connection with an academic program at a CSU campus is listed in Section 41301, Title 5, California Code of Regulations as an offense for which a student may be expelled, suspended or given a less severe disciplinary sanction. Academic dishonesty is an especially serious offense and diminishes the quality of scholarship and defrauds those who depend on the integrity of the University’s programs.*

For further information about these policies, including what constitutes plagiarism, what constitutes cheating, and what constitutes an appropriate penalty, please consult the University Catalogue.

*N.B. Although I do not anticipate it, this syllabus and the course requirements are subject to revision.*