This course serves as a survey of the major traditions within contemporary Continental philosophy. It is organized topically around the following central issues and debates:

1. Should classical approaches to subjectivity developed in transcendental phenomenology be overcome by ontology? Are both phenomenology and ontology a product of a totalizing system of thought to be displaced by an ethics of radical otherness? Or is ethics necessarily reclaimed by the very metaphysical tradition it seeks to break away from? 2. What is the value of a structure-based approach to human reality, which captures the larger-than-individual forces such as linguistic differences, social determinations, and unconscious mental processes? To what degree are structure-based approaches wedded to the traditional conceptions of science and to the metaphysics of presence – hence in need of deconstruction? 3. Is philosophical practice best described as pure reflection, or rather as a language-based hermeneutical process? 4. What is the relation between the traditional concept of history and genealogy? 5. What does a deconstructive practice of reading philosophical texts consist in, and does deconstruction necessarily turn philosophy into a species of literature? If so, is this a problem? Can such a problem be resolved by a reconstruction of Modernity and the turn to discourse ethics within critical theory? Other questions and debates will be addressed, and participants are encouraged and expected to bring their own research interests into the conversation. Traditions represented will include phenomenology, phenomenological ontology, ethics of alterity, structuralism and post-structuralism, psychoanalysis, hermeneutics, genealogy, deconstruction, reconstruction, and critical theory. We will be readings representative texts by Husserl, Heidegger, Merleau-Ponty, Levinas, Derrida, F. de Saussure, C. Levi-Strauss, Lacan, Gadamer, Foucault, and Habermas.

Reading Schedule

WEEK 1, March 30 – April 5

1. **Introductory session.**

2. **Phenomenology and/or Ontology.**
   The Foundations. Phenomenology as Transcendental Philosophy.
   Readings: Husserl, selections from *Ideas I* (sections 27-32; 33-36, pp. 51-75)
   Recommended readings: Bernet, Kern & Marbach, Ch. 2 & 3, *An Introduction to Husserlian Phenomenology*.
   Sokolowski, Ch. 1 & 4, *Introduction to Phenomenology*. 
WEEK 2, April 6 – 12

3. **Phenomenology and/or Ontology.**
   Readings: Merleau-Ponty: Preface to the *Phenomenology of Perception*; The Philosopher and his Shadow (*Signs*, 159-181).


WEEK 3, April 13 - 19


6. Heidegger What is Metaphysics? (*Pathmarks*, 82-96) S. 29, Being there as a State of Mind (*Being and Time*).

WEEK 4, April 20 – 26

7. **Beyond Phenomenology and Ontology? Ethics and Metaphysics.**

8. Readings: Levinas, *Time and the Other*

WEEK 5, April 27 – May 3

   Recommended reading: Diachrony and Representation (in *Time and the Other*).

    Further readings: S. Critchley, *The Ethics of Deconstruction*.

WEEK 6, May 4 – May 10

    Further Readings: Derrida: At This Very Moment in This Work Here I am (*Psyche: Inventions of the Other*, vol. I, 143-190).
    Levinas: Jacques Derrida, Wholly Otherwise (*Proper Names*, 55-62); Phenomenon and Enigma (*Collected Philosophical Papers*); Otherwise than Being.

12. **Structuralism and Post-Structuralism.**
    **Foundations. Structural Methods.**
WEEK 7, May 11 – May 17

Levi-Strauss, Structural Analysis in Linguistics and in Anthropology (Structural Anthropology, 31-54).
Derrida, Structure, sign, play in the Discourse of the Human Sciences (Writing and Difference, 278-293); Discussion (The Structuralist Controversy).
Recommended: Levi-Strauss, Language and the Analysis of Social Laws (Structural Anthropology, 55-80)
Gayle Rubin, The Traffic in Women (Toward an Anthropology of Women).

14. ... and Psychoanalysis
Recommended reading: Bruce Fink, Reading “The Instance of the Letter in the Unconscious” (Lacan to the Letter, 63-105).

WEEK 8, May 18 – May 24

15. Hermeneutics
Readings: Gadamer, The Universality of the Hermeneutic Problem; Language and Understanding (The Gadamer Reader, 77-88; 92-107).
Habermas vs Gadamer: Some Remarks (Perspectives on Habermas, 487-500).

Foucault (1971), Nietzsche, Genealogy, History (The Foucault Reader, 76-100).

WEEK 9, May 25 – May 31

17. Deconstruction, Reconstruction, Critical theory.
Deconstruction.
Recommended readings: Searle ‘Reiterating the Differences’
Derrida, remainder of Limited Inc (Library Reserve)

18. Deconstruction and/or Reconstruction
Readings: Habermas: On Leveling the Genre Distinction between Philosophy and Literature (Discourse of Modernity, 185-210).
Derrida, Is There a Philosophical Language? Habermas, A Last Farewell (Derrida-Habermas Reader).
Further readings: Derrida-Habermas Reader (Library Reserve).

WEEK 10, June 1 – 7

20. Final paper presentations.

Note that the schedule of readings is subject to change during the quarter. All changes will be announced in advance during class.

The following required book is available at the UO Bookstore:
- Levinas, *Time and the Other* (Duquesne, 1987).

All other readings are available on Blackboard unless otherwise stated.


**Course requirements:**
1. Participation in class discussion.
2. One in-class presentation on a required meeting (PhD Students); one written synopsis of a required reading (MA Students). Guidelines will be distributed separately.
3. Prospectus for the final paper
   You will select a topic for your final paper and submit a 2 pages long prospectus with an outline and literature review for approval and comments. You are advised to meet with me at least once before submitting the prospectus.
4. Short presentation of the final paper project during the last day of class (PhD Students).
5. Final paper
   The term paper is a conference style paper, 10-15 pages in length.

All written assignments should be double spaced, font size no smaller than 11. Detailed guidelines for the prospectus and the final paper will be distributed in class.

**Grade components (out of 100%):**
Attendance and class participation – 10%
In-class presentation on a required reading – 20%
Prospectus (and short presentation for PhD Students) – 20%
Term paper – 50%

**Total – 100%**

**Attendance policy**
No more than one unexcused absence is allowed. Each additional unexcused absence negatively affects your grade (-0.3 of the final grade).
If you have questions about the assignments, requirements, or subject matter, please let me know. If you have special needs due to a disability, please talk with me as soon as possible so that your needs can be addressed.