

# Heidegger: Early Writings

**Philosophy 382**

Fall 2006

home page: [www9.georgetown.edu/faculty/blattnew/heid/index.htm](http://www9.georgetown.edu/faculty/blattnew/heid/index.htm)

**Instructor:** W. Blattner

**Contact Info:** Office 687-4528

240 New North

**email:** [blattnew@georgetown.edu](mailto:blattnew@georgetown.edu)

## Course Syllabus

### Course Description:

In his *Being and Time* (1927), Martin Heidegger weaves threads from phenomenology, existentialism, Kantian transcendental philosophy, and hermeneutics into a comprehensive account of human life. Heidegger's picture of human life is one in which a fundamental "familiarity with the world" is more basic than our cognitive relationship to objects. This leads Heidegger to reject several of the mainstays of modern philosophical reflection, including the relevance of epistemology, the debate between realists and idealists, and the Correspondence Theory of Truth.



We will spend about two-thirds or so of the semester studying Heidegger's development of this anti-cognitivist vision, and then turn to his more existentialist side, wherein he examines the nature and implications of death, guilt, anxiety, "nullity," and self-ownership.

*Being and Time* is one of the most influential philosophical texts of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. In this course we will proceed systematically through *Being and Time*, seeking to understand Heidegger's basic moves, his motivations, and the implications of his views for our philosophical concerns. I will place a heavy emphasis this semester on teaching you to restate Heidegger's views and arguments in more accessible terms, breaking free of Heidegger's philosophical idiolect and putting his ideas into play.

### Course Requirements:

You will write two formal papers, the first short (5-7 pp.) and due Thursday, October 26<sup>th</sup> (in class), the second longer (10-12 pp.) and due Monday, December 18<sup>th</sup>, as well as as many as four or five short-response (1 or 2 pp) assignments. Course grades will be based entirely on paper grades. The two formal papers will count for 40% and 60% of your preliminary final grade, respectively. The short-response papers will be graded +, √, -; they will be averaged, and that average will modify the preliminary final grade by moving it up or down one step (B to B+, e.g.).

**Late papers:** unexcused late papers will be graded down one grade step (e.g., B+ to B) per two business days late. Please discuss legitimate excuses with me as early as possible, and consult my blurb on good excuses (on the Web). Having to take midterms on the same day or having several assignments from multiple classes due at the same time are not legitimate. The two paper assignments will be posted at least two weeks in advance of the due date. Plan in advance!

**Academic Integrity:** In accordance with university policy, any suspected cases of academic dishonesty will be turned over to the Honor Council for investigation. If the Honor Council confirms that a violation of the Honor Code has taken place, the violator will receive an "F" grade for the course (not just the assignment).

**Course Prerequisites:**

In order to enroll in this course, you must have first completed core requirements in philosophy. Beyond that, there are no prerequisites, though having taken Philosophy 385, History of Modern Philosophy (or its equivalent) would be very helpful.

**The Role of the Course Webpage:**

The most up-to-date information about the course, the readings, and the assignments is the course's webpage. The home page for Philosophy 382 is listed on the first page of this syllabus. The detailed information for this semester is linked to that page. You are responsible for checking the information on the Web the day before each class or when I direct you to do so by email. (Emails will be sent to your GU Mail account. So make sure that you have your GU Mail account configured properly.)

**Texts:***Required:*

- Heidegger. *Being and Time*. Trans. Macquarrie & Robinson. Harper & Row.
- my Heidegger's "*Being and Time*:" *A Reader's Guide*. Continuum Books. (In press. I will sell copies of the printer's proofs at cost.)
  - This is a introduction to *Being and Time* for students that I wrote based on my lectures. Reading my explanations of the text before class discussion will allow class discussion to proceed at a more advanced level.

*Recommended:*

- Heidegger. *Basic Problems of Phenomenology*. Trans. Hoftstadter. Indiana UP.
  - This is a lecture course that Heidegger gave shortly after publishing *Being and Time*. It covers some of the same issues as *Being and Time*, as well as many others besides. I will incorporate optional readings from *Basic Problems* into the schedule of readings.
- Dreyfus. *Being-in-the-World*. MIT.
  - This commentary is more advanced and more tendentious than mine.
- Guignon, ed. *Cambridge Companion to Heidegger*, 2d ed. Cambridge UP.
  - This is a collection of essays on thematic topics (e.g., Heidegger and religion, Heidegger's anti-cognitivism, etc.). Its essays tend to be accessible and are uniformly of a high quality. It may not be available at the beginning of the semester.
- Safranski. *Martin Heidegger: Between Good and Evil*. Harvard UP.
  - This an intellectual biography of Heidegger.