

Heidegger's *Being and Time*

Philosophy 521
Fall 2011

Instructor: W. Blattner
Contact Info: Office 687-4528
240 New North
email: blattnew@georgetown.edu

Course Syllabus

Course Description

A careful and slow reading of as much of *Being and Time* as we can handle in one semester. (My hope is that we can get up through §64, but we'll see.)



Format

For each seminar session a section of B&T will be assigned, sometimes along with other Heideggerian texts (chiefly parts of *The Basic Problems of Phenomenology*). The seminar meets once a week for two and a half hours. In order to maximize useful time for discussion and debate, I have assigned my own book, *Heidegger's "Being and Time:" A Reader's Guide* (Continuum, 2006). Students should read the relevant sections of the book before the seminar meets. The book will substitute for introductory lectures that might otherwise be appropriate for some students in the course. My goal is for class time to consist primarily of discussion and debate, interspersed with mini-lectures or introductions to problems as needed. I plan to raise issues concerning both the viability of Heidegger's philosophical position in *Being and Time* as well as the scholarly debate about the precise meaning and content of his position.

Reading

Aside from the assigned readings, indicated on the schedule, I have ordered several "optional" or recommended secondary sources. I will also try to put these books on reserve in Lauinger Library. I will provide lists of secondary articles as well. Since this is a graduate seminar, students are expected to read robustly in the secondary literature and mostly without specific direction from me.

Expectations and Assignments

Aside from the obvious stuff (coming to seminar sessions prepared, having read not just the assigned readings but also some secondary literature), there will be a number of required assignments.

Required writing: This bit's somewhat complicated. All students will write the first two short (5 pp.) papers:

1. Due 10/5 – prompts published by 9/21
2. Due 10/26 – prompts published by 10/12

All undergraduates and all graduate students in departments other than Philosophy will write two more short papers:

3. Due 11/16 – prompts published by 11/2
4. Fourth paper prompts will be published by 11/30. The due date depends on the student:
 - For undergraduates: due 12/19
 - For graduate students in other departments and Philosophy Department students who elect to write four papers: 12/29

Graduate students in the Philosophy Dept. *who receive an 'A' or 'A-' on both of the first two papers* may elect to write a single longer (10–15 pp.) paper in place of the third and fourth short papers. Students will select a topic and write a provisional thesis, which I must approve by 12/9. In order not to receive an 'I', students must submit this longer paper by 12/29. Any student who misses this deadline will receive an 'I' and must submit the paper in accordance with Departmental end-of-semester guidelines.

Course Prerequisites:

Formally, one must be enrolled in the graduate program of the Philosophy Dept. All other students require my permission. I will enforce this requirement. I will accept senior undergraduate philosophy majors *who qualify for the Honors Program and have already completed History of Modern Philosophy* (Phil. 385 or its equivalent). All others must meet with me to discuss their background and preparation for the course.

Texts:

Required

- Heidegger, *Being and Time* (trans. Macquarrie & Robinson, Harper, 1962) [do **not** order the Stambaugh translation; it is decidedly inferior]
- Heidegger, *Basic Problems of Phenomenology* (trans. Hofstadter, Indiana, 1982)
- Blattner, *Heidegger's "Being and Time:" A Reader's Guide* (Continuum, 2006)

Recommended/Optional

- Dreyfus, *Being-in-the-World* (MIT, 1991)
- Guignon, *A Companion to Heidegger*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge, 2006)
- Safranski, *Martin Heidegger: Between Good and Evil* (Harvard, 1999)