This course serves as a survey of the major traditions that emerged within the 20th C. Continental philosophy. The course is organized topically around the following debates: should classical approaches to subjectivity developed in phenomenology be overcome by ontology? Or should both phenomenological and ontological approaches be displaced by an ethics? Is philosophical practice best described as reflection, or rather language-based interpretation? What is the value of a structure-based approach, which captures the larger-than-individual forces such as social determinations, unconscious processes, dominant discourses and myths? To what degree are structure-based approaches wedded to traditional conceptions of science and to the history of Western metaphysics – hence in need of deconstruction? Does deconstruction turn philosophy into a species of literature, and, if so, is this a problem? Can such a problem be resolved by a reconstruction of Modernity and a turn to discourse ethics? Other questions and debates will be addressed, and participants are encouraged and expected to bring your own research interests into the conversation.

Traditions represented will include phenomenology, phenomenological ontology, ethics, structuralism and post-structuralism, hermeneutics, Marxism, psychoanalysis, literary theory, deconstruction, reconstruction, and critical theory. We will be readings representative texts by Husserl, Heidegger, Merleau-Ponty, Levinas, Gadamer, F. de Saussure, C. Levi-Strauss, Lacan, Barthes, Althusser, Derrida, and Habermas.

**Reading Schedule**

**WEEK 1, April 1 - 7**

1. Introductory session.

2. Part I. Phenomenology and Ontology.
   A. Foundations. Phenomenology as Transcendental Philosophy
   Readings: Husserl, selections from *Ideas I* (sections 27-32; 33-36, pp. 51-75)
WEEK 2, April 8 – 14


WEEK 3, April 15 -21

6. Part II. Beyond Phenomenology and Ontology: Ethics?
   Levinas: Is Ontology Fundamental? (Basic Philosophical Writings, 1-10);

WEEK 4, April 22 – 28

7. Part III. Subjectivity and Alterity
   Readings: Levinas, Time and the Other
8. Levinas Time and the Other (continued).

WEEK 5, April 29 – May 5

9. Part III. Hermeneutics
    A. Foundations. Structural Methods
    Saussure, Course in General Linguistics – Part I, Ch. I and II, Part II, ch. IV (65-78, 111-122)

WEEK 6, May 6 – May 12

11. B. Structuralism and the Human Sciences
    C. Levi-Strauss, Structural Analysis in Linguistics and in Anthropology (Structural Anthropology, 31-54)
    - Further readings: Gayle Rubin, The Traffic in Women (Toward an Anthropology of Women)
12. C. .... and Psychoanalysis
    Lacan, Instance of the Letter (Ecrits)
    - Further readings: M.Borch-Jacobsen, Lacan, the Absolute Master (excerpt)
    - R. Boothby, Death and Desire (excerpt).
WEEK 7, May 13 – May 19

13. **D. ... and Literary Studies**
   Barthes, Preface; The Writer on Holiday; Wine and Milk; Steak and Chips; Photography and Electoral Appeal (*Mythologies*).
   - Recommended: Myth Today (*Mythologies*).

14. **E. ... and Marxism**
   Althusser, Note to my English Readers; Marxism and Humanism (*For Marx*, IX-XVI; 185-214).

WEEK 8, May 20 – May 27

15. **Part V. Deconstruction, Reconstruction, Critical theory.**
    **A. Deconstruction**
    Readings: Derrida, Structure, Sign, and Play in the Discourse of the Human Sciences (*Writing and Difference*);
    - Recommended: Discussion (*The Structuralist Controversy*).

16. Readings: Derrida, Signature, Event, Context (*Limited Inc*; previously published in *Margins of Philosophy*)
    - Recommended: Searle 'Reiterating the Differences'
    - Derrida, *Limited Inc* (Library Reserve).

WEEK 9, May 27 – June 2

17. Memorial Day.

18. **B. Deconstruction and/or Reconstruction**
    Readings: Habermas – On Leveling the Genre Distinction between Philosophy and Literature (*Discourse of Modernity*).

WEEK 10, June 3 - 9

19. Habermas – On Leveling the Genre Distinction (contd.); Derrida, Is There a Philosophical Language? Habermas, A Last Farewell (*Derrida-Habermas Reader*).

20. **C. Critical Theory.**
    Readings: Habermas, Discourse Ethics: Notes on a Program of Philosophical Justification (*Moral Consciousness and Communicative Action*).

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

**Texts:**
The following required book is available at the *Black Sun* bookstore:
- Levinas, *Time and the Other* (Duquesne, 1987).

All other readings are available on Blackboard unless otherwise stated.


**Course requirements:**

**READING.** This class has a substantial reading load, and you will need to plan your schedule to allow sufficient time for reading the required texts ahead of class. Please read the assigned texts carefully, and be prepared to discuss them in class.

**WRITING.** Each Wednesday (excluding week 1 and 10) you will submit a one to two pages long typed up response to the reading assigned for the day; please include at least one passage from the reading in your response. The response is not expected to be a polished piece of writing (but needs to be readable and free from spelling/grammatical errors); it provides an opportunity for you to actively engage the material, and raise specific questions to the reading.

There will be one midterm and one term paper. The midterm is 5-7 pages long. The term paper is 8-12 pages long. Topics and guidelines for both papers will be provided in advance; students may write the term paper on a topic of your own choice if approved in advance by the instructor.

All written assignments should be typewritten, double-spaced, font size no smaller than 11. They need to include the class title, your name - and my name for the midterm and final papers.

**Grading**

What kind of paper deserves an “A,” “B,” etc.? The following rubric reflects the general standards of the Philosophy Department at the University of Oregon.

- **A** = excellent. No mistakes, well-written, and distinctive in some way or other.
- **B** = good. No significant mistakes, well-written, but not distinctive in any way.
- **C** = OK. Some errors, but a basic grasp of the material.
- **D** = poor. Several errors. A tenuous grasp of the material.
- **F** = failing. Problematic on all fronts indicating either no real grasp of the material or a complete lack of effort.

Please note: what counts as “excellent” or “OK,” for example, depends in part upon the nature and level of the class in question.
Late paper policy: the overall grade for the paper will be reduced by 0.3 grade if no extension has been granted by the instructor before the paper is due.

**Grade components (out of 100%):**
- Attendance and class participation – 10%
- Written response to weekly readings (8 total) – 10%
- Midterm paper – 30%
- Term paper – 50%

**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.