

COURSE SYLLABUS

COURSE TITLE: Heidegger I

COURSE/SECTION: PHL 550/101

TIME/PLACE: Tuesdays 1:00-4:10, Clifton 140

INSTRUCTOR: Will McNeill

OFFICE: 2352 N. Clifton, Ste. 150.3

OFFICE HOURS: Thursdays 1:00-3:00, or by appointment

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COURSE OUTLINE

This course will be devoted to a close study of Heidegger's lecture course *The Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics: World, Finitude, Solitude*, delivered at the University of Freiburg in the winter semester of 1929-30. We shall situate our reading within the framework of some of Derrida's concerns regarding this text, in particular the understanding of animal life proposed therein. Heidegger's 1929-30 course, ostensibly concerned with, on the one hand, boredom as a fundamental attunement and, on the other, animal life as "poor in world," is significant especially for its temporal analyses of attunement and its development of the concept of world, whereby *Dasein* is found to be "world-forming." It also marks a kind of closure of the project of *Being and Time*, whereby Heidegger renounces all transcendental language and ponders the inadequacy of the formulation of the "ontological difference" thus far.

PRIMARY TEXTS

Heidegger, *The Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics: World, Finitude, Solitude*.

Translated by William McNeill & Nicholas Walker. Indiana University Press, 1995. The German original is Gesamtausgabe Bd. 29/30. *Die Grundbegriffe der Metaphysik. Welt--Endlichkeit--Einsamkeit*. Klostermann, 1983.

All students should also have a copy of Heidegger's *Being and Time*, either in the Macquarrie & Robinson translation, or in the German Niemeyer edition.

SECONDARY SOURCES

1. Works by Heidegger

A complete listing of relevant works by Heidegger is provided at

<http://www.beyng.com/ereignis.html>. We'll review the most significant of these (with regard to the problem of animal life in particular) in class.

For this and other resources, visit the Heidegger Circle website at www.heideggercircle.org.

2. Other

Derrida has been the single most persistent interrogator of Heidegger's discourse on animality in the 1929-30 course, most notably in the essays "Geschlecht I" and "Geschlecht II"; in the interview "Eating Well"; and in the books *Of Spirit, Aporias, The Animal That Therefore I Am*, and *The Beast and The Sovereign*, vols. I & II.

David Krell, *Daimon Life: Heidegger and Life-Philosophy*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1992. A penetrating and critical analysis of the question of "life," animal and human, in Heidegger.

Michel Haar, *Le Chant de la Terre*. Paris: Editions de l'Herne, 1985. Translated by R. Lily as *The Song of the Earth: Heidegger and the Grounds of the History of Being*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1993. Situates the theme of animal life within the greater question of the Earth in Heidegger. An early study, and still one of the best.

Peter Steeves (ed.), *Animal Others: On Ethics, Ontology, and Animal Life*. Albany: SUNY, 1999. Contains a refreshing breadth of contemporary perspectives on animal life.

McNeill, *The Time of Life: Heidegger and Ethos*. Albany: SUNY, 2006. Chapter One, "The Phenomenon of Life: Human, Animal, and World in Heidegger's 1929-30 Freiburg Lectures" gives a reading of Heidegger's account of animal being in the 1929-30 course. (Note: an earlier version of this appeared as "Life Beyond the Organism" in Steeves, op. cit.)

Buchanan, Brett, *Onto-Ethologies: The Animal Environments of Uexkull, Heidegger, Merleau-Ponty, and Deleuze*. Albany: SUNY, 2008. An excellent analysis by one of our very own. Contains an extensive discussion of the 1929-30 course.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS & ASSIGNMENTS

1. Full attendance is an expectation for this course. Two or more absences will result in an automatic lowering of your grade.
2. Each student is required to write one class report. This report should have two components: a) a straightforward record of the most important points covered in the previous class; b) a critical reflection identifying a philosophical issue that arose and providing your own perspective on it. Here you can raise additional questions, bring in other perspectives, or cite other relevant texts. The report should be around 3 pages, single spaced, with approximately half devoted to each component; your critical

reflection must be at least a page. The report is worth a substantial part of your final grade and should be a careful and polished piece of work.

You will sign up to present your report on a particular day, and are asked to post your report on D2L 24 hours before class. Everyone should print up a copy of the report, read it, and bring it to class. We will not read through the first part of the report in class, but will begin class with a reading and discussion of your critical reflection.

3. A final 10 page research paper is required, due Friday, November 18 by 12:00 noon. *Papers that exceed 10 pages will not be accepted.*

GRADE BREAKDOWN

Class Report: 40%

Final Paper: 60%

APPROXIMATE SCHEDULE OF STUDY

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| WEEK 1 | Introduction. Situating the 1929-30 course. Review of Derrida's concerns in Chapter 4 of <i>The Animal That Therefore I Am</i> . |
| WEEK 2 | Preliminary Appraisal, Sections 1-15. |
| WEEK 3 | Part One, Ch. 1-2 (Sections 16-23) |
| WEEK 4 | Part One, Ch. 3-4 (Sections 24-36) |
| WEEK 5 | Part One, Ch. 5 and Part Two, Ch. 1 (Sections 37-41) |
| WEEK 6 | Part Two, Ch. 2-3 (Sections 42-48) |
| WEEK 7 | Part Two, Ch. 4-5 (Sections 49-63) |
| WEEK 8 | Part Two, Ch. 6 (Sections 64-71) |
| WEEK 9 | Part Two, Ch. 6 (Section 72) |
| WEEK 10 | Part Two, Ch. 6 (Sections 73-76) |
| WEEK 11 | Final paper due Friday, November 18, by 12:00 noon. |