PHILOSOPHY 474 (Winter Term): PHENOMENOLOGY (Tues; Thurs, 10:00-11:30)

Instructor: Professor Buckley
Office: Leacock 929
Office Hours: Wednesday 3:30pm-5:30pm or by appointment (preferably sign-up by email: philip.buckley@mcgill.ca)
Teaching Assistant: Mr. David Collins (email: david.collins3@mail.mcgill.ca);
Office: Leacock 934
Office Hours: Tuesday, Thursday 12:00pm-1:00pm (beginning Thursday, January 12)

COURSE DESCRIPTION: This course serves as an introduction to the phenomenological movement. It focuses upon the motives behind Husserl's original development of "phenomenological reduction" and investigates the manner in which the thought of subsequent philosophers constitutes both an extension and a break with Husserl's original endeavour.


SOME QUESTIONS TO BE CONSIDERED:

1) Background: How can Being and Time be read in view of Husserl's "transcendental" phenomenology? In what way are Husserl's and Heidegger's concerns similar? What other philosophical currents form the horizon within which this text was written (e.g. Neo-Kantianism, positivism, psychologism)? How does Heidegger see his work within the context of the entire history of Western philosophy?

2) The project: What does Heidegger mean by the "recollection of the question of Being"? What is the proper method by which such an attempt at recollection should proceed? What is meant by the "destruction" of the history of ontology? Despite the centrality of the existential analysis of Dasein, why does Heidegger claim that he is not an "existentialist"?

3) The structure of Dasein: What are some of the dramatic consequences of Heidegger's emphasis upon Dasein's "practical" comportment in the world? What is meant by "disclosure"? Why is the "hermeneutic circle" not vicious? Why does Heidegger emphasize the "equiprimordiality" of the "existentials"? What does Dasein flee in "Angst"? How is "truth" linked to disclosure? Why is Dasein given the name "Care"?

4) Authenticity: Is Heidegger's discussion of the "They" (das Man) truly "neutral?" What type of "voluntarism" is present in the discussion of "authenticity?" What can we make of Heidegger's claim that authenticity is a mode of being and not an ethical state?

5) Time: Why is the existential analysis of Dasein only "preparatory" to Heidegger's discussion of temporality? How does "death" play a central role in Dasein's recovery of its own temporal nature? Why do the "existentials" revealed in the First Part of Being and Time have to be recollected from the standpoint of temporality? What is the relation between space and time in Heidegger's early work?

6) Community: Is there a "political philosophy" to be found in Being and Time? Could Heidegger's project be construed as a "conservative" enterprise? Which aspects of the analysis of "being-in-the-world" might lead to reflection on social/political situations? How does Heidegger move from individual Dasein's historicality to a communal sense of history? What vision of community emerges out of Being and Time?

GRADING:
Two written assignments (60%), an oral exam during exam period (30%), and active participation (10%).
BIBLIOGRAPHY

Primary Texts:


Secondary Literature:


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In accord with McGill University’s Charter of Students’ Rights, students in this course have the right to submit in English or in French any written work that is to be graded.