

ICS Calendar Title: Imagining the World with Ricoeur: Narrative, Action, and the Sacred in Ricoeur's Hermeneutic Phenomenology
ICS Course Code: ICS 2533 S10
Instructor: Dr. Ronald A. Kuipers
Term and Year: Thursdays, 1:30-4:30 pm, Spring 2010
Last Updated: November 27, 2009

Imagining the World with Ricoeur: Narrative, Action, and the Sacred in Ricoeur's Hermeneutic Phenomenology

Course Description

This course will focus primarily on two essay collections by Paul Ricoeur: *From Text to Action: Essays in Hermeneutics, II*, as well as *Figuring the Sacred: Religion, Narrative, and Imagination*. These collections cover (roughly) a period from the early 1970's to the early 1990's. Together, they form an excellent introduction to Ricoeur's hermeneutical phenomenology, which he developed as an alternative to those theoretical options, such as psychoanalysis and semiotics, with which he struggled throughout the 1960's. In addition to exploring Ricoeur's evolving thoughts on such topics as textual interpretation, action, imagination, revelation, and a religious imaginary, these essays will also serve seminar participants as an effective springboard into Ricoeur's larger thematic works, such as *Rule of Metaphor*, *Time and Narrative (Vols. I-III)*, *Oneself as Another*, or *Memory, History, Forgetting*. Beginning with *From Text to Action*, the seminar will explore the general shape of Ricoeur's hermeneutical phenomenology, including such themes as text, action, explanation, understanding, ideology, and utopia. With this basic grasp of Ricoeur's hermeneutical phenomenology in hand, we will go on to explore his understanding of the disclosive force of religious texts and uses of language in the anthology *Figuring the Sacred*. Among other things, Ricoeur there ponders how Christian communities might best face the task of appropriating a textual heritage from which time has distanced them, and concerning which they have lost a certain original naivety. This seminar will explore Ricoeur's recommendation that Christians risk assuming a "second naivety" as they take up the responsibility of receiving and interpreting their religious tradition for a new generation. Imagining the world with Ricoeur, we will discuss how his recommendations on this score might help or hinder our effort to find meaning and inspiration amidst the crises and fragmentations that run through contemporary life.

Reading Schedule

1: Jan. 7 (10 pp.)	Introduction § "From Existentialism to the Philosophy of Language" (Appendix to <i>The Rule of Metaphor</i>)
2: Jan. 14 (65 pp.)	<i>Conflict of Interpretations</i> § Freedom in the Light of Hope (402-424) § Guilt, Ethics, and Religion (425-439) § Religion, Atheism, and Faith (440-467)
3: Jan. 21 (60 pp.)	<i>From Text to Action I</i> § On Interpretation (1-20) § Phenomenology and Hermeneutics (25-52) § The Hermeneutical Function of Distanciation (75-88)
4: Jan. 28 (56 pp.)	<i>From Text to Action II</i> § Philosophical Hermeneutics and Biblical Hermeneutics (89-101) § What is a Text? Explanation and Understanding (105-24) § The Model of the Text: Meaningful Action Considered as a Text (144-67)
5: Feb. 4 (54 pp.)	<i>From Text to Action III</i> § Imagination in Discourse and in Action (168-87)

	§ Practical Reason (188-207) § Initiative (208-22)
6: Feb. 11 (60 pp.)	<i>From Text to Action IV</i> § Science and Ideology (246-69) § Hermeneutics and the Critique of Ideology (271-307)
Feb. 15-19	Reading Week—no class
7: Feb. 25 (60 pp.)	<i>From Text to Action V / Figuring the Sacred I</i> <input type="checkbox"/> Ideology and Utopia (308-24) <input type="checkbox"/> Ethics and Politics (325-337) <input type="checkbox"/> Mark I. Wallace's Introduction to <i>Figuring the Sacred</i> (1-32)
8: Mar. 4 (55 pp.)	<i>Figuring the Sacred II</i> § Philosophy and Religious Language (35-47) § Manifestation and Proclamation (48-67) § The 'Sacred' Text and the Community (68-72) § Emmanuel Levinas: Thinker of Testimony (108-26)
9: Mar. 11 (51 pp.)	<i>Figuring the Sacred III</i> § On the Exegesis of Genesis 1:1-2:4a (129-43) § The Bible and the Imagination (144-66) § Biblical Time (167-80)
10: Mar. 18 (63 pp.)	<i>Figuring the Sacred III</i> § Interpretive Narrative (181-199) § Hope and the Structure of Philosophical Systems (203-16) § Naming God (217-35) § Toward a Narrative Theology: Its Necessity, Its Resources, Its Difficulties (236-48)
11: Mar. 25 (61 pp.)	<i>Figuring the Sacred IV</i> § Evil, A Challenge to Philosophy and Theology (249-61) § The Summoned Subject in the School of the Narratives of the Prophetic Vocation (262-75) § The Logic of Jesus, the Logic of God (279-283) § Whoever Loses Their Life for My Sake Will Find It (284-88) § The Memory of Suffering (289-92) § Ethical and Theological Considerations on the Golden Rule (293-302) § Pastoral Praxeology, Hermeneutics, and Identity (303-314)
12: Apr. 1 (64 pp.)	<i>Figuring the Sacred V, etc.</i> § Love and Justice (315-329) § Difficult Forgiveness (Epilogue of <i>Memory, History, Forgetting</i> -457-506)

13: Apr. 8 (40 pp.)	Culmination § Reading TBA
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Course Requirements

Total reading: 1250 pages, including research for paper, of which approximately 40-60 pages per week is required to prepare for class.

In-seminar leadership: In order to structure class discussion in a way that is both meaningful to students as well as guided by a close reading of the assigned texts, each week different students will take turns introducing the readings for that class. The goal for these presentations, however, is manifestly *not* that of complete exegetical coverage of the assigned reading. Instead, the presentation will *begin* with the most pressing question that the assigned reading raises for the student. This question might be pressing for intellectual, but also existential and religious reasons. After stating the question, the student will pinpoint the *particular* location(s) in the text where that question emerged for him or her, and then go on to offer a *close reading* of that limited portion of text. This close reading should take the form of a line-by-line analysis of the selected text, complete with suggested interpretation *and* explanation of why that portion of text raises the question it does. This interpretation may in turn radiate out from that selection and touch on other parts of the assigned text, but again, complete coverage is not required or requested. I will provide formative assessments of these in-seminar leadership assignments throughout the course, so they are to be submitted to me after the class in which they are used. They will also be used to assess the seminar leadership portion of the overall class evaluation.

Course paper: One course paper whose theme arises from in-class reading and discussion. Length: Master's: 3000–5000 words; Doctoral: 5000–7000 words. *A substantive outline*, including tentative thesis statement (50-100 words), outline, and proposed extra reading is *due on Thurs., Feb. 25, 2010*. The *paper* is *due on Fri., May. 21, 2010*.

Description and Weighting of Elements to be Evaluated

Class participation: 10%; Seminar Leadership: 20%; Paper: 70%.

Required Readings

Ricoeur, Paul. 1974. Freedom in the Light of Hope; Guilt, Ethics, and Religion; Religion, Atheism, and Faith. In *The Conflict of Interpretations: Essays in Hermeneutics*. Ed. Don Ihde. Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press. [ICS Library: BD241 .R54 2004]

_____. 1991. *From Text to Action: Essays in Hermeneutics II*. Trans. Kathleen Blamey and John B. Thompson. Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press. [ICS Library Reserve Shelf: B2430.R553 D813 1991]

_____. 1995. *Figuring the Sacred: Religion, Narrative, and Imagination*. Philadelphia: Fortress Press. 340 pp (including index). [ICS Library Reserve Shelf: BL51 .R43225 1995]

_____. 2003. From Existentialism to the Philosophy of Language. In *The Rule of Metaphor: The Creation of Meaning in Language*. London: Routledge. [ICS Library Reserve Shelf: PN228 .M4 R513 1981]

_____. 2006. Difficult Forgiveness. In *Memory, History, Forgetting*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. [ICS Library Reserve Shelf: BD181.7 .R5313 2006]

Recommended Readings

Abram, David. 1996. *The Spell of the Sensuous: Perception and Language in a More-than-Human World*. New York: Pantheon. [Robarts Library: BD581 .A25 1996X]

Barbour, Ian. 1974. *Myths, Models, and Paradigms: The Nature of Scientific and Religious Language*. London: SCM Press. [ICS Library Reserve Shelf: BL240.2 .B36]

Frye Northrop, 1991. *The Double Vision: Language and Meaning in Religion*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press. [Knox College Library: PN56 .B5 F67 1991]

Hahn, Lewis Edwin, ed. 1995. *The Philosophy of Paul Ricoeur (The Library of Living Philosophers Volume XXII)*.

Chicago: Open Court. [Trinity College Library: B2430 .R553 P48 1995]

Hesse, Mary. 1984. *The Cognitive Claims of Metaphor*. In Van Noppen.

Houtepen, Anton. 2002. *God: An Open Question*. London: Continuum. [ICS Library Reserve Shelf: BT102 .H6613 2002]

Jaspers, Karl. 1967. *Philosophical Faith and Revelation*. New York: Harper and Row. [ICS Library Reserve Shelf: BD215 .J313]

Joy, Morny. 1997. *Paul Ricoeur and Narrative: Context and Contestation*. Calgary: University of Calgary Press. [ICS Library Reserve Shelf: B2430 .R554 P36 1997]

Kearney, Richard. 2004. *On Paul Ricoeur: The Owl of Minerva*. Aldershot, UK: Ashgate. [ICS Library Reserve Shelf: B2430 .R554 K43 2004]

Kuipers, Ronald. 2002. *Critical Faith: Toward a Renewed Understanding of Religious Life and its Public Accountability*. Amsterdam and New York: Editions Rodopi. (Chapter 3: "Speaking of Spirit"). [ICS Library Reserve Shelf: BT50 .K84 2002]

LaCocque, André and Paul Ricoeur. 1998. *Thinking Biblically: Exegetical and Hermeneutical Studies*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. [ICS Library Reserve Shelf: BS511.2 .L24 1998]

Lakoff, George, and Mark Johnston. 2003. *Metaphors We Live By*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. [ICS Library Reserve Shelf: P106 .L35]

Lash, Nicholas. 1996. *The Beginning and the End of 'Religion'*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. [Knox College Library: BR50 .L345 1996 ; ICS Library Reserve Shelf: BR50 .L345 1996]

McFague, Sallie. 1982. *Metaphorical Theology: Models of God in Religious Language*. Philadelphia: Fortress Press. [Knox College Library: BR115 .L25 M345 1982 ; ICS Library Reserve Shelf: BR115 .L25 M345 1982]

Otto, Rudolph. 1950. *The Idea of the Holy: An Inquiry into the Non-Rational Factor in the Idea of the Divine and its Relation to the Rational*. Second Edition. Trans. John W. Harvey. Oxford: Oxford University Press. [ICS Library Reserve Shelf: BL48 .O8713]

Reagan, Charles E. 1996. *Paul Ricoeur: His Life and his Work*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. [Knox College Library: B2430 .R554 R43 1996 ; ICS Library Reserve Shelf: B2430 .R554 R43 1996]

Ricoeur, Paul. 1967. *The Symbolism of Evil*. New York: Harper and Row. [ICS Library Reserve Shelf: BT715 .R5313]

_____. 1970. *Freud and Philosophy: An Essay on Interpretation*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press. [Knox College Library: BF173 .F85 R47 1970 ; ICS Library Reserve Shelf: BF173 .F85 R45 1970]

_____. 1976. *Interpretation Theory: Discourse and the Surplus of Meaning*. Fort Worth: Texas Christian University Press. [Knox College Library: BD241 .R52 1976 ; ICS Library Reserve Shelf: BD241 .R52]

_____. 1984, 1985, 1988. *Time and Narrative*, 3 vols. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. [ICS Library Reserve Shelf: PN212 .R5313 v.1-3]

_____. 1992. *Oneself as Another*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. [ICS Library Reserve Shelf: B2430 .R533 S6513]

_____. 1998. *Critique and Conviction*. Cambridge: Polity Press. [Trinity College Library: B2430 .R553 C7513 1998 ; ICS Library Reserve Shelf: ON ORDER]

Soskice, Janet Martin. 1985. *Metaphor and Religious Language*. Oxford: Clarendon. [ICS Library Reserve Shelf: P301.5 .M48 S6 1987]

Van Buren, Paul M. 1972. *The Edges of Language: An Essay in the Logic of a Religion*. New York: Macmillan. [St. Michael's College Library: BL65 .L2 V35]

Van Noppen, J.P., ed. 1984. *Metaphor and Religion*. Brussels: Vrije Universiteit. [Robarts Library: BL65 .L2 T44 1981 V.2]

Vanhoozer, Kevin J. 1990. *Biblical Narrative in the Philosophy of Paul Ricoeur: A Study in Hermeneutics and Theology*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. [Trinity College Library: B2430 .R554 V37 1990 ; ICS Library Reserve Shelf: B2430 .R554 V37 2007]

Venema, Henry Isaac. 2000. *Identifying Selfhood: Imagination, Narrative, and Hermeneutics in the Thought of Paul Ricoeur*. Albany, NY: SUNY Press. [ICS Library Reserve Shelf: B2430 .R55 V46 2000]