

ICS Calendar Title: Theories of Language and Interpretation: Gadamer, Kristeva, and Searle

ICS Course Code: ICS 220701 F10

Instructor: Dr. Lambert Zuidervaart **E-mail address:** lambertz@icscanada.edu

Term and Year: Mondays, 9:00-12:00, Fall 2010

Office hours: Monday, 12:30-2:00 pm

Last Updated: September 8, 2010

Course Description

Twentieth-century philosophy took both a “linguistic turn” and an “interpretive turn.” These developments parallel the growth of general linguistics and literary theory, and they play a role in many cultural controversies and academic debates. This seminar examines philosophical theories since 1960. It discusses representative texts from three schools of thought: German philosophical hermeneutics (Hans-Georg Gadamer), French poststructural feminism (Julia Kristeva), and Anglo-American analytical philosophy of language (John Searle). It addresses two questions: What are the nature and sources of language? And what are the tasks and limits of interpretation?

The seminar is a core course in systematic philosophy at the Institute for Christian Studies, and it falls under the general rubric “Discourse and Society.” It is listed at ICS as ICS 220701 F10 and at the Toronto School of Theology as ICT3761/6761HF.

Course Requirements

Each seminar participant is expected to:

- do the required readings and join in-class discussions;
- hand in occasional weekly reflections based on questions handed out by the instructor;
- make individual or group presentations on required readings;
- write a research paper on a topic relevant to the course and endorsed by the instructor.

The approximate weight assigned each component for the course mark is as follows:

- Readings and Discussions 10-20%
- Reflections 10-20%
- Presentations 20-30%
- Research Paper 50-60%

Required Texts Please purchase the three books listed here.

- Gadamer, Hans-Georg. *Truth and Method*. 2d, rev. ed. Trans. rev. Joel Weinsheimer and Donald G. Marshall. New York: Crossroad, 1989. ISBN 0-8245-0431-3 [ICS Library Reserve Shelf: BD241 .G313]
- Kristeva, Julia. *Revolution in Poetic Language*. Trans. Margaret Waller. New York: Columbia University Press, 1984. ISBN 0-231-05643-5 [ICS Library Reserve Shelf: P99 .K713 1984]]
- Searle, John R. *Speech Acts: An Essay in the Philosophy of Language*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1969. ISBN 0-521-09626-X [ICS Library Reserve Shelf: B840 .S4]
- Westphal, Merold. "Hermeneutics as Epistemology." In *The Blackwell Guide to Epistemology*, ed. John Greco and Ernest Sosa, 415-35. Oxford: Blackwell, 1999. [ICS Library Reserve Shelf: BD161 .B53 1999]

Office Hours

Please feel free to talk to me about creating favorable conditions for your work in the seminar. I welcome spontaneous visits during my office hours. You will need to make an appointment if you want to meet at some other time.

Reflections

Occasionally I will hand out questions on selected passages from the assigned reading. The questions will guide your reading and help you prepare to discuss the reading in class. Each time you will hand in a one-page single-spaced reflection that addresses one or more of the questions handed out. Your reflection will be due when the class session on that reading begins.

Presentations

Individual: Each seminar participant will introduce at least one required reading in class. Your introduction will last about 20 minutes, depending on the number of presenters. It will summarize the reading, identify important issues in it, and state your position on these issues. You should also hand out two typed questions for us to discuss. They will help us think about the issues the reading raises. You should explain why you ask these questions and how the reading prompts them. Please keep your presentation succinct and lively, using the blackboard, photocopied handouts, computer projector, or other equipment where appropriate. Criteria for evaluation will include organization, clarity, perceptiveness, and scope.

Group: Alternatively, if you choose to, you may team up with one or two other seminar participants to prepare a group presentation. One member of the group will serve as the group's coordinator, in consultation with the instructor. In the three-hour session for which your group is responsible, the group will present an introduction to the assigned reading (about 50-60 minutes altogether, although it may occur in smaller segments). This introduction should provide historical context for the reading, identify important issues in the reading, state your individual or collective positions on these issues, and indicate why these issues are worth discussing. After your introduction, your group will lead the rest of us in a discussion of the reading and the issues you have raised. The group's presentation should reflect careful thought on the topics you choose. This does not mean that everyone in your group has to agree on every point—sometimes a presentation of disagreements is more interesting. Your group should give the rest of us topics to discuss: theses you wish to try out; questions you are wondering about; your criticism of positions or arguments in the assigned reading; etc. Please keep your presentation succinct and lively, using the blackboard, photocopied handouts, computer projector, or other equipment where appropriate. Criteria for evaluation will include organization, clarity, perceptiveness, and scope.

Research Paper (due Monday, January 17, 2011)

Format: The research paper will be typed double-spaced, include footnotes or endnotes and a bibliography, and contain approximately 4000 words; papers by doctoral students will contain approximately 5000-7000 words. **A typed one-page proposal will be handed in during class on November 8.** The proposal should include a brief bibliography that lists the key sources for your research. Papers are due January 17. Be sure to make consistent use of one of the following styles for format and documentation: either *The MLA Style Manual* or Kate L. Turabian's *A Manual for Writers* (based on *The Chicago Manual of Style*). **On the title page of your paper, please identify the style used.**

Approach: The paper will state, explain, and defend your position on one question, puzzle, or problem in the philosophy of language and interpretation. To accomplish this you will need to examine what other philosophers have said on your topic. Rather than simply report what others say, however, you should use their writings to develop your own position. **In general, the more specific your focus, the stronger your paper will be.** (Exceptions to the recommended approach should be discussed with the instructor well before the paper's due date.)

Evaluation: I shall assess your paper according to four criteria, each of which has similar weight: research, writing, reasoning, and scope. A paper that has been **properly researched** will demonstrate familiarity with relevant sources and will make strategic use of these sources. A **well-written** paper will be free from errors of spelling, punctuation, and grammar; it will be clear, concise, imaginative, and persuasive; and it will use gender-inclusive language. A **well-reasoned** paper will use valid and sound arguments; it will also be open and fair to alternative positions—not one-sided or small-minded. A paper with **sufficient scope** will be thorough, and it will probe beneath the surface of its subject matter.

Policies on Course Work: According to ICS policy, the due date for course papers falls between the third and the sixth week after the semester's end. Since this occurs after the deadline at U of T for the submission of grades, U of T students will need to complete petitions for extensions.

ICS policy gives the instructor discretion to refuse extensions for late work by ICS Junior Members, and also to penalize late work. I have five reasons to resist granting extensions beyond the stated due date:

1. Unlike fine wines, seminar papers rarely improve with age.
2. It is fairer to all seminar participants for everyone to observe the same deadline.
3. Late papers impede your finishing other course work and completing your degree program.
4. I lose motivation to grade papers the longer it takes to receive them, and that could have a negative impact on how your paper is evaluated.
5. Grading late papers disrupts my work as an instructor and research scholar.

So aim to get your paper in on time, and talk with me right away if you are running stuck.

Outline and Schedule (Gadamer readings list first 1989, then 2004 pagination)

<u>Topics</u>	<u>Readings</u>	<u>Dates</u>
Introduction	Westphal (handed out)	Sep 13
A. German Philosophical Hermeneutics	Gadamer xi-xxxviii/ xi-xxxvi, 101-169/102-171	Sep 20
	Gadamer 265-341/268-336	Sep 27

	Gadamer 341-79/336-82	Oct 04
	Gadamer 381-405/383-406	" "
	Gadamer 405-428/406-26	Oct 18
	Gadamer 428-456/427-52	" "

Gadamer 456-91/453-93,
551-79/555-84

Nov 01

B. French Poststructural Feminism

Kristeva vii-56
Paper proposals are due

Nov 08

" "

	Kristeva 57-106	Nov 15
	Kristeva 107-164	Nov 22

C. Anglo-American Analytical Phil. of Language	Searle 3-21 + <i>photocopy</i>	Nov 29
	Searle 22-53 (Ch. 2)	" "
	Searle 54-71 (Ch. 3)	Dec 06
	Searle 72-96 (Ch. 4)	" "

D. Reflections in Conclusion

Searle 97-127 (Ch. 5)
Various photocopies

Dec 13

Notes: *Items in italics are recommended readings.* Presentation slots appear in boxes above. There are no class sessions on October 11 (Thanksgiving) and October 25 (Reading Recess).