EXISTENTIAL, PHENOMENOLOGICAL, AND HERMENEUTIC APPROACHES TO CLINICAL PSYCHOLOGY (AND LITERATURE)  
(abbreviation = EPH)  
(Rutgers University, Spring, 2015; instructor: Louis Sass)

At GSAPP: Listed as: Topics in History and Systems of Psychology; course #: 18:821:633:01.  
At Comparative Literature Program: Listed as Psychoanalytic approaches to literature: Introduction to phenomenological, existential, and hermeneutic approaches.  
course #: 16:195:611:01

Monday 6 – 8:45 p.m.; room TBA.

Overview: The course offers an introduction to the allied traditions of phenomenology, hermeneutics, and existentialism through a focus on philosophical sources as well as applications to psychopathology and literary studies. In philosophy the major focus will be on Heidegger, but with attention also to Husserl, Sartre, and Lacan. In psychopathology the emphasis is on schizophrenia and melancholia. Psychologists and psychoanalysts whom we will read include Jacques Lacan, Slavoj Zizek, and various contemporary phenomenologists in psychiatry, clinical psychology, or philosophy. Excerpts from literary works by several modernist authors will be discussed, including Robert Musil, Virginia Woolf, James Joyce, Marcel Proust, Ernest Hemingway, and Franz Kafka. Considerable attention will be paid to the relationship of language and subjectivity. Parts of several films that exemplify relevant philosophical issues may be viewed.

Note: All readings will be available at SAKAI resources.  
Note: Readings in the syllabus are listed in the order in which I suggest you read them. Some readings are marked as recommended only (“rec”) or as “background” only. Readings not marked as “rec” or “background” are required.  
Note: Please be aware that the excerpts placed on SAKAI reserves are sometimes longer than what is actually assigned; only the specified pages are required, as listed in this syllabus.

Note: Readings listed are somewhat tentative. I will adjust the required and recommended readings somewhat during the course of the semester.  
Note: I have left topic for the last class undecided, for overflow or other material. See end of syllabus re requirements.
Please note: for first class meeting, you are asked to read a few brief items.
Please note: Items marked # will probably be presented by students.
INTRODUCTORY CLASSES (2)

CLASS 1: INTRODUCTION
   Nagel, Thomas (1974 in Philosophical Review). “What is it like to be a bat?”
   MacFarquhar, L. (2007, Feb 12). Two heads: A marriage devoted to the mind-body problem (re the “eliminativism” of Pat and Paul Churchland), New Yorker, 56-69. Philosophical views on subjectivity:
   Hemingway, E. (1926). “A clean, well-lighted place.” Published in Winner Take Nothing, 1933. (a very short, short story: mood of existentialism/nihilism)

CLASS 2: INTRODUCTION CONTINUED
   Literary renditions of consciousness:
   Two pages each from several novelists: Hemingway, Virginia Woolf, D H Lawrence, Balzac (under “novelists”).
   Joyce, J. (1914-1922), Ulysses, end of Molly Bloom soliloquy.
   Joyce, J. (1916), first few pages of Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man.

An introduction to psychiatric phenomenology (in preparation for next class meeting):

PHENOMENOLOGICAL PSYCHOPATHOLOGY (3 classes)
   (schizophrenia mostly, also melancholia)

CLASS 3: Phenomenology of Schizophrenia (self disturbance)
   Brief excerpts from Antonin Artaud, Ellen Saks.
Rec: Foucault, M. (1974), Mental illness and existence, chap 4 of Mental Illness and Psychology, pp. 44-59. #

CLASS 4: Comparative phenomenology of Schizophrenia, Mania, and Melancholia (Time and the body)
Theatrical rendering of severe depression: Kane, Sarah (play first performed in year 2000). 4:48 Psychosis, pp. 205-212 (whole play is recommended).

CLASS 5: Language in Schizophrenia, Mania, Melancholia; also in literary modernism

HEIDEGGER AND HERMENEUTIC PHENOMENOLOGY (4 classes)
CLASS 6: HEIDEGGER I
30-34 (concept of phenomenology) #
59-67 (Being-in-the-world, worldliness) (both in Heid BT set 1) #

CLASS 7: HEIDEGGER II
Heidegger BT (Stambaugh translation), pp. 88-94 (aroundness and Dasein’s spatiality), 335-338 (de-distancing etc, temporality of spatiality) #
126-134 (attunement, fear)
314-317 (fear and Angst) (above in Heid BT set 2)
169-178, (primordial totality, Angst as disclosedness) (in Heid BT set 3) #

CLASS 8: HEIDEGGER III
Heidegger BT pp.:
118-122 (everyday being one’s self and the They) (in Heid BT set 2)
231-240 (death) (in Heid BT set 4) #

CLASS 9: HEIDEGGER IV
Heidegger, M. “The end of philosophy and the task of thinking,” In MH, Basic Writings, pp. 427-449. #

{Note: For those who wish to read more of Heidegger’s Being and Time, here are some additional recommended sections:
49-55; 139-144 (understanding and interpretation)
178-183 (care and pre-ontological self-interpretation)
186-196 (Dasein, worldliness, and reality)
326-335 (taking-care vs theoretical discovery)
397-398 (Dasein and meaning of being in general).}
SARTRE AND MERLEAU-PONTY

10: SARTRE: NAUSEA, BAD FAITH, AND EXISTENTIAL PSYCHOANALYSIS

Excerpts from Sartre:


Sartre (1943). “The existence of others” (section re “the look”) excerpt from Being and Nothingness, pp. 233-248. #


11: SARTRE AND MERLEAU-PONTY

Sartre, on eros and sexuality in Being and Nothingness, pp 379-412 (= II: Second attitude toward others: Indifference, desire, hate, sadism).


Rec: Sartre in Being and Nothingness (this is the section preceding the above Sartre assignment), pp 351-379 (351-359 = The third ontological dimension of the body; 361-379 = Concrete relations with others: including I: First attitude toward others: Love, language, masochism).


LACAN

CLASS 12, LACAN I


See Lacan, mirror stage essay, Sass notes on.


Bring to class: Sass notes for Intro lecture on Lacan.
CLASS 13, LACAN II (with Zizek)
Sublimation and the fall of the object (83-87), The phallic anamorphosis (88-97), all in
Looking Awry: An Introduction to Jacques Lacan through Popular Culture, Cambridge
MA: MIT Press (from chapter 4: How the non-duped err, and chapter 5: The
Hitchcockian blot). (pp 69-106 are all recommended) # #
See Sass notes on Zizek reading.

CLASS 14, LACAN III
41-54), #
will be available)

CLASS 15: to be decided (overflow of the above, probably)
PERHAPS: Read and discuss MPy’s Preface to the Phen of Perception; and/or
excerpts from Eugen Fink’s Sixth Cartesian Meditation.
PERHAPS: view and discuss Hitchcock’s film “Vertigo.”

END OF COURSE.

REQUIREMENTS:
1. Attend class; participate in discussion.
2. Do the required reading (and be prepared to demonstrate this in class)
3. Make a presentation on a topic or in reaction to some of the readings (include
a handout, no more than a page long) probably twice during the semester. This can
involve questions, criticisms, applications, or any thought relevant to the readings for the
week you are assigned. Also be prepared to be especially active in discussion of the
reading in question. These will be assigned in an early class.
(Your presentations should be fairly brief, around 5 minutes, certainly not more
than 10. It should focus on your thoughts on the reading, e.g., what you found interesting
confusing irritating, applications—whatever would be a useful topic for discussion on
that reading. Many of these readings are famously obscure; there is no shame in
acknowledging that there is much you may not fully understand. If you have any
reactions or suggestions, feel free to email me.)
4. Choose option a or option b: term paper or a take-home examination. See
below:
a, Paper, approx 10 double-spaced pages, on any topic related to the themes of the course.
Topic must be approved by instructor. OR
b, Take-home exam, consisting probably of one or two essay questions. You would have
about a week to do this; to be turned in within a week of final class meeting (due date for
paper or take-home exam TBA). Grade will be based on all the above.