

Hermeneutics

Fall, 2018 Tuesday 11:00 am - 12:40 pm, Thursday 1:30 – 3:10 pm.

David Weberman

Office Hours: TBA Email: webermand@ceu.edu

4 credits, 8 ECTS credits; no pre-requisites or co-requisites; course level: MA

Course Description: Hermeneutics is a strain in German philosophical thinking for which the concepts of understanding and interpretation are as central to our grasp of the world as is the concept of knowledge. In this sense, it stands as a kind of rival to epistemology as traditionally conceived. It inclines toward holism. In its 20th century versions, it also inclines toward pluralism. Its attention to certain kinds of objects such as texts and artworks means that categories such as intention and context become more central. One key question is this: Is there ultimately only one correct way to understand and interpret things? This question touches on debates related to certain versions of relativism. We will read Schleiermacher, Heidegger and Gadamer and then turn, in the final third of the course to a manuscript I am working on.

The goals of the course: to understand and to be in a position to assess critically philosophical issues surrounding the idea of interpretation. As in other courses, to improve abilities in reading, thinking about and writing about philosophical issues in general.

Learning outcomes: the desired outcome is to realize the goals of the course.

Teaching format: seminar-style discussion

Requirements and assessment: Students are required to attend classes, do assigned reading before each class. They are strongly encouraged to take part in discussion. Students are also required to give one class presentation (15 minutes) NOT to summarize the reading but to respond to it. Students are required to write a 4000 word term paper. Grade is based on discussion (10%), class presentation (10%), term paper (80%). Criteria for term paper evaluation include clarity, originality, depth and coherence.

Wk 1 Sep 18, 20 T,Th Introduction and Overview; Michael Forster “Hermeneutics”

Wk 2 Sep 25, 27 T, Th Schleiermacher, “Hermeneutics and Criticism”

Wk 3 Oct 2, 4 T, Th Schleiermacher, “Hermeneutics and Criticism”

Wk 4 Oct 9, 11 T, Th Schleiermacher, “Hermeneutics and Criticism”

Wk 5 Oct 16, 18 T, Th Robert Stecker, "Moderate Actual Intentionalism Defended"

Wk 6 Oct 23, 25 T, Th (Tu holiday needs to be rescheduled) Gadamer, Truth and Method

Wk 7 Oct 30, Nov 1 T, Th (Th holiday needs to be rescheduled)
Gadamer, Truth and Method

Wk 8 Nov 6, 8 T, Th Gadamer, Truth and Method

Wk 9 Nov 13, 15 T, Th Weberman, Interpretive Pluralism

Wk 10 Nov 20, 22 T, Th Weberman, Interpretive Pluralism

Wk 11 Nov 27, 29 T, Th Weberman, Interpretive Pluralism

Wk 12 Dec 4, 6 T, Th open, to be determined by consensus