

Phenomenology of the Face: An introduction to Existential-Phenomenological Psychology.

Syllabus, Fall 2011.

Dr. George Kunz

Class meeting: Tues. & Thurs. 5:20 to 6:35 pm in Administration 323.

Office hours: **5:00 to 5:18 in the classroom or hallway** or appointment arranged by email.

Office: Outerbannerbankestan (Broadway building): Email: gekunz@seattleu.edu;

GOALS

- A ...to demonstrate, against the cynicism of our contemporary scientific/technological society, that philosophical questioning and reflection is important for preparing good therapists. The therapist is not just a clever technician, nor an abstracted philosopher, nor a faith healer. Perhaps all three. She combines *clinical skill*, with a deep *understanding* of the *human enigma*, and with *sincere care* for the here and now patient before her. She holds the fundamental *belief* that the positive transformation of people's desperate lives can occur, that her helping is worthwhile, and that in the whole process of breakdown, intervention and healing there is an element of *mystery*. Psychopathology and psychotherapy are not reducible to events of *nature*;
- B. ...to provide a brief and historical review of existential phenomenology with its leading themes and thinkers to help deepen an understanding of the human condition, of human hurting and healing in contemporary society; and to introduce the students to a kind of questioning and understanding that is distinctly phenomenological;
- C. ...to invite the students to not only reflect on the primacy of the *face-to-face* event but also to deepen their sense of fundamental responsibility for the Other in therapy. This invitation recognizes that our study of psychological suffering and recovery, without being denominational, are close to the notions of *religion* (*re-* again and again + *ligere* to bind = being bonded by responsibility to and for those to whom we are already bonded).
- D ...to adopt a sensibility for the underserved in society.

Based on these metaphors, this approach to suffering and healing admits the call to *ethical responsibility* in the forms of *simplicity*, *humility*, and *patience*. Both philosophy and therapy are founded on the need to question our prejudices, to welcome and share with the Other, and to re-examine the naive right of the power of the role of both therapist and client. Unless we learn to seriously and humbly *philosophize* (ask what comes before freedom), we are the victims of our ignorance and arrogance, and tend to victimize. The therapist must go beyond phenomenology and discover that the ethical call to serve the Other is the foundation for philosophical and psychological truth. This is found in the *face of the Other* saying, "Here I am; do not violate me; do not lie; do not reduce me to a category; do not manipulate me with techniques; do not try to suffer my suffering, but suffer me by loving. I have worth not by your judgment but on my own existence. Serve my needs."

REQUIREMENTS: Two take-home essay exams: mid and final. Three drafts of a case study meaning analysis. Students discuss together the same case with each preparing their own drafts.

Texts to be purchased: There will be study questions handed out for all required reading.

Man's Search for Meaning, Viktor Frankl

Existentialism Basic Writings, Guignon & Pereboom

Thinking for Clinicians. Donna M. Orange

A Different Existence, van den Berg

The Paradox of Power and Weakness, George Kunz

Hand-outs: Merleau-Ponty, Buber, Halling, Dillon, Levinas, Mook.

Recommend for beginners: *Exploring Phenomenology*, Stewart and Mickunas

CALENDAR

Sept 22 – Description of the course and opening lecture on phenomenology.

Introduce case studies from *The Experience of Anxiety*, for *meaning analysis*.

27 – **Frankl Day:** *Man's Search for Meaning*,

(**Formation of groups and case studies from, *The Experience of Anxiety*.)**)

29 – **Kierkegaard Day.** *Existentialism Basic Writings*.

4 – **Nietzsche Day.** *Existentialism Basic Writing*.

6 – **Heidegger Day.** *Existentialism Basic Writings*.

11 – **Sartre Day.** *Existentialism Basic Writings.* (**Exchange 1st draft of analysis**)

13 – **van den Berg,** *A Different Existence.* Chap. 1. (**First take-home exam handed out**)

18 – **van den Berg,** Chap. 2.

20 – **van den Berg,** Chap. 3.

25 – **Buber Day.** *Thinking for Clinicians*, Chap. 2. Hand out from Buber.

27 – **Merleau-Ponty Day.** *Thinking for Clinicians*, Chap. 4. Hand out “Primacy of Perception”
(**First exam due**)

Nov. 1 – **M M-P.** Hand-out, “Phenomenology and the Sciences of Man”

3 – Dillon, M., "The Implications of Merleau-Ponty's Thought For the Practice of Psychotherapy."
Halling, S., "The Implications of Emmanuel Levinas' *Totality and Infinity* for Therapy."
(**Exchange 2nd Draft of meaning Analysis**)

8 – **Levinas Day.** *Thinking for Clinicians.* Chap. 5. Hand-out, “The Usefulness of Insomnia.”

15 – **Gadamer Day.** *Thinking for Clinicians.* Chap. 6 & Mook Hand-out, “Hermeneutic Phenomenology and Psychotherapy”

17 – **Meaning analysis groups will meet to discuss the two drafts**

22 – *The Paradox of Power and Weakness.* Prologue and Chapter One. (**Final exam out**)

23-27 – No classes. Thanksgiving vacation

29 – *The Paradox of Power and Weakness.* Chapter Two. (**Final meaning analysis due**)

Dec.1 – *The Paradox of Power and Weakness.* Chapters Three, Four, and a focus on Five and Six.

6 – Conclusion and celebration with Lemoncello (**Final Exam Due**)

If you have a disability or chronic health problem that interferes with your performance as a student make accommodations through Disabilities Services staff in the Learning Center, Loyola 100, 296-5740.