

Phenomenology and the Theological Turn

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Course Description

Our tutorial will take up recent developments in what Dominique Janicaud has called phenomenology's "theological turn." We will begin with an analysis of Husserl's phenomenology, and then turn to the thought of Jean-Luc Marion, Michel Henry, and Jean-Louis Chrétien.

Week 2

Husserl says that phenomenology is "first philosophy." Phenomenology is "first philosophy", he contends, because it is the science of consciousness, or, the "rigorous science" as he puts it. Identify and explain the key features of Husserl's science of consciousness. What distinguishes it from naturalism and historicism? Are there problems with it?

Texts:

Husserl, "Phenomenology as Rigorous Science"

Crowell, S. "Husserlian Phenomenology", *A Companion to Phenomenology and Existentialism*, ed. Hubert Dreyfus and Mark Wrathall (London: Blackwell, 2006), 9-30.

Crowell, S. "Transcendental Phenomenology and the seductions of naturalism: subjectivity, consciousness, and meaning", *The Oxford Handbook to Contemporary Phenomenology*, ed. Dan Zahavi.

Week 4

Explicate Jean-Luc Marion's conception of phenomenology as first philosophy. Next, summarize Michel Henry's summary of the four principles of phenomenology. Do you think Henry's criticism of Marion is valid?

Texts:

Henry, M. "The Four Principles of Phenomenology." *Continental Philosophy Review*.

Marion, J.-L. "Phenomenology of Givenness and First Philosophy" Marion, J.-L. (2002b). *In Excess: Studies of Saturated Phenomena*, trans. Robyn Horner and Vincent Berraud. New York: Fordham University Press.

Marion, J.-L. "The Possible and Revelation" Marion, J.-L. (2008). *The Visible and the Revealed*, trans. Christina Gschwandtner. New York: Fordham University Press.

Week 6

Explain Henry's distinction between the world and life. In light of it, what does it mean to be "born again"? Does Henry's portrayal of "Christian ethics" support or undermine his view of the self as a being who is not a being-in-the-world?

Texts:

Henry, M. 2003. "The Second Birth." In *I am the Truth: towards a philosophy of Christianity*, trans. S. Emmanuel. Stanford: Stanford University Press.

Henry, M. 2003. "The Christian Ethic." In *I am the Truth: towards a philosophy of Christianity*, trans. S. Emmanuel. Stanford: Stanford University Press.

Rivera, J. "Generation, interiority and the phenomenology of Christianity in Michel Henry." *Continental Philosophy Review* 44(2) pp. 205-235, 2011.

Week 8

Does Janicaud's critique of the "new phenomenology" work? Why or why not? Use the Chrétien piece as an example, but feel free to use the Henry and Marion we have read too. Does Steinbock's view counter any of Janicaud's charges? Why or why not?

Texts:

Chrétien, J-L. 2015. "Biblical Figures of Joy." In *Under the Gaze of the Bible*, trans. J. Dunaway. New York: Fordham University Press.

Janicaud, D. (2001). *French Phenomenology and the "Theological Turn": the French Debate*, (eds.) D. Janicaud and J.F Coutine. New York: Fordham University Press.

Steinbock, A. 2013. "Evidence in the phenomenology of religious experience." In *The Oxford Handbook to Contemporary Phenomenology*, ed. D. Zahavi.