

Course description FIL2505 fall 2017:

At the beginning of the 20th century, psychology and natural science appeared to exhaust the possible ways to study human beings and the world around us. In this class we shall investigate an alternative third way suggested by the phenomenological tradition, which unlike skeptic or idealist philosophical positions seeks to restore the importance of our everyday, lived experience for philosophy.

We will study how phenomenology can account for perception, embodiment, and the shaping of individual and social identities. In addition, we will study how phenomenology makes possible new constructive and critical accounts of gender and race, by reading work from feminist philosophy and the phenomenology of race. The course is hence relevant for students interested in philosophy of mind, social and feminist philosophy, and the metaphysics of selfhood.

The course readings introduce the students to the thought of the three most important philosophers of phenomenology, Edmund Husserl, Maurice Merleau-Ponty and Martin Heidegger, with an emphasis on Merleau-Ponty's *The Phenomenology of Perception*. In addition we will look at more contemporary debates initiated by the work of Iris Marion Young and Frantz Fanon. We will investigate the phenomenological critique of the positivist understanding of nature and our place in it; how phenomenology rejects categories from the philosophical tradition; and focus especially on the alternative accounts of what it is to be a human being and how humans know the world around them offered by phenomenology. Central phenomenological concepts that we aim to explore and master include intentionality, presence and absence, reduction, body-subject, and being-in-the-world.