

CHAPMAN UNIVERSITY

**Honors Program
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COURSE SYLLABUS

Dr. Carmichael Peters

Spring 20...

Office: DeMille 163

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Office Hours: TTH 1:00 p.m. - 3:00 p.m. and by appointment

Course Number: HON 409-01

Classroom: DeMille 146/107

Course Title: *Hermes Unbound: Divining Hermeneutics*

Time: TTH 11:30-12:45 p.m.

Credits: 3

Prerequisite: Formal acceptance into the University Honors Program

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Reflections on Hermes, the messenger of the Greek gods, gave rise to *hermeneutike*, the art of interpretation. This art of interpretation, hermeneutics, is the discipline arising from reflection on the problems involved in the transmission of meaning from text or symbol to reader or hearer, and it centers on the understanding of understanding. This course will survey reflections on these problems from ancient times to our own. (Offered as needed.) 3 credits.

RESTRICTIONS

For students formally admitted into the University Honors Program, or by permission of course instructor and Director of Honors

LEARNING OUTCOMES

1. Program Learning Outcomes

- a. Obtain a starting point for integrative exploration of the development of cultures and intellectual achievements through a variety of disciplinary and interdisciplinary perspectives;
- b. Sharpen the ability to critically analyze and synthesize a broad range of knowledge through the study of primary texts and the encouragement of active learning with fellow students, faculty, and texts (broadly understood);
- c. Understand how to apply more integrative and interdisciplinary forms of understanding as they engage advances in knowledge and deal with dramatic challenges shaping the world;
- d. Develop effective communication skills, specifically in the areas of written and oral exposition and analysis.

2. Course Learning Outcomes

- a. Understand the history of thought in which hermeneutics was transformed from the study and collection of specialized rules of interpretation to that of a philosophical discipline and general theory of the social and human sciences – PLO a, b, & c; GE 7SI.
- b. Critically appreciate some of the important ideas and issues raised by writers of the hermeneutic tradition – PLO b; GE 7SI.
- c. Sharpened ability to see, accept, and understand meanings found in diverse cultures and, in the process, understand oneself better – PLO c; GE 7VI.

3. GE Learning Outcome

- a. 7SI/Social Inquiry: Provides students an opportunity to explore processes by which human beings develop social and/or historical perspectives. *Through GE 7SI students will be able to identify, frame and analyze social and/or historical structures and institutions in the world today.*
- b. 7VI/Values/Ethical Inquiry: Provides students an opportunity to explore values and ethical perspectives in humanistic, aesthetic, religious, and/or philosophical contexts. *Through GE 7VI students will be able to articulate how values and ethics inform human understanding, structures, and behavior.*

CONTENT

1. The basic assumption in this course is that hermeneutics is not just a contemporary theory but also a long historical conversation about understanding and interpretation which predates the beginning of writing. In the course we will study the works of writers who have made significant contributions to that conversation. These writers have had a profound impact on contemporary philosophical and theological discourse and have helped shape new modes of interpretation in the social sciences.
2. This course enables students to study some of the principal texts of the mainstream of the hermeneutic tradition. These texts were written by members of different disciplines and fields of inquiry – philosophers, historians, theologians, and social scientists. Students interested in any of these fields will gain a greater appreciation for the contemporary relevance of hermeneutics as the general theory and method of interpretation as well as philosophical hermeneutics or philosophy of culture.

REQUIRED TEXTS

1. Burns, Gerald L. *Hermeneutics Ancient and Modern*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992.
2. Cerbone, David R. *Understanding Phenomenology*. London and New York: Routledge, 2006.
3. Mueller-Vollmer, Kurt. *The Hermeneutics Reader*. New York: Continuum, 2006.
4. Sorell, Tom. *Descartes: A Very Short Introduction*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000.
5. Zimmermann, Jens. *Hermeneutics: A Very Short Introduction*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015.

Recommended readings:

- Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Dialogue and Dialectic: Eight Hermeneutical Studies on Plato*
- _____, *Hans-Georg Gadamer on Education, Poetry, and History*
- _____, *Philosophical Hermeneutics*
- _____, *Truth and Method*
- Jean Grondin, *Introduction to Philosophical Hermeneutics*
- Jurgen Habermas, *Knowledge and Human Interests*
- David E. Klemm, ed., *Hermeneutical Inquiry: The Interpretation of Texts*
- David E. Klemm, ed., *Hermeneutical Inquiry: The Interpretation of Existence*
- Martin Heidegger, *Poetry, Language, Thought*
- _____, *On the Way to Language*
- Roy J. Howard, *Three Faces of Hermeneutics: An Introduction to Current Theories of Understanding*
- Hans Robert Jauss, *Toward an Aesthetic of Reception*
- David E. Linge, “Dilthey and Gadamer: Two Theories of Historical Understanding”
- Richard Palmer, *Hermeneutics: Interpretation Theory in Schleiermacher, Dilthey, Heidegger, and Gadamer*
- Paul Ricoeur, *The Conflict of Interpretations: Essays in Hermeneutics*
- Anthony C. Thiselton, *New Horizons in Hermeneutics*
- Brice R. Wachterhauser, *Hermeneutics and Modern Philosophy*

INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGIES

1. The class will be seminar. Sometimes mini-lectures will be to establish the context and theoretical framework of our readings so as to enhance seminar conversations.
2. Students are expected to arrive at their own conclusions about issues discussed, to be able to give reasons for their conclusions, and to sympathetically understand why others may disagree.
3. Students are expected to develop further the art of conversation. Conversation requires active listening – that is, openness to what others have to say, asking questions, risking one’s opinions, and the willingness to engage in the back-and-forth of open-ended dialogue. Such conversations are essential for global citizenship in a pluralistic world.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

1. *Class Attendance:* Class attendance is required. You are expected to attend all class meetings and to have assignments prepared when they are due. More than three absences or three index cards not turned in will result in zero points for class participation. For each absence beyond three there will be a 5% deductions from your possible semester grade.
2. *Class Participation:* Participation does not mean mere presence in the classroom. Instead, it means active listening – that is, the willingness to engage in the back-and-forth of open-ended and reasoned conversations by being open to what others have to say, risking our opinions, asking questions, and surfacing disagreements. Such “active listening” is essential to being a community of scholars.

3. *Laptops and Other Communication Devices*: Please note that the use of laptops and other communication devices may only be used with the permission of the instructor.
4. *Reading Assignments*: You are asked to study carefully all required readings by the day on which they appear on the projected course schedule. It is important to note that you are asked not merely to read all assigned materials but to study them. Such study may require several readings of the material.
5. *Class Time*: Class meetings will be, for the most part, seminar conversations.
6. *Index Cards*: In order to aid class discussion, you are required to turn in a two-part index “card” for each reading assignment. A “Turnitin Assignment” folder exists for each day that cards are due. Please be sure to write your name on the cards as well as the date. Cards are to be placed in the assigned “Turnitin” folder by 6:00 p.m. on the night before class – late cards are not accepted.
 - a. On one side of the card, you are to write important questions which you have about the assigned reading material for the day. On the other side, you are to write a response to the prior class – for example, you may write about something important you learned, about a critical reaction to something said in class, or about an issue that you would like the class to revisit.
 - b. These cards together account for 20% of the semester’s grade and will be graded for their content.
 - Late cards are not accepted.
7. *Exams*: There will be three exams during the semester. Review questions will be distributed at least one week prior to each exam.
8. *Final Paper*: At the end of the semester you are to write a paper on hermeneutics based on our study of the subject. In this paper you are to do the following:
 - a. Construct your own understanding of hermeneutics.
 - b. Locate your understanding within the history of the understanding of hermeneutics.
 - c. Apply your understanding of hermeneutics to some subject in your major.
 - d. This paper is to be placed in the Blackboard Turnitin for this course by midnight on May 21, 2017.

CHAPMAN UNIVERSITY ACADEMIC INTEGRITY POLICY

Chapman University is a community of scholars which emphasizes the mutual responsibility of all members to seek knowledge honestly and in good faith. Students are responsible for doing their own work, and academic dishonesty of any kind will not be tolerated anywhere in the university.

CHAPMAN UNIVERSITY STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES POLICY

In compliance with ADA guidelines, students who have any condition, either permanent or temporary, that might affect their ability to perform in this class are encouraged to contact the Office of Disability Services. If you will need to utilize your approved accommodations in this class, please follow the proper notification procedure for informing your professor(s). This notification process must occur more than a week before any accommodation can be utilized. Please contact Disability Services at (714) 516-4520 or (www.chapman.edu/students/student-health-services/disability-services) if

you have questions regarding this procedure, or for information and to make an appointment to discuss and/or request potential accommodations based on documentation of your disability. Once formal approval of your need for an accommodation has been granted, you are encouraged to talk with your professor(s) about your accommodation options. The granting of any accommodation will not be retroactive and cannot jeopardize the academic standards or integrity of the course.

CHAPMAN UNIVERSITY DIVERSITY POLICY

Chapman University is committed to fostering learning and working environments that encourage and embrace diversity, multiple perspectives, and the free exchange of ideas as important measures to advance educational and social benefits. Our commitment and affirmation are rooted in our traditions of peace and social justice and our mission of producing ethical and responsible global citizens. The term diversity implies a respect for all and an understanding of individual differences in age, class, disability, ethnicity, gender, language, national origin, race, religion, sexual orientation, and socioeconomic status.

METHODS OF EVALUATION

1. Evaluation and grading will be based on the following:

<u>Requirements</u>	<u>Percentage of Grade</u>
First Exam:	20%
Second Exam:	20%
Third Exam:	25%
Class attendance/participation:	5%
Index cards:	20%
Final Paper:	10%

2. Grades will be assigned as follows:

A = 100-91; B = 90-81; C = 80-71; D = 70-61; F = below 60

PROJECTED SCHEDULE OF TOPICS AND ASSIGNMENTS

<u>Date</u>	<u>Topic and Assignment</u>
February 4	General Introductions <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Class members introduce themselves▪ Review syllabus: objectives/expectations of the course▪ General introduction to the course
February 6	Introduction to Hermeneutics <p>Read: <i>Hermeneutics: A Very Short Introduction</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Pages 1-23 <p>Read: <i>The Hermeneutics Reader</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Pages 1-5
February 11	René Descartes (1596-1650) <p>Read: <i>Descartes: A Very Short Introduction</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Pages 1-50

- February 13** **René Descartes (1596-1650)**
 Read: *Descartes: A Very Short Introduction*
- Pages 51-105
- February 18** **Johann Martin Chladenius (1710-1759)**
 Read: *The Hermeneutics Reader*
- Pages 5-8
 - Pages 54-71
- February 20** **Friedrich D. E. Schleiermacher (1768-1834)**
 Read: *Hermeneutics: A Very Short Introduction*
- Pages 23-29
- Read: *The Hermeneutics Reader*
- Pages 8-12
 - Pages 72-96
- February 25** **Wilhelm Dilthey (1833-1911)**
 Read: *Hermeneutics: A Very Short Introduction*
- Pages 29-33
- Read: *The Hermeneutics Reader*
- Pages 23-28
 - Pages 148-164
- February 27** **Edmund Husserl (1859-1938)**
 Read: *Understanding Phenomenology*
- Pages 1-38
- March 3** **Edmund Husserl (1859-1938)**
 Read: *Hermeneutics: A Very Short Introduction*
- Pages 33-34
- Read: *The Hermeneutics Reader*
- Pages 28-32
 - Pages 165-186
- March 5** **Martin Heidegger (1889-1976)**
 Read: *Understanding Phenomenology*
- Pages 39-67
- March 10** **Martin Heidegger (1889-1976)**
 Read: *Hermeneutics: A Very Short Introduction*
- Pages 34-38
- Read: *The Hermeneutics Reader*
- Pages 32-37
 - Pages 214-240

- March 12** **Philosophical Hermeneutics**
 Read: *Hermeneutics: A Very Short Introduction*
- Pages 39-56
- Hans-Georg Gadamer (1900-2002)**
 Read: *The Hermeneutics Reader*
- Pages 37-41
 - Pages 256-292
- March 17** **Review**
- March 19** **First Exam**
- March 24** **Spring Break**
- March 26** **Spring Break**
- March 31** **What Is Hermeneutics About?**
 Read: Gerald L. Bruns, *Hermeneutics: Ancient & Modern*
- Pages 1-17: “What Is Hermeneutics About?”
- April 2** **Truth and Power in the Discourse of Socrates**
 Read: Gerald L. Bruns, *Hermeneutics: Ancient & Modern*
- Pages 21-45: “Truth and Power in the Discourse of Socrates”
- April 7** **Thucydides, Plato, and the Historicality of Truth**
 Read: Gerald L. Bruns, *Hermeneutics: Ancient & Modern*
- Pages 46-63: “Thucydides, Plato, and the Historicality of Truth”
- April 9** **The Canon and Power of the Hebrew Bible**
 Read: Gerald L. Bruns, *Hermeneutics: Ancient & Modern*
- Pages 64-82: “The Canon and Power of the Hebrew Bible
- April 14** **Allegory as Radical Interpretation**
 Read: Gerald L. Bruns, *Hermeneutics: Ancient & Modern*
- Pages 83-103: “Allegory as Radical Interpretation”
 - Out of town for WRHC Conference
- April 16** **The Hermeneutics of Midrash**
 Read: Gerald L. Bruns, *Hermeneutics: Ancient & Modern*
- Pages 104-123: “The Hermeneutics of Midrash”
- April 21** **The Mystical Hermeneutics of Al-Ghazali**
 Read: Gerald L. Bruns, *Hermeneutics: Ancient & Modern*

- Pages 125-136: “The Mystical Hermeneutics of Al-Ghazali”

April 23

Second Exam

April 28

Hermeneutical Theory

Read: Gerald L. Bruns, *Hermeneutics: Ancient & Modern*

- Pages 139-158: “*Scriptura sui ipsius interpres*: Luther, Modernity, and the Foundations of Philosophical Hermeneutics.”

April 30

The Limits of Romantic Hermeneutics

Read: Gerald L. Bruns, *Hermeneutics: Ancient & Modern*

- Pages 159-178: “Wordsworth at the Limits of Romantic Hermeneutics”

May 5

Hermeneutical Experience

Read: Gerald L. Bruns, *Hermeneutics: Ancient & Modern*

- Pages 179-194: “On the Tragedy of Hermeneutical Experience”

May 7

Tradition

Read: Gerald L. Bruns, *Hermeneutics: Ancient & Modern*

- Pages 195- 213: “What is Tradition?”

May 12

Radical Turn

Read: Gerald L. Bruns, *Hermeneutics: Ancient & Modern*

- Pages 213-228: “On the Radical Turn in Hermeneutics”

May 14

Against Poetry

Read: Gerald L. Bruns, *Hermeneutics: Ancient & Modern*

- Pages 229-246: “Heidegger, Ricoeur, and the Originary Scene of Hermeneutics”

Conclusion

Read: Gerald L. Bruns, *Hermeneutics: Ancient & Modern*

- Pages 247-266: “Toward a Hermeneutics of Freedom”

May 21

Final Exam – 1:30 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.

May 24

Final Paper – due in Turnitin Folder by 11:59 p.m.