Philosophical Psychology (PSYC 620): Levinas and Psychology
Fall 2013

Leswin Laubscher, Ph.D.
Office Hrs.: Wed (11h00-12h00), Mon.
(16h30-17h30), or by appointment

“The essence of reason consists not in securing for man a foundation and powers, but in calling him in question and in inviting him to justice”

[Levinas]

COURSE DESCRIPTION AND OBJECTIVES

The course examines aspects of Emmanuel Levinas’s writing and thinking, with specific reference to its implications for psychology.

Framing course objectives and learning outcomes include:

- that students will come to a complex appreciation of signatory Levinasian themes, issues, and/or concerns
- that students will come to take a sophisticated, critical position vis-à-vis those Levinasian themes, issues, and concerns
- that students will examine implications of their Levinasian readings for psychology

COURSE FORMAT

The course is structured around a combination of reading seminar and lecture series. Hence, whereas there will be some lecture material, a high premium will be placed on class discussion, participation, and presentations. It is my wish and expectation that everyone, instructor and students, will participate actively and take joint responsibility for the success of this class.

READINGS

Required Readings are:

Additionally, several recommended and supplemental reading suggestions will be made in class, and listed on Blackboard.

**STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES AND/OR SPECIAL NEEDS**

Students with disabilities and/or special needs are entitled to reasonable accommodations if needed. Please contact Special Student Services at room 309 in the Duquesne Union (412-396.6657) or come speak to me as soon as possible. Accommodations cannot be granted retrospectively.

**ASSIGNMENTS / PROJECTS**

Your participation in the assignments / projects listed below will form the basis for grading evaluation (official grading policy at Duquesne permits the assignment of the following graduate level grades: A, A-, B+, B, B-, I, and F).

- Every student will select a reading section to introduce to the class, and facilitate discussion on
- Each student will share a resource list (at least 5 entries) of secondary readings, including a brief summary and appraisal of items listed
- Each student will write a final paper, principally titled “Levinas and Psychology”. Students are welcome to add qualifications (by comma, colon, dash, etc. – for example, “Levinas and psychology: Welcoming the O/other”, or “Levinas and psychology – the violence of psychology or psychology as violence”, or “Levinas and Psychology – towards an impossible therapeutics”, etc.), but all students have to proceed from the basic frame and border (unstable as it may be) that is “Levinas and psychology”. Each student will also present an abstract of their papers in class, and hand the same in to the instructor.

**COURSE SCHEDULE and READINGS**

This schedule is a guide only, and while we will try our best to keep to it, as issues and debates present themselves, it may well be modified. Consequently, pages and sections to be prepared for specific weeks will be determined and shared in class.

**Week One (Aug. 26):**
Introductions, Course Overview & “Introducing Levinas”

[Labour Day: Sept. 2]

**Week Two (Sept.9):**
"Totality and Infinity"

[No Class: Sept 16]

Week Three (Sept. 23)
"Totality and Infinity"

Week Four (Sept. 30):
"Totality and Infinity"

Week Five (Oct. 07):
"Totality and Infinity"

Week Six (Oct. 14):
"Totality and Infinity"

Week Seven (Oct. 21):
"Otherwise than Being"

Week Eight (Oct. 28):
"Otherwise than Being"

Week Nine (Nov. 4):
"Otherwise than Being"

Week Ten (Nov. 11):
"Otherwise than Being"

Resource List Due

Week Eleven (Nov. 18):
Psychology and the Other

[Thanksgiving Break (Nov. 25)]

Week Twelve (Dec. 2):
Presentation of Paper Abstracts

Week Thirteen (Dec. 09):
Last Class

"The good fortune of our debt to Levinas is that we can, thanks to him, assume it and affirm it without regret, in the joyous innocence of admiration”

[Jacques Derrida – Adieu to Levinas]