

COURSE OUTLINE: HERMENEUTICS

(1) GENERAL

UNIVERSITY / Department	• NATIONAL AND KAPODISTRIAN UNIVERSITY OF ATHENS / Department of History and Philosophy of Science		
STUDY LEVEL	Postgraduate		
COURSE CODE		SEMESTER OF STUDY	2 nd
COURSE TITLE	Hermeneutics		
INSTRUCTOR(S)	C. Mantzavinos, www.mantzavinos.org		
TEACHING ACTIVITIES	TEACHING HOURS PER WEEK	ECTS	
Seminars	3	10	
COURSE TYPE	Seminar		
PREREQUISITE COURSES	–		
LANGUAGE OF INSTRUCTION and EXAMINATIONS	English		
COURSE OFFERED TO ERASMUS STUDENTS	No		
COURSE WEBSITE (URL)	To be announced. Password: To be announced.		

(2) LEARNING OUTCOMES

Learning Outcomes
<p>According to a common view human actions are meaningful and texts and other by-products of human action constitute meaningful material. Text interpretation is a problem that lay-people and scientists alike are called to deal with in their everyday practices and the fundamental issue is both to accurately describe these activities and to normatively appraise them. In the last decades, one major line of thought which I want to label «postmodernist» has dominated the discussion, according to which text interpretation is not a problem that can be treated scientifically, i.e. using any of the standards employed in the natural sciences. Philosophical hermeneutics in the tradition of Heidegger and Gadamer and deconstructionism in the tradition of Derrida have challenged the possibility of achieving any kind of hermeneutic objectivity, of distinguishing between correct and incorrect interpretations and of appealing to any kind of evidential support of different interpretative hypotheses.</p> <p>Analytical philosophy of science has – with very few exceptions – systematically avoided the treatment of the concrete problems that emerge when dealing with meaningful material, so that literally no attention is paid to a great range of disciplines that deal with text interpretation. All those disciplines, summarized under the collective term “Humanities,” are practically excluded from the endeavours of philosophers of science, largely because there is a hesitance to reconstruct and normatively appraise their activities employing the standard tools of the analytic philosophy of science, most importantly the analysis of the relationship between theory and evidence.</p>

Rather than providing a criticism of the great array of «postmodernist» approaches, the aim of this seminar is positive: it attempts to show that the problem of text interpretation can be dealt with in a way that respects the standards prevailing in the general philosophy of science.

General Skills

- Work in an international environment
- Work in an interdisciplinary environment
- Generating new research ideas
- Exercise of critical reflection

(3) COURSE CONTENT

Week	Topic
1	Introduction
2	Hermeneutics: A Historical Approach
3	Wilhelm Dilthey's Hermeneutic Conception
4	Martin Heidegger's Hermeneutic Conception I
5	Martin Heidegger's Hermeneutic Conception II
6	Hans-Georg Gadamer's Hermeneutic Conception I
7	Hans-Georg Gadamer's Hermeneutic Conception II
8	The 'Verstehen-Erklären' Dispute
9	The Apprehension of the Meaning of Actions
10	Text Interpretation
11	Hermeneutics and the Hypothetico-Deductive Method
12	Hermeneutic Objectivity
13	Radical Interpretation

Week 1: Introduction

Week 2: Hermeneutics: A Historical Approach

Pre-reading: Oliver Scholz: "Hermeneutics", in: *International Encyclopedia for the Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 2015, pp. 778-784 and C. Mantzavinos: "Hermeneutics", in: *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, 2016.

Week 3: Wilhelm Dilthey's Hermeneutic Conception

Pre-readings: Wilhelm Dilthey: "The Rise of Hermeneutics", in: *New Literary History*, vol. 3, (1900/1972), pp. 229-244.

C. Mantzavinos: *Naturalistic Hermeneutics*, Cambridge University Press, 2005

Chapter 1: The Claim to Autonomy of the Human Sciences: A Critique of Wilhelm Dilthey's Hermeneutic Conception

Week 4: Martin Heidegger's Hermeneutic Conception I

Pre-reading: Martin Heidegger: *Sein und Zeit*, Tübingen: Max Niemeyer Verlag, 1927/1993

Einleitung

Kapitel 1: Notwendigkeit, Struktur und Vorrang der Seinsfrage

Kapitel 2: Die Doppelaufgabe in der Ausarbeitung der Seinsfrage. Die Methode der Untersuchung und ihr Aufriß

English Translation by John Maccuarie and Edward Robinson: *Being and Time*, San Francisco: Harper, 1962

Introduction

Chapter 1: The Necessity, Structure, and Priority of the Question of Being

Chapter 2: The Twofold Task in Working Out the Question of Being. Method and Design of our Investigation

Week 5: Martin Heidegger's Hermeneutic Conception II

Mantzavinos C. *Naturalistic Hermeneutics*, Cambridge University Press, 2005

Chapter 2: The Hermeneutic Circle and the Paralysis of Thought: A Critique of Martin Heidegger's Hermeneutic Conception

Week 6: Hans-Georg Gadamer's Hermeneutic Conception I

Pre-reading: Hans-Georg Gadamer: *Wahrheit und Methode*, Tübingen, J.C.B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck), 6. Auflage, 1960/1990.

Zweiter Teil, Abschnitt II: Grundzüge einer Theorie der hermeneutischen Erfahrung, pp. 270-312.

Dritter Teil: Ontologische Wendung der Hermeneutik am Leitfaden der Sprache, 387-409.

**English Translation by Joel Weinsheimer and Donald Marshall, *Truth and Method*, 2nd edition, 1989
New York: Continuum,**

Part II, Section II: Elements of a Theory of Hermeneutic Experience, pp. 265-299.

Part III: The Ontological Shift of Hermeneutics Guided by Language, pp. 381-403.

Week 7: Hans-Georg Gadamer's Hermeneutic Conception II

Pre-readings: Mantzavinos C.: *Naturalistic Hermeneutics*, Cambridge University Press, 2005

Chapter 3: The Claim to Universality of Philosophical Hermeneutics: A Critique of Hans-Georg Gadamer's Hermeneutic Conception

Week 8: The 'Verstehen-Erklären' Dispute

Pre-readings: Hans Albert: *Treatise on Critical Reason*, Ch. 6: Meaning and Reality, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985, pp. 165-198.

Mantzavinos, C.: *Naturalistic Hermeneutics*, Ch. 4: The Problematic of Meaning. The Naturalistic Way Out, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005, pp. 73-86.

<p>Week 9: The Apprehension of the Meaning of Actions</p> <p>Pre-reading: C. Mantzavinos: <i>Naturalistic Hermeneutics</i>, Ch. 5: The Problematic of Meaning: The Naturalistic Way Out, pp. 73-123.</p>
<p>Week 10: Text Interpretation</p> <p>Pre-reading: C. Mantzavinos: <i>Naturalistic Hermeneutics</i>, Chapter 6: The Apprehension of the Meaning of Texts, pp. 119-157</p> <p>C. Mantzavinos: "Text Interpretation as a Scientific Activity", in: <i>Journal for General Philosophy of Science</i>, vol. 45, 2014, pp. 45-58.</p>
<p>Week 11: Hermeneutics and the Hypothetico-Deductive Method</p> <p>Pre-reading: Føllesdal, Dagfinn (1979): "Hermeneutics and the hypothetico-deductive method", in: <i>Dialectica</i>, vol. 33, S. 319-336</p>
<p>Week 12: Hermeneutic Objectivity</p> <p>Pre-reading: Rescher, Nicholas (1997/2003): „Hermeneutic Objectivity: Against Deconstructionism“, in: Rescher, Nicholas: <i>Objectivity. The Obligations of Impersonal Reason</i>, Notre Dame and London: University of Notre Dame, S. 197-209</p>
<p>Week 13: Radical Interpretation</p> <p>Pre-reading: David Lewis (1983): "Radical Interpretation", in: <i>Philosophical Papers</i>, Vol.1, Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 108-121.</p>

(4) TEACHING AND LEARNING METHODS – ASSESSMENT

TEACHING FORMAT	Face to face, in classroom.	
USE OF INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGIES	Learning process support through the e-class online platform.	
TEACHING STRUCTURE	Activity	Semester Workload
	Lectures, Seminars	39
	Presentation preparation	21
	Independent study	120
	Project (paper preparation and submission)	120
	Total (30 hours of work per credit unit)	300
STUDENT EVALUATION	1. Presentation (30%) 2. Final essay (70%)	

	Students will be assessed through a 4,000-5,000 words essay (70%, the word limit includes footnotes and bibliography) and a presentation (30%). Citation: All assessed essays should include a complete bibliographical list of primary and secondary sources. The essay itself should be fully referenced. Essay submission at the end of the semester by email to the instructor. The essay deadline will be uploaded on e-class.
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(5) RECOMMENDED BIBLIOGRAPHY

Albert, Hans, *Kritik der reinen Hermeneutik*, Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck), 1994.

Detel, Wolfgang, 2011, *Geist und Verstehen*, Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann, 2011.

— *Kognition, Parsen und rationale Erklärung: Elemente einer allgemeinen Hermeneutik*, Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann, 2014.

— *Hermeneutik der Literatur und Theorie des Geistes. Exemplarische Interpretationen poetischer Texte*, Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann, 2016.

Hirsch, E.D. Jr., *Validity in Interpretation*, New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1967.

Kintsch, Walter, *Comprehension: A Paradigm for Cognition*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998.

Scholz, Oliver, *Verstehen und Rationalität*, 3. rev. Auflage, Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann, 2016.