

Bachelor's Paper with Seminar (B-KUL-W0EB7B): *Phenomenology*

Topic: The Phenomenology of Rationality

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Office hours: By appointment (Please send me an e-mail to schedule the appointment)

1. Course Description

We typically consider rationality as an ideal we should strive toward: we compliment others by telling them what they did or thought was rational and criticize those who fail to behave or reason rationally. This idea has loomed large from ancient Greece to the present day, and it has been the subject of continuous philosophical inquiry. Over the past two millennia, philosophers have addressed an array of questions on the 1) *nature*, 2) *scope*, and 3) *value* of rationality, including 1.i) What does make a person rational? 1.ii) Is it enough to follow through with one's intentions? 1.iii) What does it take for mental states to count as rational? 2.i) Can affective and conative states count as rational and what does it take for them to be such? 2.ii) Can negative affective states such as envy, jealousy, and resentment ever be rational? 3.i) Is rationality valuable because it makes us pursue good things? 3.ii) Can actions be rational while leading to morally bad ends? 3.iii) Is our insistence on rationality as an ideal we should strive toward born out of a Western modern idea we must overcome?

The aim of this course is to familiarize students with the ways in which these and related questions have been addressed by influential thinkers pertaining to the phenomenological tradition. At the end of the course, students will be able to navigate these issues through the lens of phenomenology and find their original angle on the topic. Readings will include core texts by Edmund Husserl, Edith Stein, Max Scheler, Hannah Arendt, and Jacques Derrida.

2. Readings

The readings comprise excerpts from the following texts, which will be made available on Toledo:

Arendt, Hannah. *Eichmann in Jerusalem: A Report on the Banality of Evil*. New York: Viking Press, 1965.

Derrida, Jacques. *Rogues. Two Essays on Reason*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2005.

Husserl, Edmund. *Ideas for a Pure Phenomenology and Phenomenological Philosophy. First Book: General Introduction to Pure Phenomenology*. Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 2014.

Husserl, Edmund. *Ideas for a Pure Phenomenology and Phenomenological Philosophy. Second Book: Studies in the Phenomenology of Constitution*. Dordrecht, Boston, and London: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1989.

Scheler, Max. *Ressentiment*. Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 2007.

Stein, Edith. *Philosophy of Psychology and the Humanities*. Washington: ICS Publications, 2000.

3. Evaluation

Students will be graded on their active participation in the seminar sessions, their oral presentations, and their final paper. More precisely:

- 30% of the grade is based on the students' participation, including attendance in the seminar sessions and oral presentations.
- 70% of the grade is based on the final paper, which will be graded by both the instructor of the course and the second reader.

You can only pass the course if you receive a grade for participation and oral presentations and a grade for the final paper.

Note: The second examination attempt is limited to (re)submitting the final paper. Participation and oral presentations cannot be retaken.

Students who fail to complete the course within one year will in principle not be able to continue to work on the same topic. They have to retake the seminar and they have to write a paper on a topic that fits within the theme of one of the seminars that will then be offered.

3.1 Participation and Oral Presentations

To get a grade for participation and oral presentations, the student must:

- Attend all of the seminar sessions*;
- Submit the assignments indicated in the course schedule in due time (See 4. *Course Schedule*);
- Deliver your oral presentations in the dedicated sessions (See 4. *Course Schedule*).

* In case you cannot, for well-founded reasons, attend class, you should inform me without undue delay. In this case, I may decide to give you a make-up assignment.

One week before each of the reading sessions, I will upload on Toledo a few questions concerning the texts that we are going to discuss together in the upcoming session. I strongly encourage you to read the text with those questions in mind and to prepare either a short answer to them or a critical comment. Doing this will help you to actively participate in the discussion, which will, in turn, positively contribute to your grade.

If you would like to improve your participation, you may also decide to upload your answers or comments on Toledo before 19:00 on the Thursday before each reading seminar. This will, again, positively contribute to your grade.

You will receive detailed indications concerning the oral presentations over the course of the seminar and during the relevant tutorial and joint sessions.

3.2 Final Paper

The topic of your paper should bear some connection to the seminar’s topic. At the end of each reading session, I will give you a list of possible topics to guide you through this decision. You can also suggest your own topic if you can show its connection with the seminar’s topic. In this case, do not hesitate to get in touch with me in due time.

The Bachelor’s paper should be between 6,250 and 7,500 words long – not including the table of contents, bibliography, and footnotes or endnotes – typed, and 1.5 spaced.

For the detailed guidelines about how to write your Bachelor’s paper, please visit the following link: <https://hiw.kuleuven.be/en/study/papers-theses-written-work/bachelor/bapaper.html>.

You will also receive further indications concerning the final paper by attending the relevant joint sessions.

4. Course Schedule

First Semester: Friday, 11.00 – 13.00, HIW 01.20 (Room N)

Note: The *Joint Sessions* will take place at a different time and venue. See the table below for precise information concerning the time and venue of those sessions.

30 Sept	<i>Introductory Session</i>
8 Oct	<i>Seminar Session I: The Rationality of Belief</i>
	<p><u><i>Required Readings:</i></u></p> <p>Husserl, Edmund. <i>Ideas I</i>. Section 4, Chapter 2, §§ 136–141, pp. 270–283.</p> <p><u><i>Optional Readings:</i></u></p> <p>Drummond, John R. <i>Historical Dictionary of Husserl’s Philosophy</i>. Lanham: Scarecrow Press, 2007.</p>
15 Oct	<i>Seminar Session II: On Rational Motivation</i>
	<p><u><i>Required Readings:</i></u></p> <p>Husserl, Edmund. <i>Ideas II</i>. Section 3, Chapter 3, §§ 56a–56b, pp. 231–235.</p>

	Stein, Edith. <i>Philosophy of Psychology and the Humanities</i> . First Treatise, Chapters 3 and 4, pp. 39–74.
22 Oct	<i>Seminar Session III: The Rationality of Emotion</i>
	<p><u>Required Readings:</u></p> <p>Scheler, Max. <i>Ressentiment</i>. Chapter 1, pp. 25–49.</p> <p><u>Optional Readings:</u></p> <p>Szanto, Thomas and Landweer, Hilge (Eds.). <i>The Routledge Handbook of Phenomenology of Emotions</i>. New York: Routledge, 2020. Introduction, pp. 1–37.</p>
29 Oct	<i>Seminar Session IV: The Value of Rationality</i>
	<p><u>Required Readings:</u></p> <p>Arendt, Hannah. <i>Eichmann in Jerusalem: A Report on the Banality of Evil</i>. Chapters 2 and 3, pp. 21–55.</p> <p>Derrida, Jacques. <i>Rogues. Two Essays on Reason</i>. Part II, pp. 117–134.</p>
3 Nov	<i>Deadline</i>
	Submit a first draft of your topic statement via Toledo by 17:00. The statement should contain a description of your chosen topic and some basic bibliographical references.
12 Nov	<i>Tutorial Session I</i>
	Oral presentation of the topic statement with class discussion (max. 10 min./student)
19 Nov	<i>Tutorial Session II</i>
	Oral presentation the topic statement with class discussion (max. 10 min./student)
3 Dec	<i>Joint Session: Research</i> (14:00 – 16:00, MSI 00.28)
10 Dec	<i>Joint Session: Writing</i> (14:00 – 16:00, MSI 00.28)
17 Dec	<i>Deadline</i>
	Submit the final version of your topic statement via Toledo by 17:00.

Second Semester: Tuesday, 11.00 – 13.00, HIW1 01.14 (Room S)

15 Feb	<i>Deadline</i>
	Submission of 1000 words of the paper in full sentences via Toledo by 17:00
16 Feb	<i>Joint Session: Research and Presenting</i> (14.00–16.00, MSI1 01.28)
1 Mar	<i>Try-Out Session I</i>
	Mock oral presentation with special attention on presentation skills (max. 10 min./student)
8 Mar	<i>Try-Out Session II</i>
	Mock oral presentation with special attention on presentation skills (max. 10 min./student)
22 Mar	<i>Presentation Session I</i>
	Oral presentations of research followed by class discussion (min. 15, max. 20 min./student)
29 Mar	<i>Presentation Session II</i>
	Oral presentations of research followed by class discussion (min. 15, max. 20 min./student)
29 Apr	<i>Deadline</i>
	Submission of 3000 words of the paper in full sentences via Toledo by 17:00
30 May	<i>Deadline (Second Examination Period)</i>
	Submission of the final version of the Bachelor's paper via Toledo and hard copy by 16:00

If you fail to submit your Bachelor's paper during the second examination period, you can still submit it in the ***Third Examination Period***. The deadline for submitting your final paper in this period is **August 18, 2022 by 16.00**. The submission should be via Toledo.