***Sample Syllabus* (300- or 400-level)**

**Decolonial Phenomenology**

When/Where: TBD

Instructor: Carmen De Schryver

Office Hours: TBD

**Course Description**

In this course, we will think about the various strategies for reforming the philosophical “canon” with decolonial aims in view. Some of the questions that will guide our discussions throughout the semester are: How does academic decolonization differ from political decolonization? What are the connections between philosophy as an academic discipline and the historical reality of colonialism? Does decolonial theory require a break with the Western tradition of thought, and, if not, what are the advantages and disadvantages of remaining in dialogue with the Western “canon”? What are the various decolonizing strategies, and what goals do they enact? In the first half of the course, we will read a variety of key texts within decolonial theory which propose very different answers to these questions. Some of the thinkers we will look at include Walter Mignolo, Marisa Belausteguigoitia, Audre Lorde, Kwasi Wiredu, Lewis Gordon and Nadia Yala Kisukidi. The second half of the course then moves on to put into practice one strategy for decolonizing philosophy in order to allow us to engage these questions more concretely. This strategy involves reading “canonical” texts of European phenomenology – including texts by Edmund Husserl and Martin Heidegger – *through* the lens provided by decolonial thinkers such as Paulin Hountondji, Frantz Fanon and Mariana Ortega. Beyond equipping students with the tools to think critically about canon-formation and the meaning of academic decolonization, this course will familiarize students with seminal texts in Latinx and Africana traditions of decolonial theory, as well as critical and decolonial phenomenology.

**Prerequisites**

A background in philosophy is expected but not required. Please contact me directly if you are unsure about your preparation for this course. The course is designed to equip students with key philosophical skills which will be helpful across a range of disciplines, as well as invite students to think about the purview and limits of “philosophy”.

**Accessibility**

This seminar is committed to accessibility among all dimensions of identity. If you require accommodations for any reason, please do not hesitate to let me know.

**Learning Outcomes**

* Develop a critical understanding of debates around the decolonization of the philosophical tradition and decolonial pedagogy
* Gain familiarity with seminal texts in decolonial theory, Africana philosophy and classical European phenomenology
* Think critically about what constitutes “philosophy” and its implicit geographical biases
* Cultivate skills in critically reading and evaluating technical philosophical material

**Course Assessment**

Grades for this course are based on:

* Participation (15%). Your participation grade is based on:
  + (i) Initial one-on-one meeting with instructor. The aim is for us to get to know each other and for me to get a sense of your background interests as they relate to the course. You will not be graded on what you say during the meeting; you just need to show up!
  + (ii) Four submissions of a short (one paragraph) reflection on the material *in advance* of the class meeting.
  + (iii) Participation in the classroom. This can take on a variety of forms. I encourage you to meet with me during office hours if speaking up in larger group settings is uncomfortable for you.
* Presentation (20%). In our first meeting, you should come prepared to select a week in which you would like to present. The presentation should be no longer than 10 minutes and set up the discussion by highlighting the key themes and arguments in the reading, as well as formulating two discussion questions (these questions should be formulated so as to conduce to in-depth philosophical discussion. If you are unsure whether your questions are suitable, don’t hesitate to contact me).
* Final paper (45%) of no more than 8 pages. This can build on the presentation or develop a novel argument on a topic of your choosing.
  + Two weeks before the deadline, you should submit a one-page outline (10%) which articulates your *thesis* and shows how you will go about demonstrating it.
  + You will then be assigned a partner, and each of you will provide written commentary (one-paragraph) on one another’s outlines (10%).

**Note on Office Hours**

I encourage you to come to office hours regularly. I particularly encourage you to come to my office hours with any questions, ideas, or worries that were raised for you during the lecture; any difficulties that you are experiencing with the material or your own learning process; or additional help and guidance you might need for assignments.

**Course Materials**

All of the readings will be made available in PDF.

**Note on the Readings**

In order to get the most out of the course, it is necessary that you read the assigned texts closely *in advance* of the class meeting. Do not be discouraged if you find the readings difficult or even confusing. Our class discussion is designed to (i) collaboratively make sense of the text and (ii) equip you with the skills that you need to fully comprehend and critically interrogate the course material. I will not expect you to understand everything that you read. I do, however, expect you to make a good-faith effort to interpret the text on your own, and to participate in the class discussion on this basis. I would also like to emphasize that raising clarificatory questions is not just okay but very much encouraged; if you are confused about something, it is likely your peers will be as well, and your questions will be welcomed!

**Course Schedule**

The following is a tentative schedule for the semester. Changes to the schedule will be announced in class.

**Week 1:** Discussion of the syllabus and decolonial reading strategies

Belausteguigotia “Strategies for a Transnational Reading”, pp.37-45

Lorde, *Sister Outsider,* pp.110-114

Lionnet and Shih, “Introduction” in *The Creolization of Theory*, pp.1-32

**Week 2:** Brief Introduction to Phenomenology

Moran, *Introduction to Phenomenology,* pp.1-21

Guenther, “Critical Phenomenology”, pp.7-20.

**Week 3:** Decolonial Theory: Decolonizing Phenomenology?

Kisukidi, “Decolonizing, or, Philosophy as an Object of Anthropology”, pp.1-15.

Maldonado-Torres, “The Decolonial Turn”, pp.111-127 (optional)

Mignolo, “Decoloniality and Phenomenology?”, pp.360-387.

*Weeks 4-7: Hountondji/Husserl Pairing*

**Week 4:** Paulin Hountondji’s I: Phenomenological Approach to African Philosophy

Hountondji, *African Philosophy: Myth and Reality,* pp.55-68.

**Week 5:** Hountondji II

Hountondji, “Husserl for Africa?: Philosophy and Worldviews”, pp.1-12.

Hountondji, “Constructing the Universal: A Transcultural Task”, pp.1-17.

**Week 6:** Edmund Husserl I: Phenomenology: Philosophy and Worldviews

Husserl, *Philosophy as Rigorous Science,* pp.122-147.

**Week 7:** Husserl II: Eurocentrism

Husserl, *Philosophy and the Crisis of European Man,* pp.149-192.

*Weeks 9-12: Ortega/Heidegger Pairing*

**Week 9:** Mariana Ortega I:Decolonial Feminisms

Ortega, “‘New Mestizas’, ‘World-Travellers’ and ‘Dasein’”, pp.1-10.

**Week 10:** Ortega II: Phenomenological Resonances

Ortega, “‘New Mestizas’, ‘World-Travellers’ and ‘Dasein’”, pp.1-29

**Week 11:** Martin Heidegger I: *Being and Time (The Existential Analytic)*

Heidegger, *Being and Time,* pp.67-90.

**Week 12:** Heidegger II: Heidegger’s Eurocentrism

Heidegger, *Introduction to Metaphysics,* pp.8-41.

*Weeks 13-16: Fanon/Merleau-Ponty Pairing*

**Week 13:** Frantz Fanon

Fanon, “The Lived Experience of the Black Man (*BSWM)*”, pp.109-134

**Week 14:** Fanon II

Fanon, “The Lived Experience of the Black Man”, pp.134-140.

**Week 15:** MauriceMerleau-PontyI

Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception,* pp.458-483.

**Week 16:** Merleau-Ponty II

Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception,* pp.458-483.