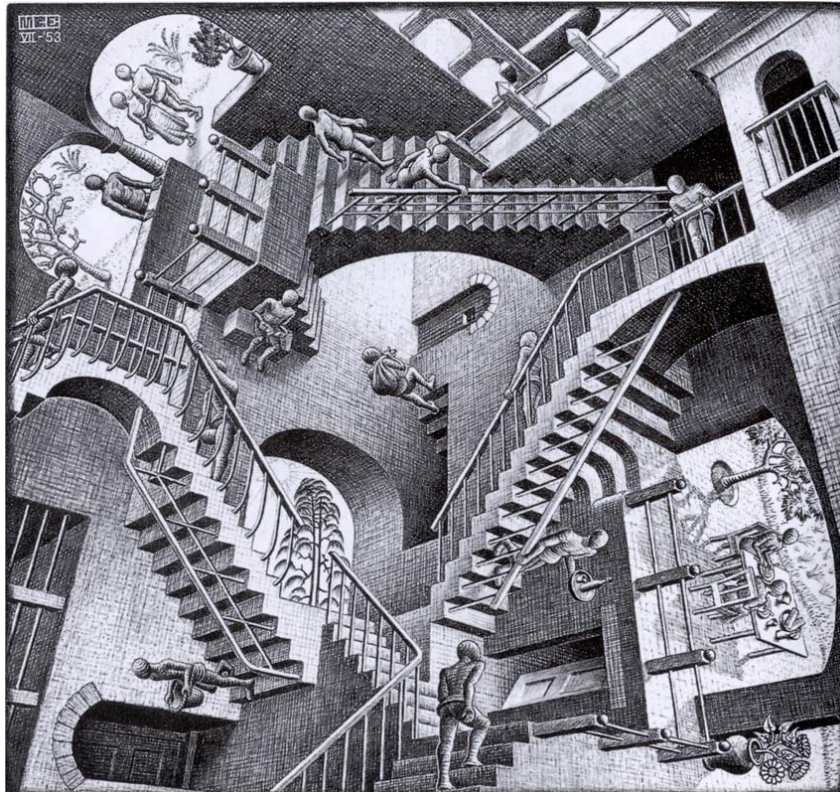


Pomona College  
CONTINENTAL THOUGHT

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Th 4:00-5:00pm and by appt.

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Fall 2023  
TuTh 2:45-4:00pm  
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“Relativity,” M.C. Escher, 1953

## COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course is an introduction to some important movements in continental philosophy, focusing on ways of thinking about knowledge, reason, the subject, experience, power, and history. Covering the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, we will survey key thinkers in German Idealism, historical materialism, phenomenology, existentialism, decolonial thought, critical theory, and poststructuralism. Some framing questions are: What is reason, and what are its limits? How ought we understand knowledge and truth in relation to history? What is the relationship between a human subject and the world? How should we understand issues of power as bound up with knowledge?

## LEARNING OBJECTIVES

By the end of the class, I hope students will be able to understand knowledge creation, engage multiple perspectives, and investigate meaningful questions in the domain of philosophy. Through course discussions, group work, writing assignments, and revisions, we will discover what it means to read, write, and think philosophically. This class should function as an introduction to key questions and methods in continental philosophy.

### Specific student learning goals:

1. Enable students to describe and evaluate various philosophical perspectives from the continental tradition
2. Teach students skills in reading and writing philosophy, including basic reasoning and the interpretation of challenging theoretical texts
3. Empower students to reflect on their own lives in light of concepts discussed in the course

## COURSE MATERIALS

**Materials will be posted as PDF files on Sakai under “Resources.” Please print all PDF’s and bring them to class, or you may make use of an eReader that does not connect to the internet.**

## COURSE REQUIREMENTS

### Participation

I divide your participation grade into two units of 10 points so that you can take note of your standing around halfway through the course. Components of your participation grade include **attendance, preparation, activity in class**, and the **Thursday Blog**.

1. Regular attendance and your engaged attention are expected. You are allowed two unexcused absences without penalty. Excused absences include illness or Covid-related difficulties and notification prior to class beginning. I also reserve the right to add short quizzes if students do not seem prepared. These quizzes will count towards your participation grade.
2. The assigned readings should be completed by the start of class. For challenging texts (and all may fall under this category), I do recommend *rereading the text*. Your participation grade will suffer if it is clear you are unfamiliar with the assigned texts.
3. Participation can take many forms in person: being vocal in discussion, active listening, respectful engagement with your peers, and meeting with me in office hours. I encourage everyone to experiment with forms of participation that may be new for them. *If you find yourself taking up a lot of space in the classroom*, try directing your questions and comments to

other students. *If you don't find vocal participation to be intuitive*, practice by asking a question—odds are, other students share your question or you might spark a generative new direction. There will also be lots of small group discussions for you to practice this.

4. An additional component of your participation grade is your weekly posting on the **Thursday Blog** on Sakai. The blog offers a further chance for you to engage with your peers and synthesize the material we have been covering in the readings and in course meetings. The blog will be continuous throughout the semester, and you are required to post a comment of 5 sentences minimum once a week, after our second class and by Thursday, 11:59pm. In your post, you may pose a question, share a reflection, make connections to resources outside the course, and you are additionally encouraged to comment on fellow students' posts. As one component of your participation grade, each blog post itself is not scored. Thoughtful posts that fulfill the minimum requirements account for full credit.

## Writing Assignments

You will complete three papers over the course of the semester. The first two will be **no longer than five pages**, double-spaced, in size 12 Times New Roman or Garamond font, while your final paper can be between **5-10 pages**. Essays are to be uploaded to Sakai **as a Word or Pages document**.

I will distribute prompts roughly two weeks prior to the due date, but you are welcome to come up with your own topic. You're encouraged to meet with me to discuss your papers, and you are required to speak with me if you are designing your own topic.

**WARNING:** You will be marked off one point if you submit a pdf instead of a Word or Pages document.

\*For papers, I suggest you use the Chicago Manual of Style for citations, though APA and MLA are also acceptable as long as you are consistent. Here is a helpful guide:

[https://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools\\_citationguide/citation-guide-1.html](https://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools_citationguide/citation-guide-1.html)

ACTIVITY	POINTS
Participation	10
Participation	10
First Paper	25
Nietzsche Paper	25
Final Paper	30
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TOTAL POINTS	100

## POLICIES AND RESOURCES

### Covid Safety Awareness

**Our health, both mental and physical, is paramount.** We must consider the health of others inside and outside the classroom. We need to take care of each other for this course to be successful.

- Class attendance is required, but if you need to miss class for health reasons, concerning symptoms, suspected Covid exposure, unexpected dependent care, technology issues, or other emergency reasons I will work with you. Let me underscore this: please make your decisions always based on health, safety, and wellness—yours and others—and I will work with you at the other end.

The pandemic is fast-moving, and we might have to adjust these principles as the semester evolves. I am always happy to receive your feedback to make this course work.

### Technology Policy

Phones, tablets, computers, and other electronic devices are great, but not for our classroom except in cases where permission is arranged. **Unless you get have an accommodation or speak with me, computers are not allowed.** Let's practice sustained attention with one another, a welcome break after so much screen time last few years. All PDFs should be printed unless permission is granted in advance.

### Late Assignment Policy

You will lose 50% of the possible points for any assignment that you submit late if you have not spoken with me before the deadline. I AM VERY HAPPY TO GRANT EXTENSIONS IF YOU WRITE/SPEAK WITH ME. Please communicate with me **at least 48 hours** before an assignment is due if you feel you need an extension.

### Academic Integrity

The extension policy is flexible so that plagiarism need never be considered a quick fix to a difficult deadline. The principle of academic integrity is taken very seriously and violations are treated gravely. What does academic integrity mean in this course? Essentially this: when you are responsible for a task, you will perform that task. When you rely on someone else's work in an aspect of the performance of that task, you will give full credit in the proper, accepted form. Please be sure to read Pomona's Policies on Academic Integrity:

<http://catalog.pomona.edu/content.php?catoid=7&navoid=394>.

In addition, you are expected to refrain from using AI to generate *philosophical content* or *writing*. Relying on AI for your written assignments is inadvisable (and unacceptable) because it hinders you from practicing philosophical thinking, which is why you are here! In addition, at this point, it is often incorrect, shallow, and blatantly generic.

One last aspect of academic integrity to mention is the free play of ideas. Vigorous discussion and debate are encouraged in this course, with the firm expectation that all aspects of the class will be conducted with civility and respect for differing ideas, perspectives, and traditions. When in doubt relating to any of these expectations, please ask for guidance and clarification.

## Disability Accommodations

If you have a disability for which you are or may be requesting an accommodation, you are encouraged to contact both your faculty and the Pomona Accessibility Resources and Services office at the beginning of the semester if you have not already registered for accommodations: <https://www.pomona.edu/accessibility/student-accessibility/accommodation-policies-and-procedures>.

## Writing Center

The Writing Center is open! Writing and Speaking Partners meet one-on-one with students to talk about their work and provide feedback at any stage of their preparation process. Additionally, staff offer specialized writing and speaking support for multilingual students navigating English as an additional language. To make an appointment with a Writing or Speaking Partner, please visit: <https://www.pomona.edu/administration/writing-center>.

## Diversity and Inclusion

In our classroom, we seek to create a learning environment that fosters respect for people across identities. We welcome and value individuals and their differences, including gender expression and identity, race, economic status, sex, sexuality, ethnicity, national origin, first language, religion, age, and ability.

## Non-Sexist Use of Language

We academics no longer use “man” or “mankind” to refer to the entirety of humanity or a hypothetical person. This extends to written work as well as discussions, and it will serve you well throughout the rest of your professional lives.

## Content Warning

In this course, we will be discussing death, racial and gendered oppression, and depression.



René Magritte, *Golconda* (*Golconde*), 1953

SCHEDULE (*subject to change*)

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**Week 1**

August 29

Introduction to class; Kant, "What Is Enlightenment?"

August 31

Hegel, *Lectures on the Philosophy of World History*, "Introduction,"  
Second Version 1830 ("The Philosophical History of the World")

**Week 2**

September 5

Descartes, *Meditations* 1-2; Hegel, *Lectures on the History of  
Philosophy*, on Descartes

September 7

Hegel, *Lectures on the History of Philosophy*, on Kant

**Week 3**

September 12

Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, "Introduction"

September 14

Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, "The Truth of Self-Certainty" and  
"Mastery and Servitude"

**Week 4**

September 19

Marx, "The Production of Consciousness"

September 21

Marx, "Alienated Labor"

**Week 5**

September 26

Nietzsche, *Genealogy of Morals*, Preface and Essay 1

September 28

Nietzsche, *Twilight of the Idols*, "Morality as Anti-Nature" and "Four  
Great Errors"

**September 29\***

**FIRST PAPER DUE**

**Week 6**

October 3

Nietzsche, *Twilight of the Idols*, "What the Germans Are Missing"  
and *The Gay Science*, selections

October 5

Nietzsche, selections; Kierkegaard, *The Concept of Anxiety*, "Anxiety  
Saving through Faith"

**Week 7**

October 10

Heidegger, *Being and Time*, selections

October 12

**NO CLASS** (Prof. Daniels at conference)

**Week 8**

October 17

**FALL BREAK**

October 19

Heidegger, on "Anxiety" and "What is Metaphysics?"

**Week 9**

October 24  
October 26  
October 27\*

Heidegger, "The Question Concerning Technology"  
Merleau-Ponty, *The Phenomenology of Perception*, "Preface"  
**SECOND PAPER DUE**

**Week 10**

October 31  
  
November 2

de Beauvoir, *The Second Sex*, "Introduction"; recommended: Sartre, "Existentialism is a Humanism"  
de Beauvoir, *The Ethics of Ambiguity*, selections

**Week 11**

November 7  
November 9

Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, Chapter 5  
Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, "On Violence"

**Week 12**

November 14  
November 16

Horkheimer and Adorno, "The Concept of Enlightenment"  
**NO CLASS** (Prof. Daniels at conference)

**Week 13**

November 21  
November 23

Adorno, "On Subject and Object"  
**THANKSGIVING**

**Week 14**

November 28  
November 30

Foucault, *The History of Sexuality*, Vol. 1, "We 'Other Victorians'"  
Foucault, *The History of Sexuality*, Vol. 1, selections

**Week 15**

December 5

Foucault, *The History of Sexuality*, Vol. 1, selections; Evaluations

December 14\*

**FINAL PAPER DUE**