



## Philosophy 491

# Philosophy of Poetry (Hegel, Heidegger, Gadamer/Derrida)

Spring Semester 2009,  
Michigan State University

Dr. Christian Lotz

### Tentative Schedule (last **UPDATE**: November 03, 2009)

Number	Date	Topic	Reading	Information	Summary Papers	General Assignments
1	Jan 13	Overview				
<b>Introduction</b>						
2	Jan 15	Introduction				
<b>Hegel</b>						
3	Jan 20	Poetry	Hegel, Lectures on Fine Art, Vol II, pp.959-971 (pdf copy)			
4	Jan 22	Poetry	Hegel, Lectures on Fine Art, Vol II, pp.959-971			
5	Jan 27	Poetry and Prose	Hegel, Lectures on Fine Art, Vol II, pp.971-1000 (pdf copy)			
6	Jan 29	Poetry and Prose	Hegel, Lectures on Fine Art, Vol II, pp.971-1000			
7	Feb 3	Poetic Expression	Hegel, Lectures on Fine Art, Vol II, pp.1000-1035 (pdf copy)			
8	Feb 5	Poetic Expression	Hegel, Lectures on Fine Art, Vol II, pp.1000-1035			
9	Feb 10	Lyric Poetry	Hegel, Lectures on Fine Art, Vol II, pp.1111-1147 (pdf copy)			
10	Feb 12	Lyric Poetry	Hegel, Lectures on Fine Art, Vol II, pp.1111-1147		Kashif	
<b>Heidegger, Rilke, Hölderlin</b>						
11	Feb 17	Language	Heidegger, Language; Heidegger, The Origin of the Work of Art, pp.70-76; voluntary: On the Way to Language (copy)		Nathan	Take-Home-Exam 1 due in my box
12	Feb 19	Language	Heidegger, Language; Heidegger, The Origin of the Work of Art, pp.70-76; voluntary: On the Way to Language (copy)			
13	Feb 24	Poetry	Heidegger, Poetically Man Dwells		Caitlin	
14	Feb 26	Poetry	Heidegger, Poetically Man Dwells			
15	Mar 3	Heidegger and Rilke	Heidegger, What are Poets for?; Rilke, Duineso Elegies		Julie	

16	Mar 5	Heidegger and Rilke	Heidegger, What are Poets for?; Rilke, Duineso Elegies	Matthew	
17	Mar 10	Spring Break	Spring Break	Spring Break	Spring Break
18	Mar 12	Spring Break	Spring Break	Spring Break	Spring Break
19	Mar 17	Heidegger and Rilke	Heidegger, What are Poets for?; Rilke, Duineso Elegies		
20	Mar 19	Heidegger and Hölderlin	Heidegger, Hölderlin and the Essence of Poetry	Evan	
21	Mar 24	Heidegger and Hölderlin	Heidegger, Hölderlin and the Essence of Poetry		
<b>Celan, Lacoue-Labarthe, Gadamer, Derrida</b>					
22	Mar 26	Celan on Poetry	Celan, The Meridian (in Derrida, pp.173-187); Celan, Bremen Speech (pdf)		Take-Home-Exam 2 due in my box
23	Mar 31	Celan on Poetry	Celan, The Meridian (in Derrida, pp.173-187); Celan, Bremen Speech (pdf)		
24	Apr 2	Celan	Lacoue-Labarthe, The Experience of Poetry, Catastrophe, pp.41-70	Tina	
25	Apr 7	Celan	Lacoue-Labarthe, The Experience of Poetry, pp.41-70		
26	Apr 9	Hermeneutics and Poetry	Gadamer, Philosophy and Poetry		
27	Apr 14	Hermeneutics and Poetry	Gadamer, On the Contribution of Poetry for the Search of Truth, Poetry and Mimesis	Brandon	
28	Apr 16	Gadamer and Celan	Gadamer, Meaning and Concealment of Meaning in Celan	Jon	
29	Apr 21	Derrida vs. Gadamer	Derrida, Rams: Uninterrupted Dialogue - Between Two Infinities - The Poem, pp.135-164		
30	Apr 23	Derrida vs. Gadamer	Derrida, Rams: Uninterrupted Dialogue - Between Two Infinities - The Poem, pp.135-164	Brianne	
	Apr 28	Derrida vs. Gadamer	Derrida, Rams: Uninterrupted Dialogue - Between Two Infinities - The Poem, pp.135-164		
	Apr 30	Wrap Up	Wrap Up	Wrap Up	Wrap Up
	Final exam day				Take-Home-Exam 3 due in my box Class essay due

**Class Meetings:**

Days: TTH

Time: 3:00pm-4:20pm

Place: A112, Berkey Hall

**Office:**

Phone: 517.353.9392

Place: 503 S. Kedzie Hall

Hours: T(1:00-2:30pm), TH (1-1:30pm), by appointment and by phone

**Exceptions:****Other Contact:**

E-mail: lotz@msu.edu

Home Phone: please ask in class

**Webpage**URL: <http://www.msu.edu/~lotz/classes>(Please check the webpage *regularly* for the current schedule)

**Box**

You will find my box in the front office of the philosophy department (503 South Kedzie); you can also slip your assignments under my door if I am not in my office (507 South Kedzie)

**Course Description:**

What is poetry? How is poetry related to other artistic forms, such as epics, dramatic speech, and songs? Can poetry be translated? What is the relation between philosophy and poetry? In what kind of experience is poetic speech based? In this class we will try to find an answer to the aforementioned questions by reading texts from Hegel, Gadamer, Lacoue-Labarthe, Heidegger, Jacobson, and Bachtin. Though this class will be concerned with meta-questions and differs from an English class, we will read selected German and Anglo-American poets. Students should expect to read difficult texts, which must be studied closely and intensively prepared.

**Course Goals:**

This class should introduce students to selected aspects of a (possible) philosophy of poetry through the study of major texts of the European tradition of thinking about poetry. As such, it is hoped that students learn how to reflect on poetry as a specific form of speaking and language, as well as its relation to philosophy.

**Note:**

Students who did not take philosophy classes before (but signed up for this class) should be aware of the fact that this course is based on extremely difficult (and awkward) texts. Accordingly, this class requires self-responsible learners and an *intense* confrontation with the primary text. In addition, the study of poetic speaking presupposes that you are interested in poetry and that you are not ignorant of the historical dimension of philosophy. Accordingly, if you are not excited about the prospect of a daily confrontation with abstract reflections on poetry, then you should not take this class. This class is not based on set knowledge; rather, we will try to *learn together*.

**Reading assignments and preparation**

The reading assignment per session is limited; however, this means that I expect you to come to class having prepared the texts carefully and thoroughly and that you are able to talk meaningfully about the text, raise questions of your own and provide answers when called upon. I will take the liberty to call on students randomly. An approximate preparation time for each class is a *minimum* of three hours. The reading for the next session, if not clear from the course schedule (below), will be announced at the end of the previous class. "Preparing for class" implies underlining and making excerpts from the text assigned; looking up unfamiliar vocabulary and writing them into a note book (I encourage you to keep a vocabulary booklet for all of your classes). Just reading the text won't be sufficient. You have to *study* the material. Some vocabulary might not be sufficiently explained in a regular dictionary (this goes especially for philosophical terms), so it is necessary to consult additional sources (e.g., the *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* — online (see remark below) — is an excellent source of information, and the MSU Library Website is a great resource for nearly all questions in this context).

**Introductory Information Online**

- Paul Celan: Wikipedia
- Paul Celan: Poets.org
- Paul Celan: Norton Poets
- Wallace Stevens: Wikipedia
- Wallace Stevens: Poets.org
- Wallace Stevens: The Idea of Order at Key West
- Martin Heidegger: Wikipedia
- Martin Heidegger: Ereignis
- Jacques Derrida: Wikipedia
- Phillipe Lacoue-Labarthe: Wikipedia
- Hans-Georg Gadamer: Wikipedia

**Required Texts**

- Derrida, *Sovereignities in Question*
- Lacoue-Labarthe, *The Experience of Poetry*

- Heidegger, Poetry, Language, Thought
- Heidegger, Elucidations of Hölderlin's Poetry
- Gadamer, The Relevance of the Beautiful
- Gadamer, Who am I and Who are You?
- Rilke, Duineso Elegies
- Please RETURN Critchley, Philosophy in the Poetry of Wallace Stevens to the bookstore

### Texts for Download

- Hegel Reading 0
- Hegel Reading 1
- Hegel Reading 2
- Hegel Reading 3
- Hegel Reading 4
- Hegel Reading 5
- Hegel Reading 6

### Course Organization

The course will be organized such that, ideally, each class period will include [i] "interactive" lecture, [ii] oral presentations or [iii] either discussion time (active learning part II) [iv] or *group* assignments (active learning part III). Students will be asked to [a] read a certain text or part of a text for the next class period and [b] give oral presentations (*group* presentations).

### Course Requirements

- 3 take-home exams
- 1 task card
- 1 summary paper
- 1 class essay

### Class Attendance

I hope and strongly encourage that students attend all classes. However, I will not require attendance, as I think that college students should manage their own class attendance decisions. Nevertheless, please be aware that you should not make *me* responsible for a failure that results out of *your* decision.

### Attendance

To get a good grade in this class, regular attendance is required. I will not call roll. Hence, it is up to you to come to class or not. However, if you do not come to class on a regular basis and participate in the class discussion, it is impossible for you to achieve a good grade in this class; so coming to class is your responsibility and your call. If you choose to attend class, please come on time, turn off cell phones and other electronic devices that interfere with your (and others') concentration, have the reading prepared and be ready to participate. If you are not prepared, do not bother showing up. It is a sign of disrespect to your peers and the instructor to attend class unprepared. If you miss class, it is your responsibility to obtain class notes from a fellow student and to catch up on reading.

### Class Response Sheets

Every student is asked to submit up to 5 class response sheets during the semester.

[Click here to download the class response sheet \(Word document, I will only accept answers that are given on this form\)](#)

The response sheets have to be submitted at the end of a class session. I do not accept late turn ins. Submission is voluntary.

### Participation

Students who do not actively participate in class will *not* lose points. I would like to foster an open class atmosphere, in which every participants can express his/her thoughts freely, that is to say, without judgmental pressure. Students, however, who make excellent contributions in class, can earn 5 extra credit points.

### Summary Papers

Every student in class (except graduate students) will write and present a 450 word summary of the readings (see schedule). Every presenter should make copies for everyone in class and read his/her paper aloud in class.

### Task Cards

I will from time to time assign so called "task cards." Students who receive task cards, must write a 1-2 page paper (no more than 600 words) about a concept or about background information. Task cards will be assigned without prior notice in class and have to be prepared for the next class section. Students have to make copies for every participants and pass their assignment out at the beginning of the next class section. For example, in one of our discussions it turns out that no one has ever heard about the philosopher Augustine or about the problem of movement in Zeno. I will ask a student to do research and to prepare brief biographical information of Augustine or an overview of the concept of movement in Zeno. Selected students will read their brief elaborations at the beginning of the next class section. This task is challenging because in your writing you should be as precise as possible. Note: you are *not* allowed to cite common internet resources, such as Wikipedia. Instead, work with the following online resources (or other resources in the library): Oxford Dictionary of Philosophy - Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy - Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy - Encyclopedia of Continental Philosophy (e-book) - The Oxford Companion to Philosophy

### Make-Up Exam

Students who need to miss the exams for *excusable* reasons must inform me ahead of time, and will be permitted to make up the exam. I will only accept official doctor notes (no faxes, no emails) and letters from other professors/athletic directors.

### Class Essay

I expect a brief paper at the end of the class (5 pages, around 1500 words), the topic of which must be chosen from a list that I will pass out during this class.

### Take-Home Exams

In order to intensify and improve your understanding of the material, you will turn in on selected days (check schedule for due dates) brief papers/exams, in which you analyze the readings (2-3 pages, double spaced, no more than 900 words):

[take-home exam 1] Hegel: download assignment

[take-home exam 2] Heidegger: download assignment

[take-home exam 3] Gadamer/Celan/Derrida: download assignment

### General Remark on Assignments

The response sheets will in and outside of the classroom force us to have *an ongoing reflection* on our texts that we read in class. In addition, the assignments will help to prepare the exam. Reading and studying the primary texts is the absolute focus of this class. If you carefully read the texts, then you will easily master the assignments.

### Course Evaluation

You will be evaluated on the basis of:

5 response sheets (turn in at the end of class sessions)		10 points
3 take-home exams	900 words	45 points
1 class essay	1500 words	25 points
1 task card	450 words	10 points
1 summary paper	600 words	10 points
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		100 points

### Grading:

4.0 (=A)	100 - 93
3.5	92 - 87

3 (=B)	86 - 82
2.5	81 - 77
2 (=C)	76 - 72
1.5	71 - 65
1.0 (=D)	64 - 60
0.0 (=F)	< 60

## GENERIC SYLLABUS (might not be applicable to each class)

### Class Attendance

I do not employ in my classes a class attendance policy. Having said this, you should be aware that class attendance is very important. When engaging in a philosophical and humanistic dialogue it is necessary to be an active and present participant in the ongoing discussion. If you miss class please do not email me asking if you missed anything important. Every class is important. You should get a study buddy for the class; a student in class who will inform you of what you missed. If you miss a class you can come to my office hours or make an appointment to discuss the material, providing you have read the material and you simply want to see if your understanding of the material is on target. Time in office hours will not be used to repeat the class lectures.

### Grading Criteria

check this page

### Helpful information about oral presentations, paper writing and plagiarism

Check this page

### Online Research Sources

Unfortunately, some people think that the internet as such is a reliable source of information. If you decide to use online sources for additional information or your paper then do not just use one of the common internet search engines, such as Google; rather, use **reliable academic** sources, such as *Britannica Online*, or the Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy. Here are other resources: Oxford Dictionary of Philosophy - Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy - Encyclopedia of Continental Philosophy (e-book) - The Oxford Companion to Philosophy. The Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy isn't very good, but still acceptable. Check out MSU's library resources! And, as with other sources, you must cite any online sources to which you refer in your essay.

### Writing Center Information

MSU's writing center offers excellent help on all matters regarding writing and learning. Check the website at <http://writing.msu.edu> for an overview and hours. For more information, please call 517.432.3610 or send an e-mail to [writing@msu.edu](mailto:writing@msu.edu).

### Plagiarism

In any essay or exam answer submitted for assessment, all passages taken from other people's work must be placed within quotation marks, with specific reference to author, title and page. *no excuse* can be accepted for any failure to do so, nor will inclusion of the source in a bibliography be considered inadequate acknowledgement. If the marker decides that plagiarism has occurred, the student may be judged to have failed the class.

### Academic Honesty

Article 2.3.3 of the Academic Freedom Report states that "The student shares with the faculty the responsibility for maintaining the integrity of scholarship, grades, and professional standards." In addition, the (insert name of unit offering course) adheres to the policies on academic honesty as specified in General Student Regulations 1.0, Protection of Scholarship and Grades; the all-University Policy on Integrity of Scholarship and Grades; and Ordinance 17.00, Examinations. (See Spartan Life: Student Handbook and Resource Guide and/or the MSU Web site: [www.msu.edu](http://www.msu.edu)) Therefore, unless authorized by your instructor, you are expected to complete all course assignments, including homework, lab work, quizzes, tests and exams, without assistance from any source. You are expected to develop original work for this course; therefore, you may not submit course work completed for another course to satisfy the requirements for this course. Also, you are not authorized to use the [www.allmsu.com](http://www.allmsu.com) Web site to complete any course work in (insert course number here). Students who violate MSU rules may receive a penalty grade, including but not limited to a failing grade on the assignment or in the course. Contact your instructor if

you are unsure about the appropriateness of your course work. (See also <http://www.msu.edu/unit/ombud/honestylinks.html>)

### **Accommodations for Students with Disabilities**

Students with disabilities should contact the Resource Center for Persons with Disabilities to establish reasonable accommodations. For an appointment with a counselor, call 353-9642 (voice) or 355-1293 (TTY)

### **Drops and Adds**

The last day to add this course is the end of the first week of classes. The last day to drop this course with a 100 percent refund and no grade reported is (see Academic Calendar). The last day to drop this course with no refund and no grade reported is (see Academic Calendar). You should immediately make a copy of your amended schedule to verify you have added or dropped this course.

### **Note on Attendance**

Students who fail to attend the first four class sessions or class by the fifth day of the semester, whichever occurs first, may be dropped from the course

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