The Chinese University of Hong Kong
Department of Philosophy
2022-23 Term 2

PHIL5180/ PHIL7180
Special Seminar on Selected Philosophical Issues:
I and we: The self and the group

Course Outline

What is the relation between subjectivity and intersubjectivity, and between individual subjects and social groups? Does membership in a group presuppose or constitute selfhood? Will a plurality of selfless minds be able to constitute a we? What is the relation between short-lived groups that are established in order to achieve a specific goal and more enduring and habitualized groups that are unified by normative systems of duties and right. The course will discuss these fundamental questions by drawing on central texts in classical phenomenology, social theory, and cognitive science. The first class will provide an introduction to contemporary discussions of selfhood. The second class will focus on Husserl's multidimensional account of self. The third class will discuss collectivist accounts of self and broach the issue of collective identity. The fourth and final class will present Gurwitsch's classical distinction between different types of group formations.

Teacher: Prof. Dan Zahavi
Time: Fridays 2:30 - 5:15 pm
Venue: Lee Shau Kee Building 308 (LSK308)

1st session (10 March 2023): The enigmatic self
What is a self? Is it an ontological independent substance or a brain (or societal) generated illusion? And can we at all make do with just one notion of self?

Required Reading:
Neisser, U. 1988. Five kinds of self-knowledge. *Philosophical Psychology* 1/1, 35-59.

Recommended Reading:
Margolis, J. 1988. Minds, Selves, and Persons. *Topoi* 7/1, 31–45.

2nd session (17 March 2023): The pure and the personal ego
In this class, we will look at Husserl's proposal that selfhood isn't merely a fundamental aspect of consciousness, but also something that develops through social interaction and the accumulation of life-experience.

Required Reading:

Husserl, E. 1977. *Phenomenological Psychology: Lectures, Summer Semester, 1925*. Translated by John Scanlon. The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, §§ 41-42.

Husserl, E. 1989. *Ideas Pertaining to a Pure Phenomenology and to a Phenomenological Philosophy. Second Book. Studies in the Phenomenology of Constitution*. Translated by Richard Rojcewicz and André Schuwer. Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers, §§ 22-25, 50-51.

Recommended Reading:
Belt, J. 2019. Between Minimal Self and Narrative Self: A Husserlian Analysis of Person. *Journal of the British Society for Phenomenology* 50/4, 305-323.

3rd session (24 March 2023): The primacy of the group?
A widespread view in cultural psychology and anthropology is that selfhood is communally grounded and enabled. We will look at one such defence of a groupist or collectivist account of the self, and also consider what collective identity might mean.

Required reading:

Markus, H.R., Kitayama, S. 2010. Cultures and selves: A cycle of mutual constitution. *Perspectives on psychological science* 5/4, 420-430.

Mathiesen, K. 2003. On collective identity. *ProtoSociology* 18/19, 66-86.

Recommended readings:

Taylor, C. 1985. The person. In M. Carrithers, S. Collins, S. Lukes (eds.), *The Category of the Person: Anthropology, Philosophy, History* (pp. 257–281). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

4th session (31 March 2023): Gesellschaft and Gemeinschaft (Association and community)
A number of phenomenologists (Scheler, Husserl, Stein, Walther) have argued that there are different types of social formations. In this class, we will consider how Gurwitsch distinguishes instrumental partnerships from communal memberships.

Required reading:
Gurwitsch, A. 1979. *Human Encounters in the Social World*. Translated by F. Kersten. Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, §§ 18-25.

Recommended readings:

Zahavi, D. 2018. Intersubjectivity, sociality, community: The contributions of the early phenomenologists. In D. Zahavi (ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of the History of Phenomenology* (pp. 734-752). Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Requirements:
At the end of the course, please submit a term paper of no more than 15 double-spaced typescript pages on a topic we have covered in the course."

Grade Descriptors:
Please refer to: http://phil.arts.cuhk.edu.hk/~phidept/UG/Grade_descriptors.pdf

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Academic honesty and plagiarism
Attention is drawn to University policy and regulations on honesty in academic work, and to the disciplinary guidelines and procedures applicable to breaches of such policy and regulations. Details may be found at

http://www.cuhk.edu.hk/policy/academichonesty/

For assignments in the form of a computer-generated document that is principally text-based and submitted via VeriGuide, the statement, in the form of a receipt, will be issued by the system upon students' uploading of the soft copy of the assignment. Assignments without the receipt will not be graded by teachers. Only the final version of the assignment should be submitted via VeriGuide.