

## PHIL 474: Ad-hoc Revisions to the Syllabus

Compiled by Renxiang Liu on 2020-03-18

The following ad-hoc revisions are made to the original course syllabus (still accessible on MyCourses) in light of the emergency of the COVID-19 pandemic. Such revisions are made in accordance to the policies and instructions of McGill University. Their general aim is to fulfill a considerable proportion of teaching goals for the rest of the semester under the current circumstance, while respecting student rights and equity.

The following revisions **overwrite** the original syllabus. This means that, whenever there is a conflict of content between this document and the original syllabus, students should refer to this document. On the other hand, what was stated in the original syllabus and *not* mentioned in this document (for example, grading criteria of essays) remains valid.

Since the situation and the university's reaction is fluid, this document itself is subject to modification. Whenever a modification is made, a new version of this document will be uploaded, and you will receive an automated notice from MyCourses.

### Revision to Teaching and Reading Schedule

McGill has advised against introducing any **new** material before March 30. Accordingly, **no content for the remaining weeks (from Week 11: Finitude) will be uploaded till then.**

Moreover, since the university "does not expect to extend the term or push back the exam period", our remaining content must be trimmed and condensed. My decision is thus (a) to **cut part of the content** (for example, Week 12: The "null basis") and (b) to **rearrange the online discussion posts** accordingly.

Below is what will happen next:

| Original Week # | Topic    | Readings   | Release date of lecture video | Due date of online discussion posts (applicable only to the questions) |
|-----------------|----------|--|-------------------------------|--|
| 11              | Finitude | <b>Part 1:</b><br>1. SZ, §§45-48 (pp. 274-290)<br>2. SZ, §50 (pp. 293-296) * | <b>Part 1:</b><br>March 31    | <b>Part 1:</b><br>April 4  |

| Original Week # | Topic                           | Readings   | Release date of lecture video | Due date of online discussion posts (applicable only to the questions) |
|-----------------|---------------------------------|--|-------------------------------|--|
| 11              | Finitude                        | <p><b>Part 2:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Edith Stein, "Martin Heidegger's Existential Philosophy" (excerpt), pp. 69-83</li> <li>2. Heidegger, <i>The Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics</i>, §49 (excerpt), pp. 208-209</li> <li>3. Merleau-Ponty, <i>Phenomenology of Perception</i>, "Solipsism cannot be overcome 'in God'", pp. 375-376 *</li> </ol> | Part 2: April 3               | Part 2: April 8  |
| 13              | Authenticity and inauthenticity | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. SZ, §§38; 54 (pp. 219-224; 312-315)</li> <li>2. Charles Guignon, "Heidegger's 'Authenticity' Revisited", Sections I-II (pp. 321-334)</li> <li>3. Michael E. Zimmerman, <i>Eclipse of the Self</i>, pp. 44-52 *</li> <li>4. SZ, §§53; 62 (pp. 304-311; 352-358) *</li> </ol>  | April 8                       | April 11   |
| 14              | The (belated) question of time  | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Merleau-Ponty, <i>Phenomenology of Perception</i>, "There is no time in things", pp. 433-435</li> <li>2. SZ, §§78-81 (pp. 456-480)<br/>OR, alternatively,<br/>Michael Gelven, <i>A Commentary on Heidegger's Being and Time</i>, pp. 214-220</li> </ol>  | April 14                      | April 18   |

Pay specific attention to the following:

1. An **asterisk (\*)** indicates that the content is optional, i.e., not mandatory. It will not be tested in the assignments; nor will the mandatory content presume a grasp of the optional content.
2. Week 11 (Finitude) is split into **two Parts** and will take up **two "Topics"** on the discussion board. Week 12 (The "null basis"), because dropped from the teaching schedule, is accordingly removed from the discussion board.

3. Only the lecture video of Week 11 will be released in two installments. Week 13 and 14 will each appear as a single video. It is advisable that you watch them at your own pace; take a break when the content feels too dense.
4. I have only listed the due dates of discussion **questions**, for all the deadlines for the responses are waived. (See next section.)

### **Revision to Evaluation Method**

1. Online discussion posts: it remains effective that you need to post **3 questions and 7 responses** throughout the semester in order to complete the course requirement.  
You may post up to one question and one response under the same “Topic”—a “Topic” usually corresponds to a Week in the original syllabus, except that Week 11 has been split into two Parts, hence two “Topics”. As a result, you may post a question and a response for Week 11, Part 1, and then post a question and a response for Week 11, Part 2.  
The due dates for the questions are listed in the table above. **The deadlines for all the responses are waived.** This is to make the students (especially those who postponed their posting activity to the end of the semester) less stressful. **As long as a response is posted before the end of April, it will be considered a valid submission.** You may even post a response for Week 1 on April 30.
2. Second essay (reflection paper): there will be **6-7 topics** for you to pick from. They are from different Weeks of the course. The topics will be made available on MyCourses before March 20.  
Alternatively, you may write on another topic you are interested in, on the conditions that (a) it is related to the content of this course, (b) your argument draws on the texts we read this semester, and (c) you consult with me **before April 14** by sending me a brief outline.  
The due date of the second essay remains **April 30** (“general extension” granted to everyone till this date), but students are advised to start thinking of the essay once the topics are released.
3. The weight distribution of the grade items remains the same as in the original syllabus: online discussion posts (20%), first essay (40%), second essay (40%).

### **Contact and Consultation**

**From March 18 to April 29**, I will have “virtual office hours” during my regular hours, that is, **Wednesdays 10:15–11:45 A.M.**

Students who wish to talk to me must **make an email appointment with me in advance** and **reserve a time slot of 15 min** during these periods. The conversation will be over Skype audio calls (no video please). My skype account is: [renxiang.liu@outlook.com](mailto:renxiang.liu@outlook.com).

Brief communications about course content, management and assessment can also be made over emails.