Phenomenology  Philosophy 442/542 – Spring 2019 - McClamrock

Writing assignment #1 -- Due Saturday, March 2nd at 6am

Everyone must do one of these. These are essays, not research papers; you typically shouldn’t need to cite anything but the assigned readings. Don’t hesitate to use quotations and citations from those texts when appropriate to support your claims and interpretations. Stay off the internets; they will only confuse things more. Essays should be close to 1200 words long for students in 442, and close to 1500 words long for students in 542. And please review and follow the paper submission rules below before submitting your paper.

1. Distinguish Husserl’s “two kinds of immanence” as discussed in The Idea of Phenomenology. Why are they different? Why does he want one kind rather than the other? Critically evaluate his reasons for that.

2. In class the distinction was made (following Frege) between the epistemic and the semantic roles of thought. Clearly distinguish these, and then discuss the following aspects of Husserl’s approach to them in The Idea of Phenomenology. How does he distinguish these? Why? Does he argue for ascribing both roles to a single thing? If so, what’s the argument? If not, why not?

3. What is the point of Husserl’s “deaf man” example in relation to his view that a theory of cognition qua cognition cannot be what he calls a science of the natural sort? Is the point well-taken? Critically evaluate.

4. Explain what a transcendent (as opposed to immanent) essence is for Husserl (in Ideas), and say why he thinks phenomenology must proceed by bracketing all transcendent essences. What is the most critical problem you see for this project? What could Husserl say to that criticism?

5. Give the best argument you can for the claim that eidetic reduction is impossible if transcendental reduction has already been performed. Give what you see as the best answer Husserl could make to this problem for him, and evaluate the conflict.

6. Summarize and critically evaluate the "transcendental" argument Husserl offers on pp.208-210 of Ideas to counter skepticism about the deliverances of reflection. What's the best criticism of Husserl’s argument? What’s the best Husserlian response that could be made? Adjudicate.

7. I suggested in class that two fundamental worries about the noetic-noematic structures for Husserl were (a) the apparent context-dependency of the mapping of noeses to noemata, and (b) the apparent lack of phenomenological saliency of the noetic sense-giving phases. Pick one of these and (i) explain the worry given in class about it, (ii) give the best Husserlian response to that worry that you can, and (iii) evaluate the disagreement.

8. Substitute topic: If you have a different topic you would like to write on that comes out of the class, you may submit the topic for approval. Substitute topics must be submitted as a one-paragraph e-mail to me by 8am Sunday 2/24. If I approve the substitute topic (which would happen later that day) you may write on it instead. If not, you must write on one of these. Don’t assume I’ll approve it; the vast majority of suggested substitutes are way too broad.

Paper submission rules:

- Papers must be submitted as documents attached to e-mail addressed to me at rmclamrock@albany.edu. These should be formatted as .docx files if possible (the native format in recent Microsoft Word); if you can’t use .docx, use .rtf (“Rich Text Format”). You need to use one of those formats. No PDFs or other file formats.
- Name the file Q1A1_Lastname_Firstname_PHI442.docx, substituting your name and the assignment/question numbers in appropriately -- e.g., assignment #1 written on question 3 from Eric Cartman should be named "Q3A2_Cartman_Eric_PHI442.docx", replacing "442" with "542" if you’re in APHI 542..
- Send the paper as an attachment to an email message. The subject line of the email should be the same as the paper file name; e.g., “Q3A1_Cartman_Eric_PHI442”. The message body should not be left empty; include a line saying “Here is Eric Cartman’s assignment #1 on question #3 for PHI 442” (substituting with your own details.) You may also include a joke in the message body, but no extra credit unless it’s really, really funny.
- Please format papers simply, single-spaced, with your name, the assignment and question number, and any title you might give to the paper at the top of the first page (don’t use a separate title page). Please set the text font to 12 pt Times-Roman, and set the left margin to 1” and the right margin to 2.5”.
- When you send papers to me, please cc: yourself to make sure everything worked OK.
- Late papers are marked down by one grade notch (e.g. B to B- or B- to C+) for every hour or portion thereof I receive them after the due date and time.
- Plagiarizing (i.e. using the words or content of others as your own), will result in being failed for the course and reported to the Dean’s office. Please, cite any outside sources that influence your paper, especially (but not only) ones that you quote.