

University of West Georgia  
**Phenomenology of Social Existence 7490-01** Spring 2020  
MW 11:00AM-12:15PM Melson Hall 213  
Psychology Department  
University of West Georgia

Instructor: Dr. Richard E. La Fleur  
Phone: (678) 839-6510  
Email: [rlafleur@westga.edu](mailto:rlafleur@westga.edu)  
Office: Melson Hall – (209)  
Office Hours: By appointment only

### Course Description

This course is intended to take a microscopic look at Phenomenology, from the historical context (reviewing the work and writings of Husserl and Heidegger) along with along with the selected texts, to situate the importance and current implications of Phenomenology and Social Existence. The discipline of Psychology assumes the generality of *intersubjectivity*, as it relates to philosophy, psychology and society at large. The work of phenomenology has the ability to reveal deeper meanings of life and gain knowledge for applied interventions, research and practice. Even greater concern lies within the division and pluralistic approaches made popular by mainstream psychology and there is a cry for an integrative approach - one which commences with the human as the center of experience. As an added layer to better understand the complexity of human existence, this course will take a slight turn in the direction of Sociology by exploring the works of Herbert Mead and R. Blume to investigate society, behavior and what constitutes our existence. Finally, we will take a closer look at the work of *Ruthellen Josselson*, a major contributor to qualitative research and do a close read of Isabell Wilkerson's book, "The Warmth of Other Suns, to investigate and test the phenomena we are studying. It is important to note that the alternative conceptual foundations explored, are most noteworthy for their assumptions regarding holism, agency, and the inescapably moral foundations of the self and social relationships.

### Course Objectives

1. To gain understanding of historical development sustaining the conception of phenomenology as a psychological inquiry for human experience.
2. To gain understanding of intersubjectivity as it is related to human existence.
3. To identify and contextualize different theories of human development and the application of said theories to applied situations and interventions.
4. To apply critical thinking and theories towards intersubjectivity – thus repudiating the mainstream perspective and identifying integrative perspective
5. Demonstrate competence in thinking, discussing and writing (APA format) for publication.

### Approaches to instruction

Instruction in this course is delivered face-to-face and online (hybrid) through Course Den, D2L learning system. Approaches can include online teaching format, online class discussions, discussion groups and postings, readings, videos and podcasts, guest lecturers as well as student developmental research. Additionally, students will work independently to cover the material outlined in the syllabus to ensure understanding of concepts within the course.

### Required Materials

1. Freeman, M., (1993) *Rewriting the self: History, memory, narrative*. ISBN0414041988. Routledge, NY
2. Josselson, R., (2013) *Interviewing for qualitative inquiry*. ISBN9871462510009. The Guilford Press, NY
3. Jung, C. (1958) *The undiscovered self: The dilemma of the individual in modern society*. New American Library. ISBN 0-451-21860-4.

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4. Kleinman, A., (2006) What really matters: Living a moral life amidst uncertainty and danger. ISBN 0195180984 Oxford University Press, NY
5. Randall, W., (2015) The narrative complexity of ordinary life: Tales from the coffee shop. ISBN 9780190675134 Oxford University Press, NY

Other Readings (optional and will be presented in class)

1. Spiegelberg, H., (1965) The phenomenological movement: A historical introduction, V1 & 2. Martinus Nijhoff, Netherlands
2. Mead, G.H., (1934) Mind, self and society: From the standpoint of a Social Behaviorist. University of Chicago Press, Chicago.
3. Wilkerson, I., (2010) The warmth of other suns: The epic story of America's great migration. ISBN978-0-679-76388-8Vintage Books, NY  
You may find these resources at the [UWG Bookstore](#)

Grading

1. Participation (50%) – One of the most rewarding ways of learning and disseminating information is when more are gathered and sharing of the narrative takes on an organic and yet researched format. Thoughtful reading of the selected texts and the ability to present summaries, develop questions along with appropriate responses, connect texts to other and broader texts and issues is the expectation set for this course. This can also include informal writing, research progress report and presentation of final paper in class. Finally listening to others and respectfully handling of disagreements is a part of this course.
2. Paper Development (50%) – This process begins with the development of “finding your voice” or “identifying your voice” or “listening to your voice” within the context of an idea, concept or current research you are engaged with, to further your process. Once you have connected with the idea, concept or problem of meaningful interest to you (my research question), you can begin to apply the “process of this course” to build on to move your cause forward and begin to develop your work and find your voice for publication. This will present itself in the form of a scholarly paper (in preparation for publication or conference presentation) and you will offer critical conceptual analysis (theoretical foundation) and how your voice can add to the conversation. Additionally, to compliment your research, exploring different articles and journals that suit your work, it part of the requirement for this course. This broadens your scope and helps you focus your writing to suit the style of the journal you are interested in. Finally, our time will culminate with a 10-minute in class presentation of your final work as a collective narrative as ‘we’ listen and learn from you.

Suggested length – 15-20 pages (most publications are between 10-15)

**Draft will be required at midterms to show progress**

All submissions must follow APA 6<sup>th</sup> ed. format.

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### Grading Scale

Course grade is determined entirely by the total points a student earns:

90-100% →	A
80-89% →	B
70-79% →	C
60-69% →	D
Below 60% →	F

### Policies

#### Communication & Engagement:

The best way to communicate with me is through email. On weekdays, I will attempt to respond to you within 24 hours and 48 hours on the weekends. If I am out of town or attending a conference, responding may take longer than normal. I would strongly suggest that you use the email system within Course Den to communicate with me. All course related communication will be done within Course Den. It is important that you log into Course Den regularly for any updates or additional information related to the course. It is also important to maintain a strong professional manner in communicating with me. Your emails should be structured as follows:

Subject: "Your Name" and "4884-Section #"  
Body of email: (Dear/Hello) Professor/Dr. La Fleur  
"The reason for your email" - Well constructed and professionally written!  
"End with Thank you or an appropriate ending".

If this format is not followed, this can/will affect your final grade!

One of the goals of this course is to get you ready for life 'post grad' and the way we communicate is an important of your transition. I urge you to be mindful of your email messages. I will not accept poor grammar and texting language in your emails to me. Being professional and having appropriate boundaries are critical to your engagement with the 'real world'.

**Missed Assignments:** If you miss an assignment, and prior arrangements have not been made, you may receive a grade of F on that particular assignment or paper and this may affect your final grade in the class. If you miss an assignment due to an emergency, please contact the Psychology office at [\(678\) 839-6510](tel:6788396510) or go to Melson Room 123 as soon as possible to complete the: "**Missed Final Exam: Verification of Emergency**" form. This form will need to be approved by the chair for an incomplete grade which may allow you the time to make up your exam or complete your final assignments. This application will require documentation and authorization from you to verify your emergency.

**Rounding up:** As a general rule, I do not 'round up' grades. Please be certain that you will receive the grade you earned based on the percentage of points that you garner during the semester. So, for example, if you obtain 82.9% of the available points, then you will have earned a B. I understand that this may be counter to the prevailing *zeitgeist*, but with the prevalence of grade inflation and with the hope that you will want to put forth just that little bit more effort knowing the rules in advance, this is grading philosophy I believe in. Naturally, I reserve the right to raise students' grades if they *consistently* demonstrate their commitment to the course by *volunteering* thoughtful comments or questions in class. However, I will not "round up" grades as a routine procedure.

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#### Academic Integrity

Cheating, plagiarism, and all other forms of academic dishonesty will NOT be tolerated. All incidents of academic dishonesty will be dealt with in accordance to university regulations (please see your student handbook). Students caught engaged in any form of academic dishonesty will minimally be given a failing grade on the assignment or exam in question.

#### Accommodations

Students with special needs as determined by the [Counseling and Career Development Center](#) must submit a letter to the instructor within the first two weeks of class (or as soon as the needs have been determined) specifying the accommodations they require.

#### Equal Opportunity Statement

No person shall, on the grounds of race, color, sex, religion, creed, national origin, age, or disability, be excluded from employment or participation in, be denied the benefits of, or otherwise be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity conducted by UWG.

#### Affirmative Action Statement

University of West Georgia adheres to affirmative action policies to promote diversity and equal opportunity for all faculty and students.

#### UWG Copyright Statement

[See statement](#)

#### Support

If you need technical assistance, please see [ITS](#) or [UWG ONLINE](#). If you are having academic difficulties, please seek assistance through [Center for Academic Success](#). If you are having other difficulties, please seek assistance through [UWG Cares](#) or [click here for more information](#).

#### Plagiarism

[See UWG policy](#)

#### Student Rights and Responsibilities

[See UWG policy](#)

#### Work Due Policy

All assignments are due at the times specified. There is a 3-day window where assignments will be accepted with a 10pt penalty per 24 hours that they are late. After 3 days, if your assignment is still not turned in, you will receive an automatic zero.

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Network Usage Policy

[See policy](#)

Important Dates

[Click here for information.](#)

Important Information

Please click [here](#) for important material pertaining to your rights and responsibilities in this class. These statements are updated as federal, state, university and accreditation standards change, and you should review these standards every semester.

Technology

Mobile devices are part of our culture and society today. While I am a huge fan of technology, during class time please abstain from using your devices to ‘stay connected’ to the rest of the world. The time we have together is part of an invitation to share dialogue and connect with one another that is different from the connection brought about by mobile devices. Please respect the classroom environment as a space to think and interact with each other.

UWG Email Policy

University of West Georgia students are provided a MyUWG e-mail account. The University considers this account to be an official means of communication between the University and the student. The purpose of the official use of the student e-mail account is to provide an effective means of communicating important university related information to UWG students in a timely manner. It is the student’s responsibility to check his or her email.

Credit Hour Policy

The University of West Georgia grants one semester hour of credit for work equivalent to a minimum of one hour (50 minutes) of in-class or other direct faculty instruction AND two hours of student work outside of class per week for approximately fifteen weeks. For each course, the course syllabus will document the amount of in-class (or other direct faculty instruction) and out-of-class work required to earn the credit hour(s) assigned to the course. Out-of-class work will include all forms of credit-bearing activity, including but not limited to assignments, readings, observations, and musical practice. Where available, the university grants academic credit for students who verify via competency-based testing, that they have accomplished the learning outcomes associated with a course that would normally meet the requirements outlined above (e.g. AP credit, CLEP, and departmental exams).

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HB 280 (Campus Carry)

UWG follows University System of Georgia (USG) guidance:

You may also visit our [website](#) for help with USG [Guidance](#):

#### Stress and Well-Being

Taking a college course “should” be difficult, in the sense that it ought to challenge you to expand your way of thinking. However, stress can overwhelm students and reach an unhealthy level. For that reason, it is important to note that students’ ‘well-being’ has priority. This is not a convenient excuse for laziness or a lack of commitment to the difficult work involved in the course. Nevertheless, if you begin to feel overwhelmed, I ask that you please come see me as soon as possible. I can help connect you to resources that will aid you in establishing a healthy balance.

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**Proposed Course Outline**

- Week 1: 1/6 - Introduction and Orientation. Please see reading posted in Course Den(CD)
- Week 2: 1/3 - Introduction to 'What is self'? - Rewriting the self: History, memory, narrative - (Freeman)
- Week 3: 1/20 - 'Self' continued – (Freeman)
- Week 4: 1/27 - Deeper look at Society (Jung)
- Week 5: 2/3 - Man and Society – Sociology (Works of George H. Mead (CD))
- Week 6: 2/10 - Man and Society – Sociology (Works of George H. Mead (CD)) – (La Fleur at conference)
- Week 7: 2/17 - Symptoms of Culture – (Works of Marjorie Garber (CD)) - (La Fleur at conference)
- Week 8:2/24 - What role does history play in culture and society? – (Works of Isabel Wilkerson (CD))
- Week 9: 3/2 - (Midterm) - Man, dehumanizing or Soul Making? – (Works of James Hillman (CD))
- Week 10: 3/9 - Mattering and Morality – (Kleinman, A), (La Fleur/Watts(CD))
- Week 11: 3/16 – SPRING BREAK WEEK**
- Week 12: 3/23 - Turning to the Narrative – (Randall), (Ricoeur, P., McAdams, D. (CD))
- Week 13: 3/30 - Roots and understanding of Phenomenology – (Works of Spielberg, H (CD))
- Week 14: 4/6 - Roots and understanding of Phenomenology – (Works of Spielberg, H (CD))
- Week 15: 4/13 - Contemporary Phenomenology – (Works of Husserl, Heidegger and Giorgi (to name a few))
- Week 16:4/20 Contemporary Phenomenology – (Works of Husserl, Heidegger and Giorgi (to name a few))
- Week 17: 4/27 - Research and Writing – (Josselson)
- Week 18: 5/4 - FINAL WEEK - Final Paper and Presentation**

This syllabus is an evolutionary document; therefore, the dates of exams, projects, etc. may be revised as the semester progresses. Thus, the dates contained in this syllabus are NOT binding. Syllabus subject to change at professor's discretion.