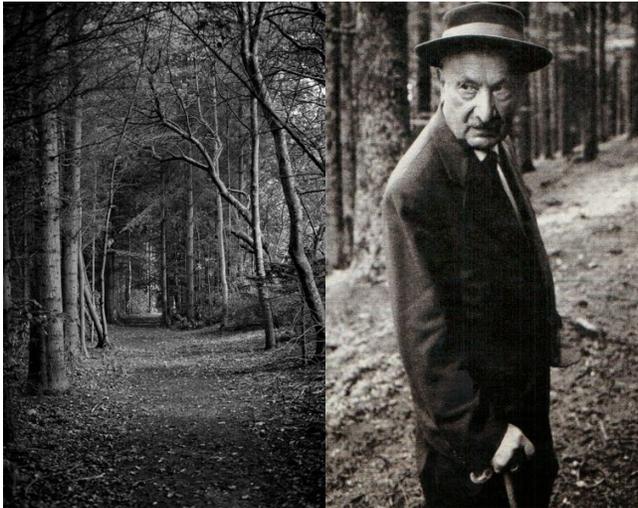**Heidegger: Poetry, Language, Thought (PHIL 3644)**
Christopher R. Myers (cmyers28@fordham.edu)
Fordham University, Fall 2025
Lowenstein Rm. 413A: Wednesday 11:30am-2:15pm
Office Hours (Lowenstein 916C): Wednesday 4:00pm-5:00pm & by appt.

In this course we will study the later writings of Martin Heidegger: perhaps the single most influential philosopher of the 20ᵗʰ century, and a deeply mysterious and controversial figure. In particular, we will focus on three consistent themes for reflection in Heidegger's writings—poetry („*Dichtung*"), language („*Sprache*"), and thought („*Denken*")—and we will determine how they relate to the fundamental shift in philosophical inquiry that he attempted. The class will proceed through a combination of reading, writing, discussion, and exercises in poetic creativity. We will work collaboratively and we will attempt to *make* and *do* as much as we *think*.

Course description:

The aim of our course is to examine Heidegger's later writings and develop an understanding of three core themes in his philosophy: [1] language („*Sprache*"); [2] thought („*Denken*"); and [3] poetry („*Dichtung*"). When Heidegger's *Being and Time* was published in 1927, it was considered a landmark event in philosophy. Word of this text spread throughout Europe "like the rumor of the hidden king," and Heidegger was hailed as having inspired a return to the earliest beginnings of philosophy. Over the course of the next two decades, however, Heidegger's philosophy would undergo a "turn" („*Kehre*") which rendered his writing in many ways even more abstract, complex, and mysterious. Whereas the focus of *Being and Time* had been primarily Dasein (i.e., existence)—which Heidegger explained as a necessary consequence of the fact that our existence is the singular in which any inquiry about the nature of Being and time becomes possible—Heidegger turns in the 1930's and 1940's to reflect on the meaning of Being itself („*Sein*")—i.e., Being as that which shapes, changes, and decenters our existence in the first place.

Heidegger's later writings are exceptionally difficult to read and understand. This is certainly not helped by the fact that Heidegger briefly aligned himself with the National Socialist Movement during the 1930's: a decision he later regretted, but still yet a decision which has affected the reception of his writings. Heidegger's later writings have

nevertheless become increasingly influential within the world of philosophy for those who are brave enough to undertake them. This is precisely what we will do in this class: we will attempt to delve into Heidegger's writings after the "turn" in his thinking during the 1930's, and we will attempt to ascertain what the later Heidegger has to offer the discipline of philosophy. We will focus specifically on Heidegger's reflections on the themes of poetry („*Dichtung*"), language („*Sprache*"), and thought („*Denken*"), which—as we will see—point to three fundamental modes of disclosure by which Being appears as it is: poeticizing („*dichten*"), speaking („*sprechen*"), and thinking („*denken*").

Required texts:

Heidegger, Martin. *Being and Time*, trans. John Macquarrie & Edward Robinson. New York: Harper Perennial Modern Classics, 2008. ISBN#: 978-0061575594

Heidegger, Martin. *On the Way to Language*, trans. Peter D. Hertz. New York: Harper & Row, 1971. ISBN#: 978-0060638597

Heidegger, Martin. *Poetry, Language, Thought*, trans. Albert Hofstadter. New York: Harper Perennial Classics, 2001. ISBN#: 978-0060937287

Recommended texts:

Babich, Babette. *Words in Blood, Like Flowers: Philosophy and Poetry, Music and Eros in Hölderlin, Nietzsche, and Heidegger*. Albany: State University of New York Press, 2006.

Gosetti-Ferencei, Jennifer. *Heidegger, Hölderlin, and the Subject of Poetic Language: Toward a New Poetics of Dasein*. New York: Fordham University Press, 2009. ISBN#: 978-0823223619.

Heidegger, Martin. *Basic Writings*, ed. David Farrell Krell. New York: Harper Perennial Modern Classics, 2008. ISBN#: 978-0061627019.

Heidegger, Martin. *What Is Called Thinking?*, trans. J. Glenn Gray. New York: Harper Perennial Modern Classics, 1976. ISBN#: 978-0060905286.

Hölderlin, Friedrich. *Selected Poems and Fragments*, trans. Michael Hamburger. New York: Penguin, 1998. ISBN: 978-01404241

Rilke, Rainer Maria. *Poems from the Book of Hours*, trans. Babette Deutsch. New York: New Directions Books, 2018. ISBN: 978-0811227582

Course requirements:

[1] Attendance/participation	10%
[2] Coursework (Perusall + Blackboard)	30%
[3] Class Presentations	10%
[4] Research Paper Proposal and Outline	10%
[5] Research Paper Presentation	10%
[6] Research Paper Assignment	30%

[1] Attendance/participation:
I will take attendance at the beginning of each class. You are allowed two unexcused absences before I must start taking points away from your overall attendance/participation grade. I will excuse an absence for a religious holiday, a serious illness, a death in your

immediate family, or your participation in a university-sponsored holiday. To get an absence excused, you must send me a formal, written explanation *before* the class in question.

Your attendance grade is also dependent on (a) your active participation during class time, and (b) your bringing all required reading materials to class (either by physical copy or computer access). Concerning class participation: our in-person class meetings will be devoted *entirely* (*100%*) to discussion about the assigned readings, and this means that your active participation during class time is absolutely essential. My expectation is that you will not only maintain strong attendance throughout the semester, but also contribute your thoughts during class discussions and act respectfully toward your classmates. Listen thoughtfully, keep an open mind, and contribute what you think. Philosophy is most worthwhile when it is enlivened by discussion and exchange.

[2] Coursework (Perusall + Blackboard):
For all of our assigned reading this semester, you must complete two weekly assignments: (1) you must add comments directly onto the assigned reading via our course Perusall page, and (2) you must contribute to our class' discussion forum in the 'Discussions' section of the course Blackboard page.

Concerning (1): Perusall allows students to collaboratively make annotations and comments on a reading. Everyone in the class is required to post at least *three* comments on our reading(s) in advance of every class meeting, and these comments can be posted directly onto the reading itself or in response to one of your classmates' previous comments. Your grade on these assignments will be based on completion. At the same time, I reserve the right to take off points for inaccuracy or irrelevance.

The deadline for all coursework on Perusall is 10:00am on the day of the class in question. No late coursework will be accepted as the purpose of these assignments is to create conversation about the readings in advance of our discussions in class.

Concerning (2): in advance of every class meeting you must also participate in our class' online discussions in the 'Discussions' section of the course Blackboard page. More specifically, you must (a) start a new discussion post and post a paragraph which responds to our weekly discussion question or activity (at least 300 words); and also (b) respond to at least one of your classmates' discussion posts (at least 50 words).

Your discussion post must also be submitted before 10:00am on the day of the class in question. Unlike the Perusall coursework, however, your discussion post needs to respond to a specific question or activity that I will announce in advance of each reading. For this reason, your grade on these discussion posts will be based on quality as well as completion. No matter what the specific question or activity is, however, the aim of these analyses will always be to engage more deeply with the readings. Accordingly, your discussion posts should always include at least one direct reference to the assigned reading (with an in-text citation). Make sure you're working to clarify our author's reasoning, and make sure also you are contributing your own thoughts and thereby reflecting *on* our author's reasoning.

When you comment on a classmate's coursework paragraph, finally, your task is to respond in such a way that you contribute new questions, additional thoughts, or new conclusions to the discussion they have already started. I want these coursework discussions to be enjoyable to write (and read!), so challenge yourself and see what new thoughts you can produce.

[3] Class Presentation:
This semester each of you is required to do one in-class presentation. Your presentation will take place immediately after our warm-up discussion, and should run for at least 15 minutes (not including discussion time afterward).

The purpose of these class presentations is to provide an overview of the day's assigned reading, clarify the key points of our author's argument/reasoning, and raise at least three discussion questions that you think deserve attention. Your presentation can be delivered via PowerPoint, Prezi, or simply the whiteboard (I have no preference). However you choose to deliver it, your presentation should consist in an overview, summary, and analysis of the assigned reading, and then a set of concluding thoughts alongside your proposed discussion questions.

You will be graded on the accuracy of your presentation, the quality of your delivery, and your ability to answer questions from the class. Please consult our class' 'Guide for Class Presentations' handout for more detailed information and requirements. Additionally, consult our class' 'Guide for Class Presentations' handout for your presentation date (I have assigned the presentations randomly across the semester). You may exchange the date of your assigned presentation with another student in the class, provided both parties agree and you let me know at least a week in advance.

[4] Research Proposal and Outline + [5] Research Paper Presentation + [6] Research Paper Assignment:
We will have one major writing assignment this semester: a research paper that is due on December 17th. The purpose of this paper assignment is to analyze something in Heidegger's late writings which engages with existing scholarship on Heidegger and provides an original contribution of your own.

Before the research paper itself is due, you will have two additional deadlines. First, you will be required to submit a research paper proposal and an outline of your proposed research paper in early November ([4]). Second, you will be required to deliver a 3-minute thesis presentation of your research paper during our final exam period on December 17th. ([5]). The first of these deadlines is meant to get you thinking about possible areas for further reflection and inquiry that might be worth pursuing with respect to Heidegger's late writings. The second of these deadlines is meant to facilitate a class-wide discussion of our research papers, as well as to improve your rhetorical skills in presenting and defending a thesis of your own.

I will announce further details for each of these requirements (including the research paper prompt itself) once we are closer to the respective deadlines. The required length of the

research paper assignment, however, will be 7-12 pages (12 font, double-spaced). Additionally, this paper assignment need to be written in line with the requirements laid out in prompt.

Course policies:

Late penalty policy:
For every day (weekend days included) that an assignment is late, this assignment will be penalized. If you suspect that you will not be able to turn an assignment in on time, reach out to me *at least 24 hours in advance* and we can talk about extending the deadline. I am considerably generous about extending paper deadlines - but I will not extend deadlines *immediately before the deadline*. No late coursework on Perusall will be accepted.

Technology policy:
During class time you are permitted to use a computer, laptop, or tablet. Your use of these devices is restricted to class use, however, and I expect that you will not allow these devices to divert your attention or the attention of others away from discussion. Remember: this course revolves around active discussion and participation. If your use of electronic devices inhibits class discussion, I reserve the right to adjust our technology policy accordingly.

Academic integrity:
All students are expected to abide by the rules of academic integrity as laid out in the Fordham Handbook. This especially includes plagiarism. Any assignment that is found to have involved plagiarism will automatically receive a failing grade. Furthermore, your professors (including me) are obliged to automatically report all cases of plagiarism to the Dean. With this in mind, it's a good idea to familiarize yourself with what qualifies as plagiarism.

The Fordham Handbook defines plagiarism as follows: "Plagiarism occurs when individuals attempt to present as their own what has come from another source. Plagiarism takes place whether such theft is accidental or deliberate." In a nutshell, plagiarism involves taking credit for someone else's work in one's own writing – intentionally *or* unintentionally. Plagiarism might mean copying an idea or quotation exactly as it is written elsewhere (in a book, online article, Chat GPT, a newspaper, etc.), paraphrasing an idea or quotation without properly including a citation, or using an idea that is not your own without citing the author(s) of this idea. To avoid plagiarism make sure you properly cite the sources you use. If you're unsure of whether you are properly citing something, come and ask me before you submit the assignment. Stay on the safe side.

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ChatGPT and GenerativeAI policy:
ChatGPT is capable of many things, but ChatGPT is not you. Having a bot answer questions

or generate essays is not the same as working out your own thoughts. This semester our class will adhere to three guidelines concerning AI technology: (1) If you use ChatGPT/GenAI in any way, you *must* cite it—that is to say, you must cite the AI technology you used, indicate what prompt you gave it, and indicate how you revised it. (2) Uses of ChatGPT/GenAI without citation will be penalized. Submitting ChatGPT/GenAI products without citation is a violation of Fordham's academic integrity policies—specifically, it is a form of plagiarism and outsourcing. (3) ChatGPT/GenAI are tools and they are here to stay—so we will keep our channels of communication open about their advantages and the best frameworks in which to deploy them. Additionally, we will use the reading skills we develop in this class to reflect critically *on* information that ChatGPT/GenAI provide about the history of philosophy. We will do this during class time, but you might consider doing this also in your coursework paragraphs.

Students with special needs and/or disabilities:
Under the Americans with Disabilities Act and Section 504 of the Vocational Rehabilitation Act of 1973, all students, with or without disabilities, are entitled to equal access to the programs and activities of Fordham University. If you believe that you have a disability that may interfere with your ability to participate in the activities, classwork, or assessment of the object of this course, you may be entitled to accommodations. Please schedule a meeting to speak with someone at the Office of Disability Services (Phone number: 718-817- 0655). (Locations: Lincoln Center – Lowenstein, Room 207; Rose Hill - O'Hare Hall, Lower Level).

Further study in philosophy:
For further information on majoring or minoring in philosophy, contact the Department Associate Chair for Undergraduate Studies: Professor Brian Johnson (brjohnson@fordham.edu).

Reading Schedule: [*Dates and pages to be determined — this is a list of planned readings*]

[*Any readings that are not in the required texts will be available on Blackboard. They are marked below with an asterisk (*)*]

Date:	*Reading:*	*Notes:*
Wed. Aug. 27th	(Class introduction)	
Wed. Sept. 3rd	*-- No class meeting --*	
Wed. Sept. 10th	Heidegger: *Being and Time* (1927), §1-5, §9, §12, §28-38, §40-42 (p. 21-40, 67-71, 78-86, 169-224, 228-244)	
Wed. Sept. 17th	Heidegger: "Letter on Humanism"* (1946)	
Wed. Sept. 24th	Heidegger: *Poetry, Language, Thought,* "The Origin of the Work of Art" (1935)	

Date:	*Reading:*	*Notes:*
Wed. Oct. 1st	Heidegger: *What is Called Thinking*? (1951), Lectures I-IV*	
Wed. Oct. 8th	Heidegger: *Poetry, Language, Thought,* "Building, Dwelling, Thinking" (1951) + "The Thing" (1950/1951)	
Wed. Oct. 15th	Heidegger: *On the Way to Language*, "Dialogue on Language" (1953/1954)	
Wed. Oct. 22nd	Heidegger: *Poetry, Language, Thought,* "Language" (1950/1959) + Heidegger: *On the Way to Language*, "Way to Language" (1959)	
Wed. Oct. 29th	Hölderlin Selections (TBD)* + Heidegger: *Poetry, Language, Thought,* "'. . . Poetically Man Dwells . . .'" (1951) + Heidegger: *Elucidations of Hölderlin's Poetry*, "Hölderlin and the Essence of Poetry"* (1936) + "The Poem"* (1968)	
Wed. Nov. 5th	Rilke Selections (TBD)* + Heidegger: *Poetry, Language, Thought,* "What Are Poets For?" (1946)	
Wed. Nov. 12th	Nietzsche Selections (TBD)* + Heidegger: *Nietzsche Volumes Three and Four,* Selections* + Heidegger: "Overcoming Metaphysics"* (1935)	
Wed. Nov. 19th	George Selections + Heidegger's *On the Way to Language*, "Nature of Language" (1959)	
Wed. Nov. 26th	*-- No class meeting –*	
Wed. Dec. 3rd	Trakl Selections + Heidegger's *On the Way to Language*, "Language in the Poem: A Discussion on Georg Trakl's Poetic Work" (1959)	
Wed. Dec. 17th	(Research paper presentations)	