

## Heidegger on 'World'

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### Course Description

The aim of the course is to examine Heidegger complex and multifaceted treatment of the notion of 'World' in three texts from roughly the same period: *Being and Time* (1927), *On the Essence of Ground* (1928) and his lecture course *The Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics: World, Finitude, Solitude* (1929-30).

In *Being and Time* 'World' – a component of the unified phenomenon Being-in-the-World – is initially approached through an analysis of the everyday environment (*Umwelt*). Later in the text, the focus shifts. Heidegger considers Dasein's being thrown "into the 'nothingness' of the world" where being 'not-at-home' is seen as the more fundamental mode of Being-in.

In *On the Essence of Ground* Heidegger approach the notion of world historically, considering the Greek *Kosmos*, the Latin *Mundus* and figures from Paul and Augustine to Kant. The focus from world as environment shifts to world as the ensemble of beings as a whole which include Dasein's relation to this whole – 'the *how* of beings as a whole'. During this period in Heidegger's thinking, the mode of Being (*Sein*) of the world is problematized. The world, as a limit totality, is not itself a being (this is not dissimilar to problems with notions of totality in modern set theory) and thus, like the notion of Being itself, world is set against beings as their other, as *not* a being. The world is somehow prior to every being. Indeed we start to see in Heidegger's writing of this period a convergence of the notions of Being, World and Nothing.

One of the most striking treatments of the notion of 'World' is given in Heidegger's lecture course *The Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics*, where he considers the animal's world in comparison to man's world. Man is 'world-forming', the animal is 'poor in world' (and the stone is 'worldless'). What is poverty in world? How can we even have access to such a radically other kind of 'To be' as that of the animal's? This discussion, which involves Heidegger's most explicit attempt to take on the definitions of 'organism' and 'life' prevalent in modern biology, leads us to the thesis that man is 'world-forming' from a completely different direction.

### Prerequisites:

This is intended as an advanced seminar for MA and PhD students. Participation of third year BA students requires the instructor's permission. Some familiarity with Division I of *Being and Time* is highly recommended.

### Required Texts:

1. Heidegger, Martin. *Being and Time*. Translated by John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson. New York: Harper & Row, 1962 – selections from Chapter 3, Division I + Section 40.
2. Heidegger, Martin. *Pathmarks*, Cambridge University Press, 1998 – “On the Essence of Ground”, translated by William McNeill.
3. Heidegger, Martin. *The Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics: World, Finitude, Solitude*. Translated by William McNeill and Nicholas Walker. Indiana University Press, 1995 – selections from Part II.

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The aim of the course is to examine Heidegger complex and multifaceted treatment of the notion of ‘World’ in three texts from roughly the same period. In *Being and Time* (1927), ‘world’ is initially approached through an analysis of the everyday environment (*Umwelt*) but later on ‘world’ is taken as that limit totality of beings – hence not itself a being, i.e. as the ‘nothing’ into which Dasein is thrown and in which it is fundamentally ‘not-at-home’. In the key paper *On the Essence of Ground* (1928) Heidegger considers the history of the notion from the Greek *Kosmos* and Latin *Mundus* and through such figures as Paul, Augustine and Kant. ‘World’ is in some way *prior* to any being and as such it begins to converge with the notion of Being (*Sein*) itself. Finally, in the lecture course *The Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics: World, Finitude, Solitude* (1929-30) Heidegger considers Dasein’s world in comparison to that of the animal. Human Dasein is ‘world-forming’ while the animal is ‘poor in world’. The attempt to approach such an alien and radically different kind of ‘to be’ as that of the animal via its world yields a striking and illuminating approach to this fundamental concept that plays such a crucial role in Heidegger’s thinking.

זהו קורס מתקדם שמיועד למסטרנטים ודוקטורנטים. תלמידי שנה שלישית מהתואר הראשון צריכים את אישור המרצה. הכרות מסויימת עם הווייה וזמן מומלצת מאוד.