

EDUC6111: Introduction to Phenomenological Research and Writing

This course provides graduate students interested in exploring human science research methods an opportunity to do so. There is a growing interest in the social sciences (education, social work) and in health-related disciplines (nursing, public health, medicine) to investigate certain kinds of questions that require a phenomenological sensitivity to lived experience (children's, adult's, patient's, client's) life-worlds.

The instructor is highly indebted to phenomenologists past and present. The course relies on the work of others particularly on the life work of [Dr. Max van Manen](#), Professor Emeritus at the University of Alberta. Max's work provides the foundation for this introductory course and this instructor is profoundly grateful for his contribution to phenomenology, human science, and education in general.

Course Description

Phenomenology aims at gaining a deeper understanding of everyday experiences. In taking a reflective, interpretive stance the researcher is oriented to the life world with attentive awareness that is communicated through writing. Opportunities to learn the systematic processes of phenomenological research and writing through questioning, reflecting, focusing and interpreting are not readily available to graduate students.

Course Goals

The course is designed to develop skills, knowledge, and values aligned with:

- Understanding the possibilities and limitations of phenomenological human science research
- Understanding the nature of lived experience
- Understanding how to orient to a phenomenological question
- Exploring phenomenological texts
- Orienting to the life world phenomenon
- Identifying phenomenological procedures, techniques and methods
- Investigating lived experience
- Understanding the nature of phenomenological reflection
- Exploring the practice of phenomenological writing
- Creating an original phenomenological text

Course Objectives

Students will:

- Know the parameters of phenomenological human science research
- Know important philosophers and contributors to the phenomenological tradition
- Develop a phenomenological question
- Understand the nature of data in phenomenological research
- Identify lived experience descriptions, etymological sources, personal experience, observing, experiential descriptions in literature, film, poetry, art

- Practice phenomenological writing exercises through cooperative learning and writing workshop approaches
- Engage in seminar and discussion forums to investigate and interpret phenomenological texts
- Develop an understanding of the concept of thematic statements and essential themes
- Develop a practice of phenomenological writing to understand the relation between research and writing
- Write an introductory phenomenological text

Course Evaluation

The course will be evaluated based on student performance on the following activities.

Participation - discussion forums, overall contribution to course including collaboration and peer support for the writing process 20

Response to Readings - demonstration of close reading and contributing insightful written responses – 20

Writing (Short Exercises) - completion of writing exercises progressing toward independently creating a phenomenological text – 20

Final Phenomenological Piece: completion of a piece of phenomenological writing oriented to an appropriate question 40

Total – 100

Learning Modules

Module 1: Phenomenology of Practice

Module 2: Mimesis and Muses

Module 3: The Questions: Everyday-ness and the Reflective Attitude

Module 4: Investigating Lived Experience

Module 5: Reflective Methods and Investigating for Meaning

Texts

van Manen, M. (1997). *Researching Lived Experience: Human Science for an Action Sensitive Pedagogy*. Althouse Press. (Required)

Vagle, M. (2014). *Crafting phenomenological research*. New York: Routledge. (Recommended)