Dallas Willard: The Phenomenology of Grace
MIN 6309w
Austin Graduate School of Theology - Spring 2016

Professor: Daniel Napier
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Conference: by appointment
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Class Time: Tuesday 7 – 9:40pm
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Course Description:
This reading intensive seminar will be devoted to a multi-faceted investigation of Dallas Willard’s thought and its contribution to contemporary spiritual and moral formation methods. Professor Willard’s philosophical work, through nuanced use of the phenomenology of Edmund Husserl and others, focused on developing a realist epistemology within a phenomenological description of the ‘substance of the self’. Our seminar will begin here. Having gained a working understanding of his philosophical method and primary epistemological and anthropological positions, our readings will expand to assess his celebrated writings on spiritual formation, religious epistemology, and apprenticeship to Jesus’ way of life. The seminar will ultimately seek to clarify the relation between Willard’s philosophical work and his religious teachings.

Learning Objectives:
• Students will learn how to prepare academic seminar papers and appropriately participate in an academic seminar.
• Students will be able to describe the basics of the Husserlian phenomenological method and how it provides a direct realist alternative to Kantian constructivism and the dominant forms (both Cartesian and Empiricist) of Classical Foundationalism.
• Students will be able to succinctly summarize Willard’s account of knowledge, the loss of moral knowledge in the contemporary world, the gospel of the kingdom, the ethical descriptions of Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount, and the various dimensions of the human self.
• Students will wrestle with Willard’s account of salvation along with its implications for pastoral duty and interreligious relations.

Required Texts:

Required Philosophical Articles and Lecture Notes by Dallas Willard (all available online at www.dwillard.org):

- ‘Truth in the Fire: C.S. Lewis and the Pursuit of Truth Today’
- ‘How Concepts Relate the Mind to its Objects: The “God’s Eye View” Vindicated’
- ‘The World Well Won: Husserl’s Epistemic Realism One Hundred Years Later’
- ‘For Lack of Intentionality’
- ‘Intentionality and the Substance of the Self’
- ‘Naturalism’s Incapacity to Capture the Good Will’
- ‘Utilitarianism and Phenomenology’
- ‘Moral Rights, Moral Responsibility and the Contemporary Failure of Moral Knowledge’
- ‘Ethical Knowledge in the University before G.E. Moore’ (unpublished notes for a public address)
- ‘On the Texture and Substance of the Human Soul’ (unpublished notes for a public address)

Course Requirements and Means of Evaluation:

- Full preparation, attendance and participation in seminar sessions are mandatory. Failure to complete the assigned readings for a session and adequately engage in the seminar will result in a 5% deduction from your final grade for each session in which one is unprepared.
- Each student will read all assigned writings and will contribute at least one seminar paper over a portion of the assigned readings on the designated date of the seminar. The seminar paper will comprise 50% of your final grade.
- Each student will research, write, and submit a research paper relating to some dimension of Dallas Willard’s thought no later than 3 May 2016. The research paper will comprise 50% of your final grade.

Course Schematic:

- Jan. 19: Introductory Lecture. ‘Phenomenology amid Modern Philosophical Projects’
- Jan. 26: Introductory Lecture. ‘Willard’s Account of Husserl’s Phenomenology’
  - Readings:
    - ‘Knowledge’ in *Cambridge Companion to Husserl*
- Feb. 2: Willard’s Account of Knowledge, Objectivity, and Truth
  - Seminar Readings:
    - ‘Truth in the Fire: C.S. Lewis and the Pursuit of Truth Today’
- ‘How Concepts Relate the Mind to its Objects: The “God’s Eye View” Vindicated’
- ‘The World Well Won: Husserl’s Epistemic Realism One Hundred Years Later’
- *Knowing Christ Today* ch.1-2, 4-5.

- **Feb. 9:** Willard’s Account of the Substance of the Self
  - **Seminar Readings:**
    - ‘For Lack of Intentionality’
    - ‘Intentionality and the Substance of the Self’
    - ‘On the Texture and Substance of the Human Soul’ (unpublished notes for a public address)
    - *The Divine Conspiracy* ch. 3

- **Feb. 16:** Willard’s Critique of Modern Ethics
  - **Seminar Readings:**
    - ‘Ethical Knowledge in the University before G.E. Moore’ (unpublished notes for a public address)
    - ‘Moral Rights, Moral Responsibility and the Contemporary Failure of Moral Knowledge’
    - ‘Utilitarianism and Phenomenology’
    - ‘Naturalism’s Incapacity to Capture the Good Will’
    - *Knowing Christ Today* ch. 3
    - *Divine Conspiracy Continued* ch. 6

- **Feb. 23:** Introductory Lecture. ‘The Religious Milieu of Willard’s Thought: Streams in American Evangelicalism’
  - **Readings:**
    - *The Divine Conspiracy* ch. 2

- **Mar. 1:** Willard’s Phenomenology of Revelation
  - **Seminar Readings:**
    - *Hearing God* ch. 1-5

- **Mar. 8:** Willard’s Phenomenology of Revelation, Pt. 2
  - **Seminar Readings:**
    - *Hearing God* ch. 6-9
    - *Knowing Christ Today* ch. 6

- **Mar. 15** (Spring Break)
- **Mar. 22:** Willard’s Ethical Description of Kingdom Existence
  - **Seminar Readings:**
    - *The Divine Conspiracy* ch. 1-4

- **Mar. 29:** Willard’s Ethical Description of Kingdom Existence, Pt. 2
  - **Seminar Readings:**
    - *The Divine Conspiracy* ch. 5-7

- **Apr. 5:** Willard’s Ethical Description of Kingdom Existence, Pt. 3
  - **Seminar Readings:**
    - *The Divine Conspiracy* ch. 8-10

- **Apr. 12:** How to become a Good Person: Willard’s Program of Spiritual Exercise
  - **Seminar Readings:**
    - *Renovation of the Heart* ch. 1-5
- *Spirit of the Disciplines* ch. 1-3
- Apr. 19: How to become a Good Person: Willard’s Program of Spiritual Exercise, Pt. 2
  - Seminar Readings:
    - *Renovation of the Heart* ch. 6-11
- Apr. 26: A Portrait of One in a Position to Know Spiritually, and the Responsibilities Thereof
  - Seminar Readings:
    - *Renovation of the Heart* ch. 12-13
    - *Knowing Christ Today* ch. 7-8
- May 3: TBA