Catalog Description:

Prerequisite: acceptance to the University Honors Program, or consent of instructor. Reflections on Hermes, the messenger of the Greek gods, gave rise to hermeneutike, the art of interpretation. This art of interpretation, hermeneutics, is the discipline arising from reflection on the problems involved in the transmission of meaning from text or symbol to reader or hearer. This course will survey reflections on these problems from ancient times to our own. (Offered as needed.) 3 credits.

Essential Equipment and Facilities: Seminar-style classroom with computer equipment.

Course Goals, Objectives and Learning Outcomes:
This course enables students to study some of the principal texts of the mainstream of the hermeneutic tradition. These texts were written by members of different disciplines and fields of inquiry – philosophers, historians, theologians, and social scientists. Students interested in any of these fields will gain a greater appreciation for the contemporary relevance of hermeneutics as the general theory and method of interpretation as well as philosophical hermeneutics or philosophy of culture.

Learning outcomes include:

- Students will become acquainted with a history of thought in which hermeneutics was transformed from the study and collection of specialized rules of interpretation to that of a philosophical discipline and general theory of the social and human sciences.
- Students will develop a historical appreciation for some of the important ideas and issues raised by writers of the hermeneutic tradition.
- Students, as global citizens, will sharpen their ability to see, accept, and understand meanings found in diverse cultures and, in the process, understand themselves better.

Content:
The basic assumption in this course is that hermeneutics is not just a contemporary theory but also a long historical conversation about understanding and interpretation which predates the beginning of writing. In the course we will study the works of writers who have made significant contributions to that conversation. These writers have had a profound impact on contemporary philosophical and theological discourse and have helped shape new modes of interpretation in the social sciences.

Current Required Texts:

**Required Readings:**
- Jean Grondin, *Introduction to Philosophical Hermeneutics*
- David E. Klemm, ed., *Hermeneutical Inquiry: The Interpretation of Texts*
- David E. Klemm, ed., *Hermeneutical Inquiry: The Interpretation of Existence*

**Recommended readings:**
- Josef Bleicher, *Contemporary Hermeneutics*
- _____, *Philosophical Hermeneutics*
- Jurgen Habermas, *Knowledge and Human Interests*
- Martin Heidegger, *Poetry, Language, Thought*
- _____, *On the Way to Language*
- Roy J. Howard, *Three Faces of Hermeneutics: An Introduction to Current Theories of Understanding*
- Hans Robert Jauss, *Toward an Aesthetic of Reception*
- David E. Linge, “Dilthey and Gadamer: Two Theories of Historical Understanding”
- Kurt Mueller-Vollmer, ed., *The Hermeneutics Reader*
- Richard Palmer, *Hermeneutics: Interpretation Theory in Schleiermacher, Dilthey, Heidegger, and Gadamer*
- Paul Ricoeur, *The Conflict of Interpretations: Essays in Hermeneutics*
- Anthony C. Thisselton, *New Horizons in Hermeneutics*
- Brice R. Wachterhauser, *Hermeneutics and Modern Philosophy*

**Instructional Strategies:** The class will include both lectures and seminar discussions. The main purposes of lectures will be to establish the historical context and theoretical framework of the readings so as to enhance seminar discussions. Students are expected to arrive at their own conclusions about the issues studied, to be able to give reasons for those conclusions, and to sympathetically understand why others might disagree.

**Methods of Evaluation:** Evaluation and grading will be based on the following
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<tr>
<th>Requirements</th>
<th>Percentage of Grade</th>
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<tr>
<td>Mid-term Exam:</td>
<td>30%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final Exam:</td>
<td>35%</td>
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<td>Class participation:</td>
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<td>Research Paper:</td>
<td>15%</td>
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<td>Index Cards:</td>
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**Chapman University Academic Integrity Policy:**
Chapman University is a community of scholars which emphasizes the mutual responsibility of all members to seek knowledge honestly and in good faith. Students are responsible for doing their own work, and academic dishonesty of any kind will not be tolerated anywhere in the university.

**Students with Disabilities Policy:**
The course syllabus should include the following statement:
In compliance with ADA guidelines, students who have any condition, either permanent or temporary, that might affect their ability to perform in this class are encouraged to inform the instructor at the beginning of the term. The University, through the Center for Academic Success, will work with the appropriate faculty member who is asked to provide the accommodations for a student in determining what accommodations are suitable based on the documentation and the individual student needs. The granting of any accommodation will not be retroactive and cannot jeopardize the academic standards or integrity of the course.

**Prepared by:**
Carmichael Peters, Spring 2009

**Last revised:**
Carmichael Peters, Fall 2009