Fall 2005 Paper Topics for Philosophy 185: Heidegger

1. “In order to encounter objects and people within the world we must transcend (go outside) our subjective, private experience.” Why would someone believe this claim? How would Heidegger argue against this claim? Do you agree with Heidegger? Why, or why not?

2. What does Heidegger mean when he says that knowing is a “founded mode in which being-in is exemplified” (p. 86)? What support is there for this claim? How would a Cartesian respond to Heidegger?

3. Explain the claim that significance can be understood in terms of something being stamped with value-predicates (page 132 top). Why does Heidegger disagree with this claim? What counterclaim does Heidegger make about significance? Which position would you defend, and why?

4. Heidegger claims that the world does not “consist” of the sum of all entities. What would be left out and could not be understood if world were to be understood this way? What evidence or argument is there that something is indeed being left out?

5. What does Heidegger mean (on p. 72, for example) when he says that starting with an “I” or subject misses the phenomenal content (richness) of Dasein? What’s being missed by starting this way? How does what Heidegger goes on to say reveal this content that the tradition has supposedly missed?

6. Heidegger is clear that “the world does not ‘consist’ of the ready-to-hand” (106/75). What is the relationship between the ready-to-hand and the world? What more goes into the world beyond the ready-to-hand?

Please Note

You are encouraged to write on a topic not on this list, but such topics must be approved by your Graduate Student Instructor. Do not wait until the last minute to propose a topic to your GSI. Pick a topic that concentrates on some part of Division I.

Note: In writing your paper, do not merely repeat what was said in lecture and section. Focus on a specific philosophical issue, not on the historical context, secondary sources, or broad philosophical themes. Make sure that you answer each question of your topic. Where relevant, present arguments, examples, and counter-examples.
Suggested Topics for First Heidegger Paper

Length: Approximately 7 pages. Please use Times New Roman 12 pt. font, 1 inch margins, number your pages. Do not write more than 8 pages (8 sides of a page). You may print on both sides of the paper to reduce paper waste. (Rick’s students should follow his paper format of punching holes in the paper and using paper clips instead of staples.)

DUE: Monday, October 10th.

Rick’s students should hand in their papers at the beginning of section on Monday, October 10th.

Dan’s students should hand in their papers to the librarian at Howison Library (top floor of Moses Hall) by 5 pm, October 10th.

Late papers must be handed in to your GSI in lecture. Do NOT put papers into a GSI’s box. Late papers will be penalized one full letter grade for papers handed in Tuesday Oct. 11th in lecture (highest possible grade of B+), and another full letter grade for those handed in Thursday Oct. 13 (highest possible grade of C+).

BE SURE TO KEEP A COPY OF YOUR PAPER.