

DEPARTMENT OF PHILOSOPHY COLLOQUIUM SERIES

THEODORE GEORGE

BIOGRAPHY



Dr. Theodore George is Associate Professor and Head of the Department of Philosophy at Texas A&M University. His research and teaching focus on continental European philosophy since Kant. His areas of expertise include hermeneutics, ethical philosophy, Hegel and classical German philosophy, and the philosophy of art and aesthetics. He is the author of two books, *The Responsibility to Understand: Hermeneutical Contours of Ethical Life* (Edinburgh University Press, under contract and approved by EUP Press and Publishing Committees; manuscript submitted) and *Tragedies of Spirit: Tracing Finitude in Hegel's Phenomenology* (State University of New York Press, 2006). His current projects include co-ed. with Gert-Jan van der Heiden, *The Gadamerian Mind* (Routledge) and co-ed. with Charles Bambach *Philosophers and their Poets: Reflections on the Poetic Turn Since Kant* (State University of New York Press, forthcoming December 2019). He is also translator of Günter Figal, *Objectivity: The Hermeneutical and Philosophy* (State University of New York Press, 2010) and author of numerous articles and book chapters. George holds an appointment as Senior Researcher, College of Fellows, Western Sydney University, and he is Editor, *Epoché: A Journal for the History of Philosophy*, as well as category editor, *PhilPapers*, "Hermeneutics," and leaf "Hans-Georg Gadamer." His research has been supported by the Fulbright Commission, the Goethe Institute, the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD), the Freiburg Institute for Advanced Studies at the University of Freiburg, Germany, as well as by the Rothrock Fellows Program and the Glasscock Center for Humanities Research at Texas A&M University.

HERMENEUTIC DISPLACEMENT

Few topics have received broader attention within contemporary philosophy than that of responsibility. Current interest in such questions of responsibility draw on a broad range of approaches and methods, from those customarily associated with analytic philosophy to those associated with phenomenology and existentialism, deconstruction, critical theory, feminist theory, race theory, and post-colonial theory. Yet, despite the expanse of current interest, philosophers have not fully appreciated the contributions that can be made to questions of responsibility by contemporary hermeneutics. The purpose of my presentation will be to examine one contour of responsibility at issue in the hermeneutical experience of understanding. In this, I shall argue that the responsibility to understand is not foremost a responsibility to reach agreement or achieve correct knowledge of something. Rather, the responsibility to understand is a responsibility to cultivate and enact what I refer to as a capacity for displacement, that is, a capacity to put one's prejudices – and thus oneself – into question, to remain open to the new in the face of such self-interrogation, and to come to understand things and oneself otherwise through it.

Thursday, September 19 • 3:45 PM • YMCA 401