

# Workshop: Metaphysics and Method in Modern Philosophy and Phenomenology

Paderborn University, June 12-13 2025

## Motivation

Many arguments and concepts in phenomenology are formulated in dialogue with thinkers and themes from modern philosophy. Foundational phenomenological texts like Husserl's *Cartesian Meditations*, Heidegger's *Being and Time*, Sartre's *Transcendence of the Ego*, or Merleau-Ponty's *Phenomenology of Perception*, criticise and appropriate ideas from modern philosophers. The deep convergences between modern philosophy and phenomenology led Merleau-Ponty to conclude that "phenomenology merges with the effort of modern thought" (*Phenomenology of Perception*, 22). Nevertheless, many aspects of the influence of many modern thinkers (such as the British Empiricists or Continental Rationalists) on phenomenology remain to be further examined. Moreover, in some cases, it is not obvious that the phenomenological tradition solves the problems raised by the metaphysical commitments and methodological assumptions of the moderns. Husserl's famous "metaphysical neutrality" as one of phenomenology's hallmarks is, as a matter of fact, difficult to maintain. Indeed, the phenomenological tradition might be better viewed as an original continuation of core problems in modern philosophy, rather than an extended attempt to dissolve them.

This two-day workshop will bring together established scholars and early-career researchers to investigate issues at the intersection of modern philosophy and phenomenology, through talks focused on common philosophical problems and individual figures. Some specific topics and questions may include:

- Phenomenological aesthetics and the (post-)Kantian tradition
- Spinoza's influence on phenomenology
- Neglected approaches to embodiment in modern thinkers
- Work by women phenomenologists and/or women in modern philosophy
- Husserl's account of semantics and predication in the context of (early) modern logic
- Conceptions of science and scientificity
- The concept of the a priori (Leibniz, Kant, Husserl)
- Spinoza and Brentano on intentionality

Confirmed keynote speakers:

**Clinton Tolley** (University of California, San Diego)

**Michela Summa** (Julius-Maximilians University of Würzburg)

## Call for Papers and Practical Information

Please apply with a blinded abstract including title (can be tentative but give clear direction as to topic), max. 1 page (12 point font) to the conference email, [metaphysicsmethodphenomenology@gmail.com](mailto:metaphysicsmethodphenomenology@gmail.com).

In the email accompanying the application, please send your name, rank (pre-doc, post-doc, junior/senior faculty) and institutional affiliation by **May 31**. You can expect to hear back by July 31 if you have been accepted. The conference will be in-person at the University of Paderborn. Practical information forthcoming.

(We will apply for conference funding and need lead-up time for that. We will, if successful, be able to cover some costs, such as travel, accommodation, and refreshments during the conference. Applicants are, however, encouraged to seek funding from their own institutions. We especially encourage junior scholars to apply.)

Conference Organizers:  
Sebastian Luft (Paderborn)  
Dimitris Apostolopoulos (Loyola Chicago)  
Aaron Wells (Paderborn)

Contact: [metaphysicsmethodphenomenology@gmail.com](mailto:metaphysicsmethodphenomenology@gmail.com)