

## **Phenomenology and Qualitative Research Methodologies – using and contextualising empathy?**

### **Subject and aim:**

This PhD course addresses PhD- students and senior researchers/doctors, who work with and intend to include phenomenology and phenomenological related discussions in their health research. Presentations and workshops will focus on methodological questions and possible solutions on how to combine data, generated from interviewing, observation and/or participation, with phenomenology. However, within this methodological framing the course will also aim to focus more specifically on the notion of '*empathy*' in relation to the interdisciplinary methodological challenges.

In popular terms, empathy can be understood as "the capacity to recognize and, to some extent, share feelings (such as sadness or happiness) that are being experienced by another sentient or semi-sentient being " (Wikipedia.com). In relation to what has been addressed as the bodily turn, from the 1990's and on, empathy implicitly has come too address 'some kind' of direct social perception, which forms part of interpersonal understanding. A critical constructive discussion, concerning the notion and handling of empathy, appear to be especially relevant when turning to research where data are generated based on 1<sup>st</sup> person experiences – and/or – different kinds of experience exchanges between 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> person perspectives. Besides phenomenological related explorations the discussion also intends to draw on anthropological discussions of how to come 'to understand' the other/the life of the other.

The course is developed in the light of the seminar: Phenomenology and Qualitative Research methodologies, arranged the 26<sup>th</sup> of May, 2011 at the Institute of Sports Science and Clinical Biomechanics. Working papers related to presentations and discussions of this seminar (Ravn and Legrand 2011, 2012) will be included in the course material.

Examples on central questions which will be discussed during the course:

- How does the researcher handle and differentiate between different 1<sup>st</sup> person experiences (including her/his own)? For example, how does the researcher use a phenomenological approach in relation to an analysis of narrative interviews? – or of observations notes from fieldwork involving the embodied experience of the researcher herself?
- Often researcher refer to 'the phenomenological reduction' (including the epoché) when including phenomenology into their methodologies. How is this philosophical concept to be understood in relation to the generation of 'soft' data? – and in relation to the validity criteria existing in relation to interviewing and fieldwork?
- How is the researcher to understand and include empathy? What are the limits/conditions/possibilities of drawing on empathy when generating data? How might different cultural background and/or life conditions affect this aspect? How is this to be taken into consideration?

### **Form:**

The course runs over two days, both days from 9.00 to 17.00. For those interested, a dinner setting will be arranged at a restaurant in Odense City. Participants are themselves responsible for taking care of accommodation and food.

**The first day**, the program will alternate between presentations by guest speakers and following discussions. The day takes form as a seminar. In the morning the focus will be on different methodological

questions which in the afternoon are intended to be specifically focused on methodological issues related to empathy.

**The second day** will consist of workshops. PhD students will be divided in groups of 6 students. Each group will have one or two of the guest speakers/researchers connected to their group during the day. The group will be formed according to themes and methodological questions raised in the paper the PhD students have send in. All group members are requested to have read the papers of the other group members. The workshops are not to be expected to take form of presentations and feedback but are expected to focus round critical constructive discussions and – not least – facilitate clarifications in relation to methodological choices and challenges for the participants.

Senior researchers/doctors can choose only to participate the first day.

PhD students will be requested to send in 3-8 pages (excl. references and notes) synopsis/extended abstract/paper in progress latest 14 days before the course. It will be expected that the student in this synopsis/paper identifies and, if possible, discusses phenomenological related challenges connected to her/his project.

**Literature:**

Shaun Gallagher and Dan Zahavi (2008): *The Phenomenological Mind*. (The book has recently been translated to Danish by philosopher Rasmus Jensen – published by Gyldendal)

Working papers describing and discussing challenges and promises of combining phenomenology and qualitative research methodologies (Ravn and Legrand 2011, 2012)

Selected articles as suggested by the invited researchers: Hanne De Jaegher, Dorothée Legrand, Max van Manen, Joel Krueger and Søren Harnow

Articles and working papers will be listed and uploaded for course participants in August, 2012.

**Course coordinator:**

Susanne Ravn, Associate Professor, Institute of Sports Science and Clinical Biomechanics, University of Southern Denmark.

**Invited speakers/researchers – and workshop leaders:**

Dorothée Legrand, PhD, CNRS, CREA, University Paris VII, France

Hanne De Jaegher, PhD, Dept. of Logic & Philosophy of Science, University of the Basque County, San Sebastian, Spain

Max van Manen, Emeritus, Faculty of Education, University of Alberta, Edmonton, Canada

Joel William Krueger, PhD, postdoc, Center for Subjectivity Research, University of Copenhagen.

Søren Harnow Klausen, Professor, Institute of Philosophy, Education and the Study of Religion.

**Participants:**

PhD students and supervisors involved in the PhD program for Social Studies in Medicine. PhD students and supervisors who are interested in the seminars of the program.

Senior researchers working with phenomenology are invited to participate the first day exclusively.

As a minimum 18 participants

As a maximum 24 PhD students plus 20 other participants

**Time and Venue:**

September 26-27, 2012

University of Southern Denmark, (SDU), Campusvej 55, 5230 Odense M, Denmark

**Language:**

The course will be held in English

**ECTS:** 2,5

**Course Fee:**

The seminar is free of charge for PhD students and lecturers/supervisors involved in the PhD program for Social Studies in Medicine. The seminar is also free of charge for PhD students and lecturers/supervisors from University of Southern Denmark or Odense University Hospital.

The seminar fee for PhD students and researchers from other Danish universities depends on the general cooperation agreements between universities.

DKK 2200 per person for other participants.

Participation only on the first day is free of charge, but registration is required.

**Enrolment:**

**Deadline XX**