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Martin Heidegger (1889–1976) is widely recognized the most influential philosopher of the 20th century, yet many of the views at the heart of his “later” work remain shrouded in confusion and controversy. Focusing carefully on a few of the works Heidegger composed after *Being and Time* (1927), this seminar will seek to clarify, explain, and critique Heidegger’s views on the immense significance of art, poetry, and language; his critical understanding of metaphysics as ontotheology; his insightful rereading of Nietzsche and linked critique of technology as nihilism; his critical views of modern “subjectivism” and late-modern “enframing” and complementary vision of a post-nihilistic postmodernity; his creative experiments with writing philosophical dialogues; and, of course, we will address the issue of when exactly Heidegger’s “later” work begins and how best to characterize its most distinctive philosophical features.

This course is good (indeed, indispensable) preparation for understanding much subsequent work in continental philosophy and the other theoretical humanities, which often take Heidegger’s insights as their own point of philosophical departure. For example, Heidegger’s later work decisively shaped the concepts and concerns of such major continental thinkers as Agamben, Arendt, Badiou, Baudrillard, Blanchot, Butler, Cavell, Deleuze, Derrida, Dreyfus, Foucault, Gadamer, Irigaray, Lacan, Levinas, Marcuse, Rancière, Rorty, Taylor, Vattimo, and Žižek—and this remains the case even where these thinkers approach Heidegger’s thought quite critically (as they all do, in their own distinctive and interesting ways). One thus needs to understand Heidegger in order to see where these thinkers are coming from, even if his is a thinking they seek (more and less successfully) to move beyond.