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PHL 316.01: Heidegger and Contemporary Culture

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The intent of the course is to examine the power of philosophy of clarifying the social and material structures in a world that is in crisis. We will begin with Appiah’s unfolding of the complex and frequently mistaken social conditions we find ourselves in today (The Lies That Bind).

We will then turn to Heidegger’s claim that there is a need and a possibility of a fundamentally illuminating theory regarding human being in the world (“Being and Time: Introduction”). That theory is specified as material reality in the essay that sees the center of an era’s meaning in the work of art (“The Origin of the Work of Art”).

These claims are severely tested by the upheavals of the Second World War. The question is whether a coherent and constructive vision of the human condition is possible any longer (“Letter on Humanism”).

We will conclude with the challenge that Heidegger sets out for us in his comprehensive theory of the human condition in a technological world (The Bremen Lectures; not the Freiburg Lectures).