

PhD Course (3 ETCS):

## **Existential Health Care Communication and Phenomenology**

May 26-28<sup>th</sup>, 2021, University of Aalborg (Denmark)

*This PhD-course is created in co-operation between University of Aalborg, Center for Dialogue and Organization, and The Doctoral Research Programme in Communication and Psychology – and University of Humanistic Studies, Research Unit in Care Ethics, Utrecht (The Netherlands). The course will be led by professor in philosophy, Finn Th. Hansen from University of Aalborg, who is an expert/scholar on existential phenomenology and wonder-based approaches in health care and educational professions, and by professor in philosophy, Carlo Leget from University of Humanistic Studies, who is an expert/scholar in care ethics and spiritual care (for more information on CV, see below).*

### **Course description, incl. learning objectives and prerequisites:**

In this three-day PhD-seminar, we will focus on the phenomenological and existential dimensions of communication and search for meaning in health care professions and professions where the interhuman relations are central. For decades, professionals and researchers in health care and human-centred professions have called for a re-humanization in health, education and welfare. This has been described as responding to an unsettling tendency in these professions of feeling “out of tact with life” or “out of resonance” with the core values of their professions (Kitson et al. 2010; Galvin & Todres, 2013; Uhrenfeldt et al., 2018; Martinsen, 2018; Rosa, 2019; Hansen & Jørgensen, 2020).

Our approach to phenomenological research inquiring into the areas of existential communication, spiritual care and care ethics is threefold and described as a movement from an ontic, over an ontological, to a pre-ontological phenomenology. Existential Health Communication can also be understood as having these three phenomenological levels. In the PhD-course, we will show how existential and spiritual care and communication have been approached from these three levels and how we in our research work to integrate these levels.

Basically, we will try to answer three questions through this triple perspective: 1) how can we understand the search for meaning in human-centred professions from the perspective of care ethics and spiritual care (Tronto 1993; Cobb, et al. 2012; Leget et al 2019); 2) How can we understand the existential dimensions in communication when health and well-being basically are understood as an “ontological homecoming” (Heidegger, 1995; Svenaeus, 2000; Todres & Galvin (2010), Ücok-Sayrak, 2019, Hansen & Jørgensen, 2020); and 3) how can we do phenomenological and action-oriented research (Halling et al, 1994; Dinkens & Hansen, 2016, Visse, Hansen & Leget, 2019, 2020) that specifically aims to create aesthetical, philosophical and spiritual spaces for a special kind of existential resonance (Rosa, 2019), wondrous listening (Nancy, 2002) and evocative writing (Van Manen & Van Manen, 2020) towards these existential, spiritual and ethical dimensions in caring and human-centred practices?

### **Teaching methods and program:**

In the first two days, we will make a journey into the existential and spiritual dimensions of communication and caring practices and discover how we can do phenomenological and action-

oriented research in these areas. On the third day, we will focus on the integration of the content of the seminar in the work of the PhD-students.

**Concrete Day-to-Day-program:**

**Day 1: The search for meaning in spiritual care and care ethics**

9.00 – 9.30	General introduction
9.30 – 10.15	<p><b>Session 1: ‘Setting the stage: the importance of context’</b></p> <p>Existential health care communication in Western culture finds place in a health care system that healthcare professionals, patients and families often experience as reductionist or even dehumanizing (Meide 2015; Rosa 2019) . This context is important to take into consideration before understanding why existential health care communication is both highly important and challenging. In this first session some characteristic features of our healthcare system will be analysed from a care ethical perspective (Tronto 1993; Leget et al 2019). We will develop a first understanding of what care is, how humanity is conceptualised and what threatens and undermines the existential and spiritual dimension of communication.</p>
10.15 – 10.30	Break
10.30 – 11.00	Questions and discussion
11.00 – 11.45	<p><b>Session 2: ‘Spiritual care and the limits of existential health care communication’</b></p> <p>One of the established ways of addressing the existential dimension in healthcare communication is the interdisciplinary approach called spiritual care. In this session we will present the development of this movement and see how it operates within the boundaries of our healthcare system. We will see the value of this approach, but also discover where it seems to limit its own engagement with the existential dimension in communication. We will discuss the metaphor of ‘inner space’ as an attempt to bridge the gap between the possibilities the healthcare system offers, and opening up towards a more existential and spiritual dimension in communication (Leget 2017). This brings us to a first understanding of why doing phenomenology is important in this context.</p>
11.45 – 12.00	Break
12.00 – 12.30	Questions and discussion
12.30 – 13.30	Lunch break
13.30 – 14.15	<p><b>Session 3: ‘From lived experience to political impact’</b></p> <p>One good example of how fruitful phenomenological research can be is the work of dr. Els van Wijngaarden on older people who have a desire to end their lives although they are not suffering from any disease. Van Wijngaarden used a phenomenological analysis to approach to the lived experience of these people, and her research had a great impact in a highly topical and politically sensitive debate in the Netherlands (van Wijngaarden, Leget &amp; Goossensen 2015; 2016). We will present and analyse the work of van Wijngaarden and see that although she fruitfully uses a phenomenological approach, she stays within the realm of the ‘ontic’. That is a big step forward and a great addition to other research in this area. But does it really cover the existential dimension in healthcare communication?</p>
14.15 – 14.30	Break

14.30 – 15.15	<p><b>Session 4: ‘From the ontic to the ontological in the humanization of healthcare’</b></p> <p>Having grasped the possibilities and limitations of an ontic approach, in this session we will introduce and analyse the work of Les Todres and Kathleen Galvin. These two British scholars provide an interesting example of an attempt to humanize healthcare by moving from an ontic approach towards an ontological approach (Todres, Galvin &amp; Holloway 2009). By introducing their lifeworld approach and their concept of ‘dwelling-mobility’ as existential well-being, we will discover a new way of doing phenomenological research (Todres &amp; Galvin 2010). This ontological approach differs from the ontic approaches we have discussed thus far. Where does this bring us, and what does it mean for existential health care communication?</p>
15.15 – 15.30	Break
15.30 – 16.30	Questions and discussion
16.30 – 17.00	Wrap up and looking forward to day 2

## Day 2: Existential Health Communication in Phenomenological Practice and Research

9.00 – 9.30	Questions that came up about day 1
9.30 – 10.15	<p><b>Session 5: ‘Health as ontological homecoming and the three spaces: from inner space and art to philosophical wonder’</b></p> <p>Todres and Galvin work with a notion of humanization as a process of ‘at-homeness’ (Galvin &amp; Todres, 2013). Inspired by Sevenaeus (2000) and Heidegger they also talk about health as a ontological or existential ‘homecoming’. When doing that, emphasis is put on relations and situations understood as embodied lifeworld experiences and through primary and existential and psychological-informed phenomenology. They focus on a so-called “lifeworld approach” and “lifeworld-led care”. We would like to question this approach and understanding of existential homecoming by taking not only an ontological but also pre-ontological and so-called “Apophatic Approach” (Visse, Hansen &amp; Leget, 2019, 2020) and what we call “Wonder- and Phenomenon-led Care”. This is done by describing three pre-ontological ‘spaces’ reaching out for or creating a sounding board for the “light of silence” (Rosenzweig, 2005). Through the phenomenology and ethics of wonder we elaborate how wonderment can be seen on an ontic, ontological and pre-ontological level through an aesthetical, philosophical and spiritual approach, and why to be in deep wonder is a key in existential, ethical and dialogical phenomenology (Van Manen, Patocka, Marion, Buber).</p>
10.15 – 10.30	Break
10.30 – 11.00	Questions and discussion
11.00 – 11.45	<p><b>Session 6: ‘Existential health communication as a <i>philosophical practice</i>’</b></p> <p>How do we understand Existential Health Communication as containing ontic, ontological and pre-ontological dimensions, and why are aesthetic and philosophical practices important when trying to get in resonance with the ‘Saturated Phenomenon’ (Marion) or “living Mystery” of an existential experience or call? How do we practice Existential Health Communication and what seems to be its limitations? By focusing on examples of philosophical practice (philosophical counselling and Socratic dialogue Groups) used in different health care and human-centred professions we will discuss the strength and weaknesses of using philosophical practices as a way to</p>

	strengthen existential health care communication and health and well-being understood as 'existential homecoming' or 'existential rootedness'.
11.45 – 12.00	Break
12.00 – 12.30	Questions and discussion
12.30 – 13.30	Lunch break
13.30 – 14.15	<p><b>Session 7: 'The important interplay between "writing phenomenology"(Heidegger, Van Manen), "dialogical phenomenology"(Buber, Halling) and "action phenomenology"(Patocka, Hansen)'</b></p> <p>Now, what kind of phenomenological research approaches would fit when wanting to think humanization and Existential Health Care Communication from this triple perspective: an ontic, ontological and pre-ontological perspective? Why is it, that the process of writing phenomenology is not necessarily the most inviting or evocating way of getting into dialogue and resonance with an existential life phenomenon? How do we approach or 'hear' what is ineffable? What can dialogical phenomenology reach that writing phenomenology cannot reach? And if existential phenomena are only understood by 'living the phenomena' then how do we work with 'action phenomenology'?</p>
14.15 – 14.30	Break
14.30 – 15.15	<p><b>Session 8: Integrating phenomenology in healthcare practice: The practice of Wonder Labs and 'the phronetic space' (practical Wisdom).</b></p> <p>A concrete phenomenological research approach is presented where both processes of phenomenological writing, phenomenological dialogue and phenomenological action research are in interplay. The research practice is formed through an "action-in-to-the-field" where researcher and practitioners in the field of Health Care work with a so-called Wonder Labs and a 'phronetic space'. This method will be discussed critically through the threefold lens of the ontic, ontological and pre-ontological, and what we earlier termed "wonder- and phenomenon-led care".</p>
15.15 – 15.30	Break
15.30 – 16.30	Questions and discussion
16.30 – 17.00	Wrap up and looking forward to day 3

### Day 3: Discussion and integration

9.00 – 9.30	Questions that came up about day 2
9.30 – 10.00	<p>Overlooking the path we have travelled and introducing the reflection work for this morning and the preparation for a presentation and discussion of how the content of this course resonates with your own work:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) What new insights have I gained?</li> <li>2) What new questions do I see?</li> <li>3) How can this be integrated in my research?</li> </ol>
10.00 – 10.15	Break
10.15 – 12.30	<b>Individual reflection and preparation for the presentations in the afternoon</b>
12.30 – 13.30	Lunch break
13.30 – 15.00	<b>Presentations and discussion: part 1</b>
15.00 – 15.15	Break

15.15 – 16.45	<b>Presentations and discussion: part 2</b>
16.30 – 17.00	Wrap up and saying goodbye

### ***Course format***

The course will be organised along lectures, dialogues and interactivity through workshops. The organizer of this course is Professor Finn Thorbjørn Hansen.

Morning and afternoon lectures in Day 1 & 2 will be thematically organised in order to address the questions listed above. The lectures will be followed by questions and discussions in groups and in class.

On Day 3 the participants will be divided into groups of 5-6 participants. It is expected that every group member has read all abstracts and key questions in their group prior to the course. Before the course starts the participants will be asked to do two things: 1) write an abstract that describes their research project and their main research question (wonder), and 2) to list at least 5 questions that have come up while reading the mandatory literature of this course.

The participants of this PhD-course will receive 3 ETCS-points. 1 ETCS is equivalent to 27,5 student effort hours, and 500 pages of research literature.

The language will be in English.

### ***Lecturers:***

This PhD-course is arranged in a co-operation between the research environment on “Existential Health Communication” at the Centre for Dialogue and Organization, Department of Communication, University of Aalborg (Denmark) – and the Chair of Care Ethics at the University of Humanistic Studies in Utrecht (The Netherlands).

**Professor Carlo Leget** is full professor of care ethics at the University of Humanistic Studies in Utrecht, the Netherlands. At the same university he holds an endowed chair in ethical and spiritual questions in palliative care, established by the Netherlands Comprehensive Cancer Organisation (IKNL) and the Association Hospice Care Netherlands (AHZN). As chair of the care ethics department he is responsible for the Master in Care Ethics & Policy at his university, and his research focuses on the intersection of care, meaning and end of life issues. He is a member of the Health Council of the Netherlands and the Care Ethics Research Consortium. For more information: <https://www.uvh.nl/contact/vind-een-medewerker?person=nhrjrsEsHowOfbPwC>

**Professor Finn Thorbjørn Hansen** is full professor of applied philosophy at the Center for Dialogue and Organization, Department of Communication, University of Aalborg (Denmark). He has been a Visiting Professor at Agder University in Kristiansand (Norway) where he was head of an international research project ‘Wonder, Silence and Human Flourishing’. His research focus and speciality is the phenomenology and ethics of wonder, existential and ethical phenomenology and ‘philosophical and phenomenological action research’. He has been head of several external funded research projects in the field of Health Care, Higher Education, Innovation and research on Artistic Creation. He is the founder of the Danish Society for Philosophical Practice and have written several books on wonder and philosophical counselling practices. For more information: <https://vbn.aau.dk/en/persons/123561>

## Literature:

**(Please note:** Later, a more precise list of mandatory research literature (max 1500 pages) and a list of secondary research literature will be created. Because of the work the PhD-students have to do before coming to the course (writing an Abstract and five key questions), and the seminar is around 24 hours, the list of mandatory research literature will be around 1000 pages.)”

- Arnett, R. (1994). “Existential Homelessness: A Contemplative Case for Dialogue”. In: *The Research of Dialogue: Confirmation, Voice and Community*, p. 229-246. Cresskill, NJ: Hampton Press.
- Bauman, Z. & Donskis, L. (2013). *Moral Blindness: The Loss of Sensitivity in Liquid Modernity*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Cobb, M., Puchalski, C., & Rumbold, B. (Eds.). (2012). *Oxford textbook of spirituality in healthcare*. OUP Oxford.
- Cooper, D. (2012). Living with Mystery: Virtue, Truth, and Practice. *European Journal of Philosophy of Religion*, 4(3): 1-13.
- Crawford, P., Brown, B. & Charise, A. (eds.)(2020). *The Routledge Companion to Health Humanities*. London: Routledge.
- Dinkins, C. S. Hansen, F.T. (2016). Socratic Wonder as a Way to Aletheia in Qualitative Research and Action Research. In: *HASER. Revista Internacional de Filosofía Aplicada*, Nr. 7: 51-88. (Peer reviewed)
- Evans, H.H. (2016b). Medicine, the body and an invitation to wonder. *Medical Humanities*, June, Vol. 42, No. 2, pp: 97-102.
- Gallagher, A. (2020). *Slow Ethics and the Art of Care*. Hward House, Bingley: Emerald Publishing.
- Galvin, K., & Todres, L. (2013). *Caring and well-being: a lifeworld approach*. London: Routledge
- Han, B.-C. (2015). *The Burnout Society*. Stanford, CA: Stanford briefs.
- Han, B.-C. (2017). *The Scent of Time*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Hansen, F.T. (2012): One Step Further: The Dance Between Poetic Dwelling and Socratic Wonder in Phenomenological Research. *Indo-Pacific Journal of Phenomenology* (Special Edition, Ed.: Galvin, K.). July 2012, pp. 1-20.
- Hansen, F.T. (2015). The Call and Practice of Wonder. How to evoke a Socratic Community of Wonder in professional settings. In: M. N. Weiss (ed.), *The Socratic Handbook*. Vienna: LIT, pp: 217-244.
- Hansen, F.T. (2016). *At undre sig ved livets afslutning: Om brug af filosofiske samtaler i palliativt arbejde* [To Wonder at the End the of Life: On the Use of Philosophical Conversations in Palliative Care]. Copenhagen: Academic Publisher.
- Hansen, F.T & Jørgensen, L.B. (2020). A contribution to the ontology of the Fundamentals of Care Framework from a Wonder-based Approach. *Journal of Clinical Nursing*. Pp: 1-11. <https://doi.org/10.1111/jocn.15272>
- Hansen, F.T. (2021 – forthcoming). Wonder and Philosophy as grounding sources in Health Humanities. In: *Palgrave Encyclopedia of Health Humanities*, Paul Crawford and Paul Kadetz (Editors-in-chief).
- Hansen, F.T., Eide, S.B., & Leget, C. (2021 - forthcoming). *Wonder, Silence and Human Flourishing: Towards a humanization of the professions of Health & Care, Welfare and Education*. Lanham: Lexington Books.
- Heidegger, M. (1995). *The fundamental concepts of metaphysics: World, finitude, solitude*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

- Leget, C. (2017). *Art of Living, Art of Dying: Spiritual Care for Good Death*. London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers.
- Leget, C. (2017). *Art of living, art of dying: spiritual Care for a Good Death*. Jessica Kingsley Publishers.
- Leget, C., van Nistelrooij, I., & Visse, M. (2019). Beyond demarcation: Care ethics as an interdisciplinary field of inquiry. *Nursing ethics*, 26(1), 17-25.
- Mugerauer, R. (2008). *Heidegger and homecoming: The leitmotif in the later writings*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.
- Pedersen, J. B. W. (2019). *Balanced wonder: Experiential sources of imagination, virtue, and human flourishing*. Lanham: Lexington Books.
- Rosa, H. (2019). *Resonance. A Sociology of Our Relationship to the World*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Schinkel, A. (2017). The educational importance of deep wonder. *Journal of Philosophy of Education*, 51(2), 538–553.
- Schinkel, A. (2018). Wonder and moral education. *Educational Theory*, 68(1), 31–48. <https://doi.org/10.1111/edth.12287>.
- Svenaesus, F. (2000). *The hermeneutics of medicine and the phenomenology of health: Steps towards a philosophy of medical practice*. London: Kluwer Academic Publishers.
- Todres, L., Galving, K. & Holloway, I. (2009). The Humanization of Health Care : A Value Framework for Qualitative Research. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies on Health and Well-Being*, Vol. 4: 68-77.
- Todres, L., Galvin, K. T., & Holloway, I. (2009). The humanization of healthcare: A value framework for qualitative research. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies on Health and Well-being*, 4(2), 68-77.
- Todres, L., Galvin, K. T., & Holloway, I. (2009). The humanization of healthcare: A value framework for qualitative research. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies on Health and Well-being*, 4(2), 68-77.
- Todres, L., & Galvin, K. (2010). “Dwelling-mobility”: An existential theory of well-being. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies on Health and Well-being*, 5(3):1-6.
- Tronto, J. C. (1993). *Moral boundaries: A political argument for an ethic of care*. Psychology Press.
- Ücok-Sayrak, Ö. (2019). *Existential Rootedness: Aesthetic Ecology of Communication Ethics*. Vancouver: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press.
- Uhrenfeldt, L., Sørensen, E. E., Bahnsen, I. B., & Pedersen, P. U. (2018). The centrality of the nurse–patient relationship: A Scandinavian perspective. *Journal of Clinical Nursing*, 27, 3197–3204. <https://doi.org/10.1111/jocn.14381>.
- Van der Meide, H., Olthuis, G., & Leget, C. (2015). Why frailty needs vulnerability: A care ethical perspective on hospital care for older patients. *Nursing Ethics*, 22(8), 860-869.
- Van Wijngaarden, E., Leget, C., & Goossensen, A. (2015). Ready to give up on life: The lived experience of elderly people who feel life is completed and no longer worth living. *Social Science & Medicine*, 138, 257-264.
- Van Wijngaarden, E., Leget, C., & Goossensen, A. (2016). Disconnectedness from the here-and-now: a phenomenological perspective as a counteract on the medicalisation of death wishes in elderly people. *Medicine, Health Care and Philosophy*, 19(2), 265-273.
- Visse, M., Hansen, F.T. & Leget, C. (2019). The Unsayable in Arts-Based Research: on the Praxis of Life Itself. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, Vol. 18: 1-13 (DOI: 10.1177/1609406919851392) (Peer Reviewed)
- Visse, M. Hansen, F.T. & Leget, C. (2020). Apophatic Inquiry: Living the Questions Themselves. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, Vol. 19: 1-11.

**See practical information next page!**

## ***Practical Information:***

Registration by mail to Hanne P. Clausen: [hannepc@hum.aau.dk](mailto:hannepc@hum.aau.dk) – deadline April 25

Price for external PhDs (PhDs not enrolled within AAU-HUM/SAMF) is DKK 500 – link to payment site will be sent to registered participants.

Deadline for sending abstract and research questions (see below) is May 14 – also by mail to [hannepc@hum.aau.dk](mailto:hannepc@hum.aau.dk):

- 1) Abstract that describes your research project and your main research question (wonder), and
- 2) List at least 5 questions that have come up while readings the mandatory literature of this course.

The course is planned to take place with physical presence at Aalborg University (room to be announced later).

As point of departure, the course is only open for active PhD-students – other participants will be put on a waiting list and will only be offered a seat at the course if there are available seats after the registration deadline.