

Phenomenology

It is the [philosophical](#) study of the structures of experience and [consciousness](#). As a [philosophical movement](#) it was founded in the early years of the 20th century by [Edmund Husserl](#) and was later expanded upon by a circle of his followers at the universities of [Göttingen](#) and [Munich](#) in [Germany](#). It then spread to [France](#), the [United States](#), and elsewhere, often in contexts far removed from Husserl's early work.

Phenomenology is not a unitary movement; rather, different authors share a common family resemblance but also with many significant differences. Gabriella Farina states:

A unique and final definition of phenomenology is dangerous and perhaps even paradoxical as it lacks a thematic focus. In fact, it is not a doctrine, nor a philosophical school, but rather a style of thought, a method, an open and ever-renewed experience having different results, and this may disorient anyone wishing to define the meaning of phenomenology.

Phenomenology, in Husserl's conception, is primarily concerned with the systematic reflection on and study of the structures of consciousness and the [phenomena](#) that appear in acts of consciousness. Phenomenology can be clearly differentiated from the [Cartesian](#) method of analysis which sees the world as [objects](#), sets of objects, and objects acting and reacting upon one another.

In its most basic form, phenomenology attempts to create conditions for the [objective](#) study of topics usually regarded as [subjective](#): consciousness and the content of conscious experiences such as [judgements](#), [perceptions](#), and [emotions](#). Although phenomenology seeks to be scientific, it does not attempt to study consciousness from the perspective of clinical psychology or neurology. Instead, it seeks through systematic reflection to determine the essential properties and structures of experience.

There are several assumptions behind phenomenology that help explain its foundations:

1. Phenomenologists reject the concept of objective research. They prefer grouping assumptions through a process called phenomenological [epoché](#).
2. They believe that analyzing daily human behavior can provide one with a greater understanding of nature.
3. They assert that persons should be explored. This is because persons can be understood through the unique ways they reflect the society they live in.
4. Phenomenologists prefer to gather "capta", or conscious experience, rather than traditional data.
5. They consider phenomenology to be oriented toward discovery, and therefore they research using methods that are far less restrictive than in other sciences.^[4]

Husserl derived many important concepts central to phenomenology from the works and lectures of his teachers, the philosophers and psychologists [Franz Brentano](#) and [Carl Stumpf](#).^[5] An important element of phenomenology that Husserl borrowed from Brentano is [intentionality](#) (often described as "aboutness"), the notion that consciousness is always consciousness *of* something. The object of consciousness is called the *intentional object*, and this object is constituted for consciousness in many different ways, through, for instance, [perception](#), [memory](#), [retention and protention](#), [signification](#), etc. Throughout these

different intentionalities, though they have different structures and different ways of being "about" the object, an object is still constituted as the identical object; consciousness is directed at the same intentional object in direct perception as it is in the immediately following retention of this object and the eventual remembering of it.

Though many of the phenomenological methods involve various reductions, phenomenology is, in essence, anti-[reductionistic](#); the reductions are mere tools to better understand and describe the workings of consciousness, not to reduce any phenomenon to these descriptions. In other words, when a reference is made to a thing's *essence* or *idea*, or when the constitution of an identical coherent thing is specified by describing what one "really" sees as being only these sides and aspects, these surfaces, it does not mean that the thing is only and exclusively what is described here: the ultimate goal of these reductions is to understand *how* these different aspects are constituted into the actual thing as experienced by the person experiencing it. Phenomenology is a direct reaction to the [psychologism](#) and [physicalism](#) of Husserl's time.

Ethnomethodology

It is the study of how [social order](#) is produced in and through processes of social interaction. It generally seeks to provide an alternative to mainstream [sociological](#) approaches. In its most radical form, it poses a challenge to the social sciences as a whole. Its early investigations led to the founding of [conversation analysis](#), which has found its own place as an accepted discipline within the academy. According to Psathas, it is possible to distinguish five major approaches within the ethnomethodological family of disciplines (see [§ Varieties](#)).

Ethnomethodology provides methods which have been used in [ethnographic](#) studies to produce accounts of people's methods for negotiating everyday situations. It is a fundamentally descriptive discipline which does not engage in the explanation or evaluation of the particular social order undertaken as a topic of study.^[6] However, applications have been found within many applied disciplines, such as software design and management studies. The term's meaning can be broken down into its three constituent parts: *ethno* – *method* – *ology*, for the purpose of explanation. Using an appropriate Southern California example: *ethno* refers to a particular socio-cultural group (for example, a particular, local community of surfers); *method* refers to the methods and practices this particular group employs in its everyday activities (for example, related to surfing); and *ology* refers to the systematic description of these methods and practices. The focus of the investigation used in our example is the social order of surfing, the ethnomethodological interest is in the "how" (the methods and practices) of the production and maintenance of this social order. In essence ethnomethodology attempts to create classifications of the social actions of individuals within groups through drawing on the experience of the groups directly, without imposing on the setting the opinions of the researcher with regards to social order, as is the case with sociological studies