


ETHICAL KNOWING IN  
THE CLASSROOM AND THE  
CARE OF UNDERSERVED  
POPULATIONS

# LEARNING OBJECTIVES

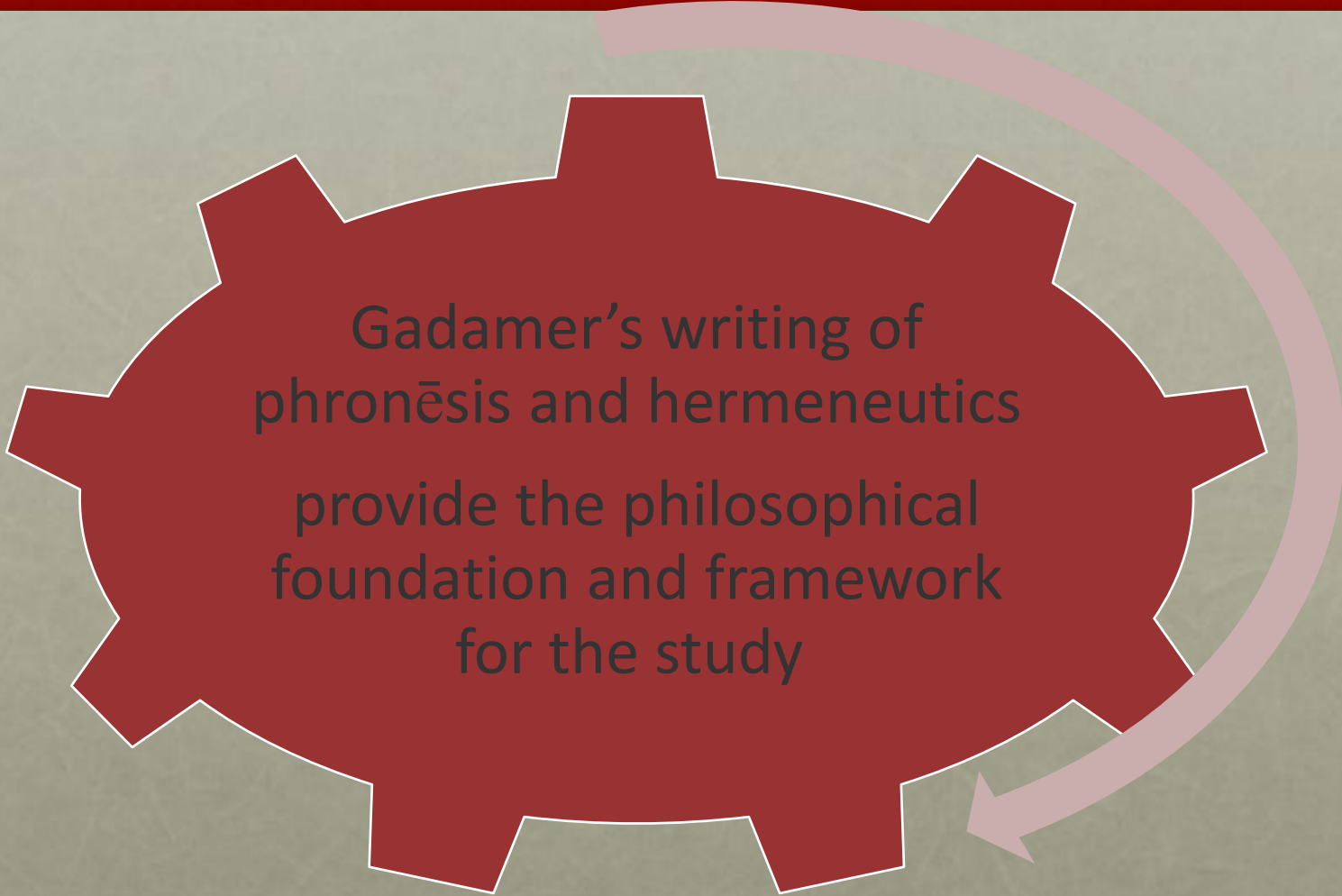
- **Learning Objective #1**
  - Describe the importance of ethical knowing in the care of underserved populations
  
- **Learning Objective #2**
  - Apply concepts of Gadamer's hermeneutic philosophy to developing ethical knowing in nursing education

# PURPOSE OF THE STUDY



To examine how ethical knowing is created in the setting of graduate level nursing education regarding the care of underserved and marginalized populations

# PHILOSOPHICAL FRAMEWORK



Gadamer's writing of  
phronēsis and hermeneutics  
provide the philosophical  
foundation and framework  
for the study

# DEFINITIONS

## Ethical knowing

- Phronēsis
- Versus technē

## Dialectic

- “Only in dialogue—with oneself or with others—can one get beyond the mere prejudices of prevailing conventions” (Gadamer, p. 43)

# SPECIFIC AIMS

- Create opportunities for ethical knowing/phronētic experience in the classroom
- Bring together two diverse groups with different life experiences and perspectives, i.e., nursing students and formerly incarcerated adults together in a dialectic and dialogic way
- Develop new meanings and understandings about ethical knowing (phronēsis) as it relates to nursing care generally and to caring for specific groups, such as formerly incarcerated adults

# METHODS

- Setting
  - Course: Health promotion of individuals & families across the lifespan
- Sample
  - Students: 2<sup>nd</sup> semester direct entry masters program (RN/CNL)
  - Parolees: formerly incarcerated panelists who presented about their life experiences as the authorities on poverty, stigma, drug addiction, hope, recovery, and change.
- Data collection
  - Pre & post class focus groups of students & parolees digitally audio recorded & transcribed verbatim
  - Post class student written reflections
- University of San Francisco IRB approval obtained

# THE CLASS

- Violence prevention/therapeutic communication
- Ongoing project
- Variations of a theme
  - Parolee presentation of life story
  - Parolee facilitated empathy lecture & exercises
  - Small group work with students & parolees



# PAROLEE/STUDENT INTERACTION



# QUOTES: PAROLEES

- Pre: “I’m always curious being a black man, I still got some of the things that go along with it as far as the stereotype—braids, tattoos...when you look in people's eyes you wonder, is they making a judgment about you?...” (Ricky)
- Post: “...It also personally allowed me to have community engagement and community building and both things have been a big form of therapy, from having the shame, denial, and stigma of becoming a federal felon to now using that to assist others in the work that they want to do, so it feels really good to be able to talk to people about it and not have them chastise me or judge me...” (Luz)

# QUOTES: STUDENTS

- Pre/Post: “Prior to our class with the parolees, (I am slightly embarrassed to admit) I was nervous. I have never met someone who had been incarcerated and I did not know what to expect. I also feel as though I may have prejudged them slightly (thinking that most of them would end up back in prison like the stereotype)... After meeting them and sharing the class period with them I was extremely surprised to find how these individuals had changed my opinion of previously incarcerated people” (Aly)

# DISCUSSION

- Participants' pre-class expectations
  - fear, curiosity, skepticism, judgment, excitement
- Participants' post-class reflections
  - described a phronēsis in action
    - transformations of prior understandings of the subject matter

# CONCLUSION

- Through the use of dialogic exchange, ethical knowing, or phronēsis can be created in the classroom
- Students and formerly incarcerated panelists' assumptions about one another were challenged
- New understandings were developed
  - of themselves
  - of each other
  - what it means for nurses to care for this population in a way that is imbued with phronēsis

# WHAT NOW?

- Submitted to Nursing Philosophy (in revision)
- Continue to improve class & employ more Socratic dialogue methods during the interactive class (& all classes)
- Case Study: Transformative wonder: Ex-cons talking about Heidegger to a class of graduate students

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# THANK YOU

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