

UNIVERSITÄT ERFURT
Katholisch-Theologische Fakultät

Herzliche Einladung zum Vortrag am **17.11.2026** um **19.00 Uhr** im **Hörsaal Kiliani (Domstr. 10, Erfurt)** von **Professor Dr. Francisco J. Gonzalez, Ottawa, Canada**

Is an Ontology of Life Possible? Heidegger and Aristotle on Living Beings

When Martin Heidegger first turns to Aristotle in his seminars from the early 1920s, it is with the goal of finding in *De Anima* resources for developing an ontology of life, i.e., an account of what characterizes living things as such in their very being. By the time he publishes *Being and Time* in 1927, however, Heidegger has abandoned this project in favor of a focus on distinctly *human* being (*Dasein*). In this work he claims that the only interpretation of what he calls "mere life" that is possible is a 'privative one', i.e., one that interprets life as *lacking* what defines human *Dasein.* In a course of 1929/30 (*Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics*) Heidegger then attempts this 'privative' interpretation of 'life': if the being of *Dasein* is being-in-the-world, he argues, animals are 'poor in world'. In this talk I wish to challenge this abandonment and then severe restriction of an ontology of life by opposing to the later Heidegger his own reading of Aristotle in the early, largely still unpublished seminars. I also comment briefly on Heidegger's reading of *De Anima* in a recently discovered seminar from 1942/43 that might represent a return to the earlier reading. The question at issue is whether we can indeed understand life only negatively as 'mere life' in opposition to our own way of being or, on the contrary, can understand our own being only within a broader comprehension of life itself.

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