

PHILOSOPHY 314

19th Century Philosophy: Nietzsche in Context

PHIL 314
SPRING 2022
Mon/Thurs 2:30-3:50
Clearihue A127

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Course Objectives

A founding figure of our intellectual epoch, Nietzsche's influence on subsequent thought and culture cannot be overstated. He said he wrote "in blood" language artful, excessive, and notoriously provocative. How are to understand him then?

In this course we will explore Nietzsche's work in the context of the philosophy of the 19th Century, from his roots in Schopenhauer and Emerson, and his disdain for socialist movements to the conception and development of his extraordinary works of the Will to Power, the Overman and Eternal Return, Genealogy, and Life. We will read his work carefully from The Birth of Tragedy and Thus Spoke Zarathustra, through Beyond Good and Evil and the Genealogy of Morals. We will delight in the enigmatic force of his language and endeavor to comprehend him on his own terms, as profoundly as possible.

Readings will undoubtedly be difficult and class attendance necessary. As with all great adventures, what you take away will depend on what you put in. Graded work will include homework questions, one class midterm, one short exegetical paper, and a final paper.

Learning Outcomes

As in all courses in philosophy, the primary learning outcome is to train ourselves to become deeper thinkers, more attentive readers, better writers, and clearer speakers. The readings in this course will give us insight into one of the most profound and influential philosophers of the modern age, which will require us to read more fully and comprehensively. Homework questions will provide opportunities to hone our skills at determining the critical points of a text and answering a question accurately and concisely. The midterm and essays will test our ability to probe and communicate complex ideas and their interrelations in classroom discussion. It is my hope that we will learn how to articulate our thoughts honestly and precisely and to disagree without rancor.

TEXTS: In the Bookstore: Basic Writings of Nietzsche, trans. Kaufmann,
Modern Library, 2000
[Includes: Birth of Tragedy, Genealogy of Morals,
Beyond Good and Evil, & Ecce Homo]

Thus Spoke Zarathustra, trans. Graham Parkes,
Oxford Univ. Press, 2008

Additional Material will be available on Brightspace

Course Policies:

Schedule of Classes

Week One – Introductions

January 10

Week Seven – READING BREAK
February 24 24

Week Eight – Beyond Good & Evil

28 Philosophers
Read: Beyond Good & Evil, Preface, Part One & Two
March 3 “Natural” History
Read: BG&E Part Five

Week Nine – Noble Virtues

7 Scholars, Philosophers, and their Virtues
Read: BG&E Part 6