



GE 20420-01 / PHIL 20243-01 – Marx, Nietzsche, and Freud

Spring 2018, MW, 12:30 - 1:45 p.m., O'Shaughnessy 109

Professor Robert E. Norton
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Course description

This course introduces students to the work and impact of perhaps the three most influential thinkers of post-Hegelian modernity. Karl Marx's historical materialism, Friedrich Nietzsche's atheism, perspectivism and genealogical method, and Sigmund Freud's psychoanalysis have fundamentally challenged traditional frameworks for understanding the human mind and agency, society, history, culture, morality, and religion. According to each of these three "masters of suspicion," as the French philosopher Paul Ricoeur famously called them, we typically fall victim to some form of "false consciousness" that systematically distorts our perspective on both the world around us and our own selves. According to Marx, economic structures and processes in capitalist society generate class-bound views that conceal rather than reveal the very nature and historical fate of capitalism as a necessarily collapsing social environment that is fundamentally incompatible with true human flourishing. According to Nietzsche, our most cherished intuitions about truth and knowledge, morality and religion have emerged through historically contingent and ultimately indefensible processes. Their ideological sediments (what Nietzsche called "idols") misguide us about what form of human life is truly valuable. According to Freud, unconscious mechanisms, which can be elucidated through psychoanalytical techniques with therapeutic benefit, deceive us about the complex structure of our mind and its behavioral manifestations.

Our task in examining these and related contentions will be exegetical as well as philosophical. As exegetes, we will try to thoroughly understand what Marx, Nietzsche, and Freud actually claimed. As students of philosophy, we will attempt to justly assess the merits and demerits of their descriptive and normative claims. Starting with succinct biographical and historical-contextual overviews for each of the three authors, we will investigate and critically compare the thematic contents, methodological commitments and argumentative

structures of selected key writings that revolve around the following complementary topics: (1) society and history, (2) the human mind and human agency, (3) religion and morality, (4) culture, literature and the arts.

Requirements

Students will write two papers over the course of the semester. The first paper (4-5 pages, due on March 19) will concentrate on the analysis and critique of a specific argument based on a specific reasoning. The second paper (8-10 pages, due on May 2) will be comparative in character. Paper topics will be chosen in consultation with me 3 weeks before the papers are due. The first paper will count for 20%, the second for 30% of the grade. In addition, students will take three written exams: a short pre-midterm test (20 minutes), a short post-midterm test (20 minutes) and a final exam (2 hours). The two tests will each count for 5%, the final exam for 30% of the grade. Attendance and participation in class will count for 10% of the grade. Students must familiarize themselves with the Honor Code on the University's website and pledge to observe its provisions in all written and oral work, including oral presentations, quizzes and exams, and drafts and final versions of essays.

Schedule

Wednesday, Jan. 17

Course Introduction: Marx, Nietzsche, and Freud – Philosophical and Historical Aspects of Comparison

Monday, Jan. 22

Class cancelled in observance of on-campus Martin Luther King Jr. Day events.

Required Reading: Lewis S. Feuer, "Karl Marx." *The Encyclopedia Britannica*

(<http://www.britannica.com/biography/Karl-Marx>);

Bernd Magnus, "Friedrich Nietzsche." *The Encyclopedia Britannica*

(<http://www.britannica.com/biography/Friedrich-Nietzsche>);

Martin Even Jay, "Sigmund Freud." *The Encyclopedia Britannica*

(<http://www.britannica.com/biography/Sigmund-Freud>).

Recommended Reading: Brian Leiter, "The Hermeneutics of Suspicion: Recovering Marx, Nietzsche, and Freud." *The Future of Philosophy*. Ed. Leiter. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2004: 74-105.

Wednesday, Jan 24

Hegel and Marx on History and Society

Required Reading: Hegel, *Lectures on the Philosophy of World History*

(<http://www.efm.bris.ac.uk/het/hegel/history.pdf>, Translator's Introduction: 5-II; Introduction: 14-96); "Hegel. A Brief Illustrated Biography" (<http://www.gwfhegel.org/hegelbio.html>).

Recommended Reading: Frederick C. Beiser, "Hegel's Historicism." *The Cambridge Companion to Hegel*. Ed. Beiser. London: Cambridge UP, 1993: 270-300; Daniel Little, "Philosophy of History." *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (<http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/history/>)

Monday, Jan 29

Hegel and Marx on History and Society (cont.)

Required Reading: Marx/Engels, *Manifesto of the Communist Party*

(<https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/download/pdf/Manifesto.pdf>, Editorial

Introduction: 2-3; Sections I-III: 14-34)

Recommended Reading: G. A. Cohen, *Karl Marx's Theory of History. A Defence*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2000: 1-27 ("Images of History in Hegel and Marx").

Wednesday, Jan 31

Feuerbach's Critique of Religion and Marx's Critique of Feuerbach

Required Reading: Ludwig Feuerbach, *The Essence of Christianity* (Introduction: §§1-2; Part I: Chs. XV and XVIII)

Recommended Reading: Todd Gooch, "Ludwig Andreas Feuerbach." *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (<http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/ludwig-feuerbach/>)

Monday, Feb 5

Feuerbach's Critique of Religion and Marx's Critique of Feuerbach (cont.)

Required Reading: Marx, *Theses on Feuerbach; German Ideology* (Part I: Feuerbach)

Recommended Reading: Vittorio Hösle, *A Short History of German Philosophy*. Princeton: Princeton UP, 2017: 139-155 ("The Revolt against the Bourgeois World: Ludwig Feuerbach and Karl Marx").

Wednesday, Feb 7

Marx's Early Critique of Capitalism: Alienation and False Consciousness

Required Reading: Marx, *1844 Manuscripts* (First manuscript)

Recommended Reading: Allen Wood, *Karl Marx*. New York: Routledge, 2004: 1-60 ("Part One: Alienation").

Monday, Feb 12

Marx's Later Theory of Capitalism

Required Reading: Marx, *Capital* Vol. I (selected sections)

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Recommended Reading: G.A. Cohen, *Marx's Theory of History: 175-215* ("The Productive Forces and Capitalism")

Wednesday, Feb 14

Marx on Base, Superstructure, and Ideology

Required Reading: Marx, *Critique of Political Economy* (Preface); *The German Ideology* (selected sections); Georg Lukács, *History and Class Consciousness*. London: Merlin Press, 1971: 60-79 ("Class Consciousness").

Recommended Reading: Raymond Williams, "Base and Superstructure in Marxist Cultural Theory."

(<http://dtllc.fflch.usp.br/sites/dtllc.fflch.usp.br/files/Williams%20-%20Base%20and%20Superstructure%20in%20Marxist%20Cultural%20Theory.pdf>)

Monday, Feb 19

Marxism and Morality

Required Reading: Marx, *Critique of the Gotha Program*; Steven Lukes, “Marxism, Morality, and Justice.” *Royal Institute of Philosophy Lecture Series 14* (1982): 177-205.

Wednesday, Feb 21

Pre-midterm test (20 minutes)

Nietzsche’s Nihilism

Required Reading: Nietzsche, “Decline of Cosmological Values” and other passages from the unpublished work of the 1880s (*Nachlass*).

Recommended Reading: Arthur C. Danto, *Nietzsche as Philosopher*. Expanded Edition. New York: Columbia UP, 2005: 1-17 (Ch. 1: “Philosophical Nihilism”).

Monday, Feb 26

Nietzsche’s Perspectivism

Required Reading: Nietzsche, *On Truth and Lies in an Unmoral Sense*

Recommended Reading: Maudemarie Clark, *Nietzsche on Truth and Philosophy*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1990: 63-94 (Ch. 3: “Language and truth: Nietzsche’s early denial of truth”).

Wednesday, Feb 28

Nietzsche’s Perspectivism (cont.)

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Required Reading: Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil* (Preface and sections 1-44); *Nachlass* (selected passages)

Recommended Reading: Maudemarie Clark, *Nietzsche on Truth and Philosophy*: 127-158 (Ch. 5: “Perspectivism”).

Monday, March 5

Nietzsche’s Aestheticism

Required Reading: Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy* (Sections 1-17)

Recommended Reading: Arthur C. Danto, *Nietzsche as Philosopher*: 18-49 (Ch. 2: “Art and Irrationality”).

Wednesday, March 7

Nietzsche’s Aestheticism (cont.)

Required Reading: Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy* (Sections 8-25; “Attempt at Self-Criticism”); *The Gay Science* (Preface and selected sections)

March 10-18 Spring Break

Monday March 19

Nietzsche's Conception and Practice of Genealogy

Required Reading: Nietzsche, *On the Genealogy of Morality* (Preface, First Treatise); Vittorio Hösle, *A Short History of German Philosophy: 156-175* ("The Revolt against Universalistic Morals: Friedrich Nietzsche").

Wednesday, March 21

Nietzsche's Conception and Practice of Genealogy (cont.)

Required Reading: Nietzsche, *On the Genealogy of Morality* (Second Treatise)

Recommended Reading: Mathias Risse, "The Second Treatise in 'On the Genealogy of Morality': Nietzsche on the Origin of the Bad Conscience." *European Journal of Philosophy* 9 (2001): 55-81

Monday, March 26

Midterm paper due (4-5 pages)

Nietzsche's Conception and Practice of Genealogy (cont.)

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Required Reading: Nietzsche, *On the Genealogy of Morality* (Third Treatise)

Recommended Reading: Maudemarie Clark, *Nietzsche on Truth and Philosophy: 159-203* (Ch. 5: "The ascetic ideal").

Wednesday, March 28

Nietzsche's Metaphysics: The Will to Power

Required Reading: Nietzsche, *Nachlass* (selected passages)

Recommended Reading: Arthur C. Danto, *Nietzsche as Philosopher: 196-210* (Ch. 8: "The Will-to-Power"); Maudemarie Clark, *Nietzsche on Truth and Philosophy: 205-244* (Ch. 5: "The will to power").

Monday, April 2

Nietzsche's Concept of the Self and the Ideal of the Superhuman

Required Reading: Nietzsche, *The Gay Science; Beyond Good and Evil; Thus Spoke Zarathustra; Nachlass* (selected sections)

Recommended Reading: Alexander Nehamas, *Nietzsche: Life as Literature: 170-199* (Ch. 6: "How To Become What One Is").

Wednesday, April 4

Post-Midterm test (20 minutes)

Freud's Methodology of Dream Interpretation and its Theoretical Foundations

Required Reading: Freud, *On Dreams*; Freud, *A General Introduction to Psychoanalysis* (Chs. VI, VII, XIV, XV)

Recommended Reading: Jonathan Lear, *Freud*. New York: Routledge, 2006: 88-116. (Ch. 3: "The Interpretation of Dreams").

Monday, April 9

Freud's Theory of the Mind

Required Reading: Freud, *An Outline to Psycho-Analysis* (Part I)

Recommended Reading: Richard Wollheim, *Freud*. London: Fontana, 1991: 42-64 (Ch. 2: "The Theory of Mind").

Wednesday, April 11

Freud's Theory of the Mind (cont.)

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Required Reading: Freud, *An Outline to Psycho-Analysis* (Part II-III)

Recommended Reading: Marcia Cavell, *The Psychoanalytic Mind: From Freud to Philosophy*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard UP: 1996: 9-41 (Ch. 1: "Meaning and Mind").

Monday, April 16

Recent Criticisms and Defenses of Psycho-Analysis

Required Reading: Adolf Grünbaum, *Foundations of Psychoanalysis. A Philosophical Critique*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984: 127-170 (Ch. 2: "Did Freud Vindicate His Method of Clinical Investigation?"); Richard Wollheim, "Desire Belief, and Professor Grünbaum's Freud." Wollheim, *The Mind and its Depth*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard UP: 91-111.

Wednesday, April 18

Freud's Contribution to Social Psychology

Required Reading: Freud, *Mass Psychology and the Analysis of the 'I'*

Recommended Reading: Jerome Rabow, "Psychoanalysis and Sociology." *Annual Review of Sociology* 9 (1983): 555-578.

Monday, April 22

Freud's Critique of Religion

Required Reading: Freud, *The Future of an Illusion* (I-IV)

Recommended Reading: Adolf Grünbaum, "Psychoanalysis and Theism." *The Monist* 79 (1987): 12-173.

Monday, April 23

Freud's Critique of Religion (cont.)

Required Reading: Freud, *The Future of an Illusion* (V-X)

Recommended Reading: William P. Alston, "Psychoanalytic Theory and Theistic Belief." *Faith and the Philosophers*. Ed. John Hick. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1964: 63-102.

Wednesday, April 25

Freud's Theory of Culture

Required Reading: Freud, *Culture and Its Discontents* (I-IV)

Recommended Reading: Richard Wollheim, *Freud*: 219-235 (ch. 8: "Civilization and Society").

Monday, April 30

Freud's Theory of Culture (cont.)

Required Reading: Freud, *Culture and Its Discontents* (V-VIII)

Recommended Reading: John Deigh, "Freud's later theory of civilization. Changes and implications." *The Cambridge Guide to Freud*. Ed. Jerome Neu. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1991: 287-309.

Wednesday, May 2

Final paper due (8-10 pages)

Closing Discussion: The Merits and Demerits of the School of Suspicion

Required Reading: Michel Foucault, "Nietzsche, Freud, Marx." Foucault, *Aesthetics, Method, and Epistemology*. Ed. James D. Faubion. New York: The New Press, 1998: 269-278.

Monday, May 7

Final Exam (8:00 – 10:00 AM)