

COURSE SYLLABUS

Course/Section: PHL 525-201 Winter 2015
Course Title: Nietzsche
Time/Place: Tuesdays 1:00-4:10pm, McGowan South 204.
Instructor: Will McNeill
Office: 2352 N. Clifton, Suite 150.3
Office Hours: Tuesday 9:00-11:00am, or by appointment
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COURSE OUTLINE

This course will provide an introduction to Nietzsche's thought. We shall read selections from most of Nietzsche's writings from his first published work, *The Birth of Tragedy* (1872), to his last, *Ecce Homo* (1888), as well as a series of secondary commentaries. The course will trace some of the central concepts in Nietzsche's thinking, including the Dionysian, the Eternal Recurrence of the Same, the Death of God, Will to Power, the Overman, Revaluation, and Nihilism.

REQUIRED TEXTS

There are two required texts:

1. A sourcebook of primary texts (in translation). It contains virtually all of the selections we shall study in this course: *The Nietzsche Reader*, eds. Keith Ansell-Pearson & Duncan Large. Oxford: Blackwell, 2006.
2. A compendium of secondary studies: *The New Nietzsche: Contemporary Styles of Interpretation*, ed. David B. Allison. Cambridge: MIT Press, 1985.

EDITIONS OF NIETZSCHE'S WORKS

I. German Editions

Authoritative German editions comprise the following:

Kritische Gesamtausgabe (KGW) (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1967-).

Kritische Studienausgabe (KSA) (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1980).

Briefwechsel: Kritische Gesamtausgabe (KGB) (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1975-).

Sämtliche Briefe: Kritische Studienausgabe (KSB) (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1986).

Of these, the most useful edition of Nietzsche's works for independent study is the *Kritische Studienausgabe*, a complete edition available as a boxed set of 15 volumes at a reasonable price (around \$200).

Another important resource is the Digital Critical Edition of Nietzsche's Works and Letters (*Digitale Kritische Gesamtausgabe Werke und Briefe*) (eKGWB), ed. Paolo D'Iorio (2009–), based on the print edition of the *Kritische Gesamtausgabe*. The electronic edition is available at www.nietzschesource.org/eKGWB; specific works are then cited in this essay by abbreviation of respective work, e.g., Posthumous Fragments (NF), year, group, and fragment number. The Digital Critical Edition incorporates many philological corrections to the printed version.

II. Translations

Despite repeated claims by publishers, there is, of course, no such thing as the “authoritative” or “definitive” or “standard of scholarly” translation. Serious scholarship demands access to original texts, and translations vary with interpretations. English readers of Nietzsche are well advised to consult different translations and to use them discriminately. That said, most translations of Nietzsche are fairly decent: those by Kaufman and Hollingdale are generally reliable in conveying the sense and spirit of Nietzsche's writings (though both tend to take quite a bit of poetic license that is not always helpful); the Cambridge translations are good overall; and the more recent, Stanford series promises yet another set of variations (initial impressions are that the Stanford translations are a bit idiosyncratic). *Caveat lector*.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

In addition to regular attendance and participation, there are two required components:

1. A final paper, due Tuesday of Week 11, by noon. Your final paper must take a critical stance on one or more of the secondary commentaries with regard to a particular theme of your choosing in Nietzsche's work. Your critical stance may entail either rejection/revision or affirmation of the interpretation in question. Length: 10-15 pages, double-spaced.
2. Each student is required to present an analysis of one of the secondary commentaries, to be assigned. Presentations will take place during the second half of the seminar, and should be around 15-20 minutes. Your presentation should: a) be selective, concentrating on a particular theme in the reading that intrigues you; b) relate this theme to Nietzsche's texts; and c) take a critical stance toward the secondary reading, either affirmative or problematizing.

APPROXIMATE GRADE BREAKDOWN

Presentation: 35%

Final Paper: 65%

PROJECTED SCHEDULE OF STUDY: PRIMARY READINGS

- Week 1 *The Birth of Tragedy*, Sections 1-15 (1872): pp. 42-73.
- Week 2 *On Truth and Lies in a Nonmoral Sense* (1873): pp.114-23.
On the Utility & Liability of History for Life, Sections 1-3; 10 (1874): pp. 124-41.
- Week 3 *Human, All Too Human*, Section 1 (“Of First and Last Things”) (1878): pp.161-70.
Daybreak. Selections from Books I and II (1881): pp.191-201.
- Week 4 *The Gay Science*. Selections from Books III and IV (1882): pp.219-37.
- Week 5 *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, Prologue and selections (1883-85): pp.254ff.:
Prologue
Of the Despisers of the Body
Of Self-Overcoming
Of the Tarantulas [* not included in *Reader*]
Of Redemption
- Week 6 *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, continued:
Of the Vision and the Riddle
The Convalescent
Notes on Eternal Recurrence from 1881: pp.238-41.
- Week 7 *Beyond Good and Evil*, Preface & Selections from Section 1 (“On the Prejudices of Philosophers”) (1886): pp. 311-17.
- Week 8 *Beyond Good and Evil*, Selections from Sections 1 & 2 (“On the Prejudices of Philosophers” & “The Free Spirit”) (1886): pp. 318-31
- Week 9 *European Nihilism* (notes); *On the Genealogy of Morality*, Preface and Third Essay (“What Do Ascetic Ideals Mean?”) (1887): pp.385-89; 390-95; 424-35.

Week 10 *Twilight of the Idols* (“Reason in Philosophy”; “How the Real World Finally Became a Fable”) (1888): pp.462-65.
Ecce Homo, selections (1889): pp.500-516.

SECONDARY INTERPRETATIONS:

We shall read the following selections from *The New Nietzsche*, on a schedule to be determined:

David Allison, *Preface and Introduction*
Michel Haar, *Nietzsche and Metaphysical Language*
Alphonso Lingis, *The Will to Power*
Martin Heidegger, *Who is Nietzsche’s Zarathustra?*
Gilles Deleuze, *Active and Reactive*
Pierre Klossowski, *Nietzsche’s Experience of the Eternal Return*
Jean Granier, *Nietzsche’s Conception of Chaos*
Eric Blondel, *Nietzsche: Life as Metaphor*
Jacques Derrida, *The Question of Style*
Jean Granier, *Perspectivism and Interpretation*
Sarah Kofman, *Metaphor, Symbol, Metamorphosis*

In addition, the following will be made available on D2L:

Selections from *Heidegger’s 1937 reading of the Eternal Return*.

McNeill, “*The Poverty of the Regent: On Nietzsche’s Critique of the ‘Subject’.*” *Epoché*, Volume 8, Issue 2 (Spring 2004), pp. 285–296.

McNeill, “*A Wave in the Stream of Chaos: Life Beyond the Body in Heidegger’s Nietzsche.*” *Philosophy Today*, SPEP Supplement, 2006, pp.156-61.

McNeill, “*The Secret of Life: Explorations of Nietzsche’s Conception of Life as Will to Power.*” *Research in Phenomenology* 43 (2013), pp. 177–192.