

## DUKE UNIVERSITY

PS226S/Phil 237S/Ger 276S  
Nietzsche's Political Philosophy  
Fall, 2009  
Office hours: Th 3-5 or by appointment

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### Introduction

This course will be a comprehensive consideration of Nietzsche's mature moral and political philosophy in the context of his philosophy as a whole. We will begin with an examination of his understanding of the cultural crisis of his time and its solution in a rebirth of a tragic culture modeled on the Greek tragic age. This will involve an examination of his first book, *The Birth of Tragedy*. This examination will provide the jumping off point for a lengthy examination of Nietzsche's *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*. This work was Nietzsche's greatest attempt to solve the fundamental problem that he believes has beset humanity since the time of the Greeks, a problem he later came to call nihilism. In this context we will consider at length the question of the overman and the eternal recurrence. We will then turn to his late critique of European morality and politics in *The Genealogy of Morals* and *Twilight of the Idols*. We will then look at Nietzsche's autobiography *Ecce Homo* in order to come to terms with the relationship of the author to his works. In conclusion we will briefly consider the place of the pseudo-work, *The Will To Power*, in his thought and try to come to terms with the misinterpretation of his thought that this work has occasioned. Primary and secondary readings for each class are listed below. I have also included recommended readings for many of the class sessions. Students are also required to choose two books from among the major secondary sources listed below (including those listed under recommended purchases) and read them during the course of the semester. (Heidegger's *Nietzsche* and Janz's *Nietzsche: Biographie* each count as two selections). A one page synopsis of each book must be turned in by 12:00 Noon, Dec. 4, 2009. Undergraduates are required to write a 10-15 page paper (due at 12:00 Midnight on Nov. 6, 2009) and take a final. Graduate students may write a 10-15 page paper if it is completed by Dec. 8, 2009 and a 20-30 page paper if completed thereafter. Each student will be responsible for a short and informal discussion of the readings assigned for one class. The written work will constitute 65% of the grade. The remaining 35% will be determined by class participation.

### Required Purchases:

Nietzsche, *The Portable Nietzsche*  
Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy and the Case of Wagner*  
Nietzsche, *The Genealogy of Morals and Ecce Homo*  
Other required readings available on Blackboard or available on line.

### Recommended Purchases:

David Allison, ed. *The New Nietzsche*

Michael Allen Gillespie and Tracy Strong, ed., *Nietzsche's New Seas*  
Laurence Lampert, *Nietzsche's Teaching*

### Class Schedule

- Aug. 24 Introduction  
Recommended:  
Michael Allen Gillespie, *Nihilism Before Nietzsche*, chps. 6-7.
- 26 *Birth of Tragedy*, Preface to Richard Wagner, sections 1-6  
Schopenhauer, *World as Will and Representation*, Bk. III, chp. 39  
Nietzsche, "The Greek State"  
Recommended:  
Charles Senn Taylor, "Nietzsche's Schopenhaurianism," in *Nietzsche-Studien* 17 (1988):45-73.
- 31 *Birth of Tragedy*, sections 7-13  
Robert Rethy, "The Tragic Affirmation of the Birth of Tragedy," *Nietzsche-Studien* 17 (1988):1-44.
- Sept. 2 No Class
- 7 *Birth of Tragedy*, sections 14-19  
Recommended:  
John Sallis, *Crossings: Nietzsche and the Space of Tragedy*  
John Peter Sloterdijk, *Thinker on Stage: Nietzsche's Materialism*
- 9 *Birth of Tragedy*, sections 9-25  
Recommended:  
Curt Paul Janz, "The Form-Content Problem in Nietzsche's Conception of Music," in *Nietzsche's New Seas*, pp. 97-116
- 14 *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, Prologue  
*The Gay Science*, aphorism 125 (in *The Portable Nietzsche*, p.95)  
Recommended:  
Lampert, *Nietzsche's Teaching*, pp. 1-31  
Michael Allen Gillespie, "'Slouching Toward Bethlehem to Be Born': On the Nature and Meaning of Nietzsche's Superman," *Journal for Nietzsche Studies* 30 (2005):50-70.  
Richard Perkins, "How an Ape Becomes a Superman: Notes on a Parodic Metamorphosis in Nietzsche," *Nietzsche-Studien* 15 (1986):
- 16 *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, pp. 137-167  
Michael Allen Gillespie, "Nietzsche and the Anthropology of Nihilism," *Nietzsche-Studien* (e-reserve)  
Recommended:

- Lampert, *Nietzsche's Teaching*, pp. 31-58  
 John Powell Clayton, "Zarathustra and the Stages on Life's Way: A Nietzschean Riposte to Kierkegaard," *Nietzsche-Studien* 14 (1985):179-200
- 21 *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, pp. 167-191  
 Recommended:  
 Lampert, *Nietzsche's Teaching*, pp. 58-82
- 23 *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, pp. 195-217  
 Recommended:  
 Lampert, *Nietzsche's Teaching*, pp. 83-102
- 28 *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, pp. 217-241  
 Recommended:  
 Lampert, *Nietzsche's Teaching*, pp. 102-35
- 30 *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, pp. 241-259  
 Martin Heidegger, "Who is Nietzsche's Zarathustra," in *The New Nietzsche*, pp. 64-79  
 Recommended:  
 Lampert, *Nietzsche's Teaching*, pp. 135-54
- Oct. 5 Fall Break- No Class
- 7 *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, pp. 264-294  
 Karsten Harries, "The Philosopher at Sea," in *Nietzsche's New Seas*, pp. 21-44  
 Recommended:  
 Lampert, *Nietzsche's Teaching*, pp. 155-89
- 12 *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, pp. 295-327  
 Recommended:  
 Lampert, *Nietzsche's Teaching*, pp. 189-211
- 14 *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, pp. 327-343  
 Pierre Klossowski, "Nietzsche's Experience of the Eternal Return" in *The New Nietzsche*, pp. 107-120  
 Recommended:  
 Lampert, *Nietzsche's Teaching*, pp. 211-44
- 19 *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, pp. 349-390  
 Kathleen Higgins, *Nietzsche's Zarathustra*, pp. 203-42, 273-81  
 Recommended:  
 Lampert, *Nietzsche's Teaching*, pp.287-99
- 21 *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, pp. 390-439  
 Hans-Georg Gadamer, "The Drama of Zarathustra," in *Nietzsche's New Seas*, pp.

- 220-231  
 Recommended:  
 Lampert, *Nietzsche's Teaching*, pp. 299-311
- 26 *Genealogy of Morals*, Preface, First Essay;  
 Michel Foucault, "Nietzsche, Genealogy, History," in *The Foucault Reader*, pp. 76-100  
 Recommended: Jacqueline Stevens, "On the Morals of Genealogy," *Political Theory* 3, no. 4 (Aug. 2003):558-588. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3593672>
- 28 *Genealogy of Morals*, Second Essay  
 Catherine Zuckert, "Nietzsche on the Origin and Development of the Distinctively Human," *Polity* 16, no. 1 (Autumn, 1983):48-71.  
<http://www.jstor.org/stable/3234522>
- Nov. 2 *Genealogy of Morals*, Third Essay, sections 1-17  
 Recommended:  
 Christopher Janaway, "Beyond Selflessness in Ethics and Inquiry," *Journal of Nietzsche Studies* 35-36 (2008):124-140.  
 David Owen, "Nietzsche's *Genealogy* Revisited," *Journal of Nietzsche Studies* 35-36 (2008):141-154
- 4 *Genealogy of Morals*, Third Essay, sections 18-28  
 Lawrence Hatab, "How Does the Ascetic Ideal Function in Nietzsche's *Genealogy*?" *Journal of Nietzsche Studies* 35-36 (2001):106-123)
- 6 Undergraduate papers due, 12:00 Midnight (by email)
- 9 *Gay Science*, Aphorism 343 (in *The Portable Nietzsche*, pp. 447-48)  
*Twilight of the Idols*, pp. 465-492  
 Michael Allen Gillespie, "Nietzsche's Musical Politics," in *Nietzsche's New Seas*, pp.117-49
- 11 *Twilight of the Idols*, pp. 492-530  
 Tracy Strong, "Introduction," in Nietzsche, *Twilight of the Idols*, pp.vii-xxvii
- 16 *Twilight of the Idols*, pp. 530-63
- 23 *Ecce Homo*, pp. 217-258  
 Albert Camus, "Nietzsche and Nihilism," in *The Rebel*, pp. 65-80
- 25 No Class, Thanksgiving
- 30 *Ecce Homo*, pp. 259-335,
- Dec. 2 *The Will to Power*, aphorisms 1-56

Bernd Magnus, "The Use and Abuse of *The Will to Power*," in *Reading Nietzsche*, ed. Robert Solomon and Kathleen Higgins, pp. 218-35.

Recommended:

Martin Heidegger, "The Word of Nietzsche: 'God is Dead'," in *The Question Concerning Technology and Other Essays*, pp. 53-112

Valadier, "Dionysus verses the Crucified," *The New Nietzsche*, pp.247-61

Dec. 4 Synopses due, 12:00 Noon

8 Graduate papers due, 12:00 Noon

### Important Secondary Works on Nietzsche

Peter Berkowitz, *Nietzsche and the Ethics of an Immoralist*

Recent critique of Nietzsche from a premodernist, preeminently Platonic perspective.

Gilles Deleuze, *Nietzsche and Philosophy*

The first and in some respects still the definitive post-structuralist reading of Nietzsche.

Jacques Derrida, *Eperons/Spurs*

Discussion of one section of *Twilight of the Idols* as the basis for an argument about the nature and status of texts.

Bruce Detwiler, *Nietzsche's Aristocratic Radicalism*

The most accurate current account of Nietzsche's political philosophy available in English.

Eugen Fink, *Nietzsches Philosophie*

The preeminent phenomenological reading of Nietzsche's thought.

Jean Granier, *Le Problème de la vérité dans la philosophie de Nietzsche*

Thoughtful account of Nietzsche's understanding of truth by a leading French Heideggerian/post-structuralist.

Robert Gooding-Williams, *Zarathustra's Dionysian Modernism*

Commentary on Zarathustra as an attempt to revive the earth's passions.

Martin Heidegger, *Nietzsche*

The preeminent philosophical encounter with Nietzsche's thought by the most penetrating thinker of the twentieth century.

Curt Paul Janz, *Nietzsche: Biographie*

The definitive biography of Nietzsche in three volumes. Relatively unphilosophical.

Karl Jaspers, *Nietzsche: Introduction to an Understanding of his Philosophy*

The greatest early existentialist reading of Nietzsche.

Walter Kaufmann, *Nietzsche: Philosopher, Psychologist, Antichrist*

The work that revived interest in Nietzsche's thought in America after WWII.

Pierre Klossowski, *Nietzsche and the Vicious Circle*

French post-structuralist reading of Nietzsche's thought from the perspective of his idea of the eternal recurrence.

Sarah Kofman, *Nietzsche and Metaphor*

Most insightful discussion of relation of language and thought in Nietzsche's work by student of Derrida.

Karl Löwith, *Nietzsche's Philosophy of the Eternal Recurrence of the Same*

Brilliant early discussion of the idea of the eternal recurrence by one of the twentieth

century's most eminent scholars of German thought.

Wolfgang Müller-Lauter, *Nietzsche: His Philosophy of Contradictions and the Contradictions of his Philosophy*

Insightful reading of Nietzsche's thought as a whole by the preeminent German Nietzsche scholar of the last quarter century.

Alexander Nehamas, *Life as Literature*

Attempt to read Nietzsche more as a writer interested in creating himself than as a philosopher beset by questions he cannot answer.

Henning Ottman, *Philosophie und Politik bei Nietzsche*

The best book in German on Nietzsche's political philosophy.

Stanley Rosen, *The Mask of Enlightenment: Nietzsche's "Zarathustra"*

An attempt to show the contradictions that arise in *Zarathustra* as a result of Nietzsche's desire to speak to the few and to the many.

Safranski, Rudiger, *Nietzsche: A Philosophical Biography*

Relatively new biography by Germany's preeminent philosophical biographer.

Tracy Strong, *Nietzsche and the Politics of Transfiguration*

One of best known attempts in English to discover a more democratic Nietzsche.

Mark Warren, *Nietzsche and Political Thought*

An attempt to show that Nietzsche was essentially a democratic, liberationist thinker whose efforts were side-tracked and ultimately defeated by his acceptance of the false conclusions of defective nineteenth century science.