

Course

The Philosophy of Nietzsche (尼采哲学研究), Spring Semester 2021

Teacher

Sebastian Sunday Grève (ssg@pku.edu.cn) (office hours: Mondays 14:00–16:00)

Location

Weeks 1–16, Mondays, 16:10–18:00, room to be announced

Level

Open to all undergraduate students; no prerequisites

Description

Friedrich Nietzsche (1844–1900) was a German philosopher, who famously proclaimed the death of God and challenged the foundations of traditional morality. In many ways, Nietzsche's philosophy remains as powerful and relevant as ever. This course offers an introduction to it. We will study Nietzsche's mature writings including *Beyond Good and Evil* (1886), *On the Genealogy of Morality* (1887) and *Twilight of the Idols* (1888). And we will examine his key ideas, including nihilism, affirmation of life and the will to power, as well as his criticisms of Judeo-Christian morality, the will to truth and the ascetic ideal.

Format

The course will consist of two consecutive parts. During the first, longer part, the focus will be exclusively on Nietzsche's own writings: meetings will take the form of lectures offering detailed commentary on the text, with time for questions and discussion; students will be advised to read only Nietzsche's own writings during this part of the course (either the original German texts or the suggested English translations). During the second part, we will discuss some secondary literature too, and the last few meetings will be held in the form of seminars with student presentations. All students will receive prompt written feedback on each requirement that they fulfil by the end of Week 16.

Marking

Each student's individual marks for the various assessed requirements will be weighted such that the maximum percentage shown below is assigned to their highest score (see Requirements).

Requirements

Weekly reading assignments

Participation (10–30% of the overall course mark)

2 × 1,500-word essays during term (40–70%)

1 × ten-to-twenty-minute presentation after Week 10 (20–40%)

Options

Students may revise and resubmit each of their 1,500-word essays once before the end of term, if they wish to improve their initial mark. In consultation with the teacher, students may also present work equivalent to one or more of the requirements set out above.

Essential readings

[All readings will be made available in electronic form.]

- Nietzsche, Friedrich. 1881. *Morgenröthe: Gedanken über die moralischen Vorurtheile*. E. W. Fritzsche (second edition, 1887).
[*Daybreak: Thoughts on the Prejudices of Morality*, ed. Maudemarie Clark and Brian Leiter, trans. R. J. Hollingdale.
Cambridge University Press, 1997.]
- Nietzsche, Friedrich. 1882. *Die fröhliche Wissenschaft ("la gaya scienza")*. E. W. Fritzsche (second edition, 1887).
[*The Gay Science: With a Prelude in German Rhymes and an Appendix of Songs*, ed. Bernard Williams, trans. Josefine
Nauckhoff, poems trans. Adrian Del Caro. Cambridge University Press, 2001.]
- Nietzsche, Friedrich. 1883–5. *Also sprach Zarathustra: Ein Buch für Alle und Keinen*. Ernst Schmeitzner (parts I–III, 1883–4),
E. W. Fritzsche (part IV, 1885).
[*Thus Spoke Zarathustra: A Book for All and None*, ed. Adrian Del Caro and Robert B. Pippin, trans. Adrian Del Caro.
Cambridge University Press, 2006.]
- Nietzsche, Friedrich. 1886. *Jenseits von Gut und Böse: Vorspiel einer Philosophie der Zukunft*. C. G. Naumann.
[*Beyond Good and Evil: Prelude to a Philosophy of the Future*, ed. Rolf-Peter Horstmann and Judith Norman, trans.
Judith Norman. Cambridge University Press, 2001.]
- Nietzsche, Friedrich. 1887. *Zur Genealogie der Moral: Eine Streitschrift*. C. G. Naumann.
[*On the Genealogy of Morality*, ed. Keith Ansell-Pearson, trans. Carol Diethe. Cambridge University Press, 2006.]
- Nietzsche, Friedrich. 1888. *Götzen-Dämmerung oder Wie man mit dem Hammer philosophirt*. C. G. Naumann.
[*Twilight of the Idols: Or How to Philosophize with a Hammer*. In Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Anti-Christ, Ecce Homo,
Twilight of the Idols, and Other Writings*, ed. Aaron Ridley and Judith Norman, trans. Judith Norman. Cambridge
University Press, 2005.]

Weekly schedule (to be confirmed)

Week 1: Nietzsche's life and works

Week 2: *Daybreak*

Week 3: *Daybreak*

Week 4: *The Gay Science*

Week 5: *The Gay Science*

Week 6: *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*

Week 7: *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*

Week 8: *Beyond Good and Evil*

Week 9: *Beyond Good and Evil*

Week 10: *On the Genealogy of Morality*

Week 11: *On the Genealogy of Morality*

Week 12: *Twilight of the Idols*

The exact schedule of topics for weeks 13 to 16 will be determined later, depending on prior progress
and how the students' interests develop.