

**University of Hong Kong
Department of Philosophy
Semester I 2017-2018
PHIL 2040 Nietzsche**

- Coordinator:** Prof Timothy O’Leary
Office: RRST 1010
Email: teoleary@hku.hk
- Lectures:** Thursdays 10:30am-12:20pm
Knowles Building KB113
- Tutorials:** Times to be announced.
Tutor: Mr Johannes Hoerning (johannho@connect.hku.hk)
- Moodle:** You must use Moodle to access essential information for this course.

Course Description:

Friedrich Nietzsche (1844-1900) is undoubtedly one of the most important philosophers of the modern period. His work has been a major source of inspiration, and exasperation, for many writers, artists, and philosophers during the 20th century and beyond. He has been grouped, along with Marx and Freud, as one of the three “masters of suspicion” who have profoundly altered the way modern individuals see themselves and their world. Many of his concepts, such as the will to power, the overman, and *ressentiment* have taken their place in popular culture. However, Nietzsche is a difficult philosopher, one who makes enormous demands on his readers. In particular, Nietzsche’s style (of thought and expression) forces us to read slowly and carefully – as he says, to “*ruminare*”.

In this course, we will primarily work through two of Nietzsche’s major works: *Beyond Good and Evil* (1886) and *On the Genealogy of Morals* (1887). This approach will give us a perspective on Nietzsche’s work as a whole, while allowing us to focus on his contribution to a critical history of morality – especially as that resonated in twentieth century European philosophy. Our overall aim will be to see to what extent Nietzsche’s thought can continue to animate philosophical activity today.

Course Learning Outcomes:

Having taken this course, students will be able to:

- Describe and explain some key ideas and issues in Nietzsche’s philosophy
- Critically examine the issues and positions discussed and identify their strength and weaknesses
- Demonstrate interpretive, analytical, and argumentative skills in oral presentation and writing
- Demonstrate appreciation of the philosophical framework and concerns of Nietzsche’s work

READING:

There are many excellent introductions to Nietzsche available, and also “Readers’ Guides” to individual works. You can use these resources as we work through the semester, but the best strategy is to begin with Nietzsche himself. For this course, a good place to start would be with the opening sections of each of the two books we will be reading: *Beyond Good and Evil* (BGE), the “Preface” and Part One “On the prejudices of philosophers”; and *On the Genealogy of Morals* (GM), the “Preface”.

You can also look at these three articles, from *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, for a more general overview:

R. Lanier Anderson, “Friedrich Nietzsche”:

<https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/nietzsche/>

Brian Leiter, “Nietzsche’s Moral and Political Philosophy”:

<https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/nietzsche-moral-political/>

Robert Wicks, “Nietzsche’s Life and Works”:

<https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/nietzsche-life-works/>

Required Texts –

Friedrich Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil* (the Vintage edition – available in HKU Bookstore – or the Cambridge University Press edition);

Friedrich Nietzsche, *On the Genealogy of Morals & Ecce Homo* (the Vintage edition – available in HKU Bookstore – or the Cambridge University Press edition, which has a slightly different title)

Both are **essential** and both are available in the HKU Bookstore, G/F, Chi Wah Learning Commons. You cannot succeed in this course unless you acquire these two books and read them in depth.

Supplementary readings will be available for you to access through the course Moodle page. Using these supplementary resources is an **essential** component of this course.

TUTORIALS:

In this course you will attend 6 tutorials. Attendance and Participation is compulsory (**20% of final grade**).

ASSESSMENT:

First Writing Exercise (1,000 words), Fri Oct 6th :	20%
Second Writing Exercise (1,000 words), Fri Nov 3rd :	20%
Research Essay (2,000 words), Fri Dec 8th :	40%
Tutorial Attendance & Participation:	20%

WRITING:

Plagiarism:

Plagiarism is not tolerated. Nor is ignorance. Please visit this website:

www.hku.hk/plagiarism

Inclusive Language: Please follow the School of Humanities Guidelines:

http://www.soh.hku.hk/docs/SOH_Inclusive_Language.pdf

LECTURE TOPICS:

Part One: Introduction

Sep 7: How to read Nietzsche.

Sep 14: Historicising humanity, the Death of God, etc

Part Two: Beyond Good and Evil

Sep 21: Old and New Philosophies

Sep 28: The Natural History of Morals

Oct 12: Noble Virtue

Part Three: Genealogy of Morals

Oct 26: “Good and Bad” vs “Good and Evil”

Nov 2: On the Origin of Guilt

Nov 9: On Moral Ideals: Asceticism

Part Four: In Nietzsche’s Wake

Nov 16: The Will to Power (Heidegger’s Nietzsche)

Nov 23: Ethics and Subjectivity (Foucault’s Nietzsche)

Nov 30: Active and Reactive (Deleuze’s Nietzsche)