

BAYLOR UNIVERSITY
Department of Political Science
Graduate Seminar in Political Philosophy

German Moral & Political Thought

PSC 5363
D.D. Allman
Burleson 306
Ext. 6062

Spring 2015
Office Hrs:
TTH: 10:00-12:00pm
Or by appt.



**Friedrich Nietzsche
(1844-1900)**

COURSE OVERVIEW:

No culture has exercised a more important influence on the contours of modern philosophy, including moral and political philosophy, than has the German-speaking world. From the last decades of the eighteenth century to the early decades of the twentieth, German thinkers gave formative shape to what we today recognize as the unfolding path of modern social thought. The list of major philosophical works composed in German during this period, which are of social, moral, and political significance, is rivaled only, perhaps, by Greek thinkers in the age of Plato and Aristotle. The course of German thought, moreover, tracks the precipitous trajectory of modern philosophy—from the heights of a distinctly modern version of philosophical idealism at the turn of the 1800s, with its confident forecast of a truly enlightened society erected upon rational critique, to the depths of philosophical pessimism at mid-century, culminating in a critical evaluation of human reason that eventuates in the philosophical celebration of “the will to power” by the beginning of the 1900s. This class will concern itself with the works of three seminal thinkers: Kant, Hegel, and Nietzsche. These three, arguably the most important thinkers in the history of German philosophy, exercise an intellectual influence that spans the full breadth of German thought in modernity.

REQUIRED TEXTS:

---G.W.F. Hegel, *Introduction to the Philosophy of History*, trans. Leo Rauch, Hackett Publishing Co., 1988. (ISBN: 0-87220-056-6)

--Kant: *Groundwork for the Metaphysics of Morals*, ed. Mary Gregor, Cambridge University Press, 1998. (ISBN: 0-521-62695-1)

---Kant: *Political Writings*, ed. H. S. Reiss, trans. H. B. Nisbet, Cambridge University Press, 1991. (ISBN: 0-521-39837-1)

---Friedrich Nietzsche, *On the Genealogy of Morals & Ecce Homo*, ed. Walter Kaufmann, Vintage Press, 1989. (ISBN: 0-679-72462-1)

---Friedrich Nietzsche, *On the Advantage and Disadvantage of History for Life*, ed. Peter Preuss, Hackett Publishing Co., 1980. (ISBN: 0-915-14494-8)



G.W.F. Hegel
(1770-1831)

STRUCTURE OF COURSE:

Participation—

This course will be conducted seminar-style and therefore structured around your participation. Class time will be largely devoted to our common deliberation on the texts selected for consideration. Coming to class prepared and participating meaningfully in our deliberations on these works is therefore essential to success in this course. My hope is that you too will *assume a personal responsibility for the success of this endeavor*, which will express itself in the investment you make preparing for and engaging in each session of the course. Regular and significant contributions to classroom activity, moreover, will inevitably factor into my evaluations of your performance in the course. By demonstrating a commitment to the course through such participation, you ensure yourself the benefit of the doubt in my assessments of individual assignments and/or of overall performance in the course.

Attendance—

Attendance will be taken at the beginning of each class session. Our class is relatively small and meets only once per week. Therefore, I am going to insist that everyone do his/her very best to attend every class session. To receive above a C grade for the course students can miss no more than 2 (**two**) class sessions (including any make-up sessions). In the case of intractable, extenuating circumstances that make it impossible for you to avoid missing more than two class sessions I will expect you to communicate with me about the nature of your circumstances at the earliest possible opportunity. My readiness to accommodate your situation will be commensurate to your attempts to accommodate that of the course. In accordance with Baylor University policy, moreover, **any student missing more than 4 scheduled class meetings (i.e., 25%) will fail the course, regardless of performance.** Your attendance will likewise factor into my evaluation of your commitment to and participation (discussed above) in the course.

Quizzes—

Students should expect to be quizzed on the reading assignment for a particular class session. These quizzes will be a frequent feature of class and may take several forms, including multiple-choice questions, the identification and explanation of key terms or concepts contained in a particular reading assignment, or the generation of an appropriate and substantial question for that period's class discussion. Quiz assignments will almost always include an opportunity to win extra points; students can thereby hope to make up for mistakes on past quizzes, or to bankroll points that can be applied to future quizzes. Quizzes will count for **20% of the final grade for the course.** *Regular attendance and careful preparation for class are the secrets to accumulating a full tally of quiz points.*

Because of the regular possibility of earning extra-credit quiz points, it is not uncommon for conscientious students to accumulate more than the "officially" allotted number of total quiz points for the semester. I will reward any student earning more than the officially allotted total **one (1) extra point** to his/her seminar paper score (see below) for every **five (5) points** earned above the allotted quiz total.

Directing Class Discussion—

In the interest of cultivating some of the skills essential to success as a teacher of classes in political philosophy, each student will take a turn at conducting our classroom conversation and common study by signing up *to lead us through one of our assigned readings.* It need not be a work with which you are already familiar, since the art of steering a productive conversation about a given reading involves, first and foremost, clarifying those key questions or puzzles that need to be identified and addressed in order to make full sense of the piece, a task which can sometimes be facilitated by coming to a work with no presuppositions or preconceived views. Your performance in this capacity will be evaluated and the score awarded will count for **10% of the final grade.**

Seminar Paper—

Each student will be required to complete a **seminar paper** to be handed in no later than **Friday, May 1, by noon or 12:00pm** (as indicated on the calendar of assignments). Needless to say, any composition submitted for credit must be entirely your own work. *Plagiarism, whether from a published source or a made-for-sale essay, is a violation of Baylor's honor code and will result in an F for the course.*

The seminar paper should be approximately 15-20 pages in length and should deal with one or more of the texts for this course. The paper should have a well-conceived thesis, which it prosecutes cogently with evidence drawn effectively and efficiently from the relevant text(s). The paper should also show evidence of having consulted and taken account of relevant secondary sources. And it should conform to the conventions prescribed by the *Chicago Manual of Style*. Submission of a paper proposal or abstract is also required, which is meant to be a resource to help you with the task of formulating a suitable seminar project. Each student **must have a formal abstract (approx. 1-2 pages) ready to submit no later than April 15**. Your abstract should explain the project you propose to undertake—e.g., the thesis or argument you intend to prosecute, detailing at least in broad terms how you intend to structure the paper in order to accomplish your aims. It should likewise include at least a brief bibliography of secondary sources you expect to consult. **Work on the paper can proceed only after approval of the abstract. No seminar paper will be accepted for which an abstract has not first been submitted and approved.** The seminar paper will count for **70% of the final grade**.

GRADE SCALE:

100 – 92% = A
91 – 90% = A-
89 – 86% = B+
85 – 82% = B

81 – 80% = B-
79 – 76% = C+
75 – 72% = C
71 – 70% = C-

69 – 60% = D
59 – 0% = F