

Philosophy 3150

Spring 2014

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Overview: In this course we will try to gain a clear overview of the way philosophy developed in Europe over the 19th century, from Kant to Nietzsche. We will be gaining this view mainly through a secondary work (Copleston), though we will also work through selected primary texts, such as Kant's *Prolegomena*, Nietzsche's *Beyond Good and Evil*, and various selections from other thinkers. Through assigned readings, questions, class discussions, and papers, this course will strengthen your abilities to explain philosophical views, defend them, and criticize them. Many of the skills you develop should transfer to work in other classes, or work in a career. So that is an indirect benefit. More directly, the subject matter is valuable in itself: the thinkers covered in this class had radical and profound views to offer, and we have not yet come to terms with them. This course aims at developing the following three general learning outcomes:

- Learning fundamental principles, generalizations, or theories
- Developing skills in expressing oneself orally or in writing
- Learning to analyze and critically evaluate ideas, arguments, and points of view.

Required texts: Copleston, *A History of Philosophy*, volume VII (Image); Kant, *Prolegomena to any Future Metaphysics* (Hackett); Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil* (Vintage).

| date | what we will discuss or do on that date |
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| 1.7 | Introductory lecture; review of syllabus, assignments |
| 1.9 | Hume and Kant |
| 1.14 | Kant, <i>Prolegomena</i> , preface and preamble |
| 1.16 | <i>Prolegomena</i> , first part |
| 1.21 | <i>Prolegomena</i> , second part |
| 1.23 | How to write a philosophy essay: |
| 1.28 | <i>Prolegomena</i> , third part |
| 1.30 | <i>Prolegomena</i> , Conclusion & Solution |
| 2.4 | German Idealism, Copleston pp. 1-31; paper #1 due |
| 2.6 | Fichte, Copleston pp. 32-75 |
| 2.11 | Fichte & Schelling, Copleston pp. 76-148 |
| 2.13 | Schleiermacher, Copleston pp. 149-58 |
| 2.20 | Hegel: Spirit, Copleston 159-88 |
| 2.25 | Hegel: History, Copleston 189-225 |
| 2.27 | Hegel: Legacy, Copleston pp. 226-47 |
| 3.4 | Schopenhauer, Copleston pp. 261-76 |
| 3.6 | Schopenhauer, Copleston pp. 277-92 |
| 3.18 | Review and discussion |
| 3.20 | Feuerbach & Marx, Copleston pp. 293-334; paper #2 due |
| 3.25 | Marx, reading selection from <i>Capital</i> |
| 3.27 | Kierkegaard, Copleston pp. 335-51 |
| 4.1 | Materialism & Neokantians, pp. 352-73 |
| 4.3 | Nietzsche, <i>Beyond Good and Evil</i> , preface and part 1 |

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| 4.8 | Nietzsche, parts 2 and 3 |
| 4.10 | Nietzsche, part 4 |
| 4.15 | Nietzsche, parts 5 and 6 |
| 4.17 | Nietzsche, part 7 |
| 4.22 | Nietzsche, parts 8 and 9, and "Epode" |
| 4.24 | Discussion |
| 5.1 | Paper # 3 due by 1:30 pm |

Course work: Before February 27th, you should have submitted (on Canvas) and passed two *reading summaries* (see below). These summaries are not graded, but passing two of them is required for passing the course. Your final grade is determined by the grades you earn on the *three paper assignments* (see below), which count equally toward the final grade.

Reading summaries.

- Before each class, beginning on 1.9, you may submit (on Canvas) a summary of the reading that will be discussed that day. No late summaries will ever be accepted. None can be rewritten.
- You must pass two reading summaries in order to pass the course. (This does not mean that passing two will automatically mean that you pass the course; to pass, you must also have a sufficiently high average on the papers.)
- In order to pass, a summary must be perfectly grammatical, clear, accurate, and demonstrate thoughtfulness on the topic. Details of what the summary should include follow next.
- You should pass the two summaries by February 27th.

Each summary should consist of four paragraphs (as follows), and be about 500 words in length.

- 1. Main topic.** What claim is asserted in this selection? Summarize it in a single, clear, accurate sentence: "In chapter 6 of *The Human Problem*, Briny Fathead claims that/explains/explores ..." Note that some works provide *reasons* for thinking a claim is true; others provide *explanations*; and others are inconclusive *explorations* of some question or topic. You need to figure out exactly what the selection is attempting to provide.
- 2. Content.** Now: exactly how is that argument/explanation/exploration delivered? What are the author's chief reasons, or explanatory components, or main points of discussion? Explain these main points clearly and accurately.
- 3. Assessment.** Explain what the selection gets right, in your judgment, and what it gets wrong - or at least does not obviously get right (there is a difference between making a clear mistake and failing to provide a right answer). Limit yourself to one or two points of discussion; and if you present two, then mark them off clearly from one another.
- 4. Significance.** Give a brief answer to the question "So what?" What is the significance of this reading selection? Do not be content with vague, mushy observations; be as accurate and precise as you can. If there seems to be no significance, explain why the author was wrong to think the topic significant.

Summaries must be submitted on Canvas before our class discussion of that particular reading assignment. (So, if you are submitting a summary of the second part of Kant's *Prolegomena*, it must be turned in before class on January 21st.) I will provide prompt but *very limited* feedback on them: either "Pass" or "Fail", with an identification of the respect(s) in which the summary was lacking:

"Grammar", "Clarity & Accuracy", "Reflection". Once you have passed two summaries, you need not do any more. You cannot rewrite them; you should just keep turning new ones in, using the general advice given in class, until you pass two of them.

Papers. Each paper is like a reading summary, but longer and more interesting in both its assessment and its discussion of significance.

- The first paper should be on Kant; the second on anything we have covered between Fichte and Schopenhauer; and the third on Nietzsche.
- It is up to you to select a topic that has been raised in the readings or in class. Unless you are already accomplished at this, you should run the topic past me first and obtain my approval.
- Each paper should include significant discussion of a primary work. For Kant and Nietzsche, that is straightforward. For the thinkers in the scope of paper #2, primary readings will be provided; you should include discussion of one of them in your paper.
- Each paper should be in the range of 1400-1600 words (so about 6 pages, typed and double-spaced). Roughly one third should be an accurate summary of the content of the work, and the remaining two-thirds should be assessment (mostly) and discussion of significance (less).
- Papers (in hard copy) should be submitted in class on the day they are due.
- Papers 1 & 2 may be rewritten for (at most) a +3 raise in grade (e.g., from C+ to B+).
- **On assessment:** assessing a philosophical claim, argument, or account *does not* mean simply comparing it to what you happen to believe. It means making a judicious assessment of how well a philosopher has done in establishing that claim, argument, or account. What objections are likely to be raised? How might the philosopher respond to them? How compelling would those replies be to the person raising the objection? Think of assessment along the lines of a test for "structural integrity."
- **On significance:** this is usually hard to do, but basically you want to explain how the material you have just summarized and assessed affects how we view ourselves, or one another, or the meaning of human life, or the world, etc. If you adopted this philosopher's view, what (if anything) would change in your beliefs about the world, and does that seem to you to be good or bad, avoidable or unavoidable?

Cheating or plagiarism. You should *never* try to pass off someone else's understanding or words as your own. Everything in each reading summaries should be either your own words or a quote from the text (cited with page number). The penalty for cheating or plagiarism will be a failing grade for the course, with a note of academic dishonesty included in your academic file.

Classroom expectations. You should not do anything in class that you would not do in a one-on-one meeting with me. You should demonstrate respect for yourself, me, your fellow students, and this publically-funded opportunity for you to learn.