

19th Century Philosophy

Fall 2015, PHIL 264

Office Hours: MW: 3-5 and by appointment

Office: Wheatley 5-008

Prof. Steven Levine

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Course Description

This course focuses on four major figures of 19th century philosophy: Hegel, Marx, Kierkegaard, and Nietzsche. In reading these figures students you will become acquainted with the important philosophical movements of post-Kantian Idealism, Marxism, and Existentialism. The course begins with a discussion of the Enlightenment and Romanticism, which are the essential backdrop for 19th century philosophy. We then discuss Hegel and his philosophy of freedom. This is critical for understanding Marx and Kierkegaard because they both develop their own thought in response to Hegel. We finish with Nietzsche, a revolutionary thinker who poses a fundamental critique of the Western moral system. By reading these thinkers students will be confronted with fundamental questions about reason, history, freedom, morality, action, and identity. So in addition to becoming acquainted with an important period of the history of philosophy, this class will provoke students to ask fundamental questions about their lives—as individuals and as members of society.

Required Texts (available at the bookstore)

- Marx, *Selected Writings*, ed. Simon, Hackett Press, 1994.
- Kierkegaard, *A Kierkegaard Anthology*, Princeton University Press, 1973.
- Nietzsche, *Genealogy of Morals*, Hackett Press, 1998.
- All other readings can be found on my website: <http://faculty.www.umb.edu/steven.levine/>

Course Outline (This is subject to revision)

Week	Date	Class Theme and Activities	Assignment
Week 1	Sep. 9, 11	Review of Syllabus and Introduction to 19 th Century Philosophy	
Week 2	Sep. 14, 16, 18	The Enlightenment Background: Reason, Freedom, and Critique	Kant: 'What is Enlightenment?', <i>On my website</i> Charles Taylor, <i>From Hegel and Modern Society</i> , <i>On my website</i>
Week 3	Sep. 21, 23, 25	Hegel: Reason, Freedom, and History	From the <i>Lectures on the Philosophy of World History: Introduction</i> , <i>On my website</i>
Week 4	Sep. 28, 30 Oct. 2	Hegel: Independence and Dependence of Self-Consciousness: Lordship and Bondage	<i>Phenomenology of Spirit</i> , § 178-196, <i>On my website</i>

Week 5	Oct. 5, 7, 9	Marx: Critique vs. Criticism	Feuerbach, <i>The Essence of Christianity</i> , excerpts from sec. 1 and 2, <i>On my website</i> Marx, 'Toward a Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right, Introduction', pp. 27-39 Marx, 'Letters from the Franco-German Year-book', <i>On my website</i>
Week 6	Oct. 14	Marx: Revolutionary Praxis <i>No class Oct. 12 or 16th</i> Oct. 14th: First Paper Due	'Theses on Feuerbach', pp. 98-101
Week 7	Oct. 19, 21, 23	Marx: Capitalism and Alienation	<i>The Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts of 1844</i> , pp. 54-80
Week 8	Oct. 26, 28, 30	Marx: Historical Materialism	<i>The German Ideology</i> , pp. 103-153
Week 9	Nov. 2, 4, 6	Kierkegaard: Truth and Subjectivity	<i>Either/Or</i> , pp. 97-108 <i>Concluding Unscientific Postscript</i> , pp. 201-231
Week 10	Nov. 9, 13	Kierkegaard: The Teleological Suspension of the Ethical	<i>Fear and Trembling</i> , pp. 118-134
Week 11	Nov. 16, 18, 20	Kierkegaard: Despair and the Self	<i>The Sickness Unto Death</i> , pp. 341-371
Week 12	Nov. 23	Nietzsche: Introduction Nov. 23rd: Second Paper Due <i>Nov. 25th: Course Withdrawal Deadline</i>	Preface to <i>On The Genealogy of Morals</i>
Week 13	Nov. 30, Dec. 2, 4	Nietzsche: Good and Evil	<i>On The Genealogy of Morals 1</i> , pp. 1-33
Week 14	Dec. 7, 9, 11	Nietzsche: Aesthetic Ideals and Nihilism	From <i>On The Genealogy of Morals 3</i> , pp. 83-118 (sec. 11-28)
Week 15	Dec. 14	Finish Nietzsche <i>Take home final due Dec. 18th, 4 PM</i>	

Assessable Tasks

In this class you will have a variety of ways of demonstrating your intellectual engagement with the course material, including in-class participation, a 5 page paper, a 7 page paper, and a take home final exam. For the final take home exam you will write 2 short (2-3 page) essays on assigned topics.

Final Grade Calculation

First Paper: 25%, Due Oct. 14th

Second Paper: 35%, Due Nov. 23rd

Take Home Final Exam: 30%, Due Dec. 18th

Class participation: 10%

Grading Policy for Papers

Your papers will be evaluated by the following criteria: (1) **Accuracy**: A good paper must always present the views being discussed accurately. You should be careful not to misinterpret what you have read, or ascribe to the author views she does not hold. You must also defend any interpretation you make of a writer's work. When you are trying to prove that the writer holds the view you ascribe to her, you may use quotes or paraphrase. However, you should avoid paraphrasing or quoting when trying to explain or defend an author's view. Use quotes and paraphrasing only to 'pin down' an author on a question of interpretation. (2) **Thoroughness**: A good paper is thorough in its discussion of the issues. It does not leave important issues un-discussed, when they are clearly relevant to the topic you have selected. For example, you must address, and offer reasons against, the position you are rejecting in your paper. (3) **Clarity of writing**: Besides being grammatically correct, your writing must be easily understood by any reader. You cannot expect me (or any reader) to understand what you mean in your writing unless you present your argument in clear and precise writing. For the second paper there is a further criteria, (4) **Persuasiveness**, because it is an argumentative paper. Thus, you must assert a thesis (conclusion), and offer the most persuasive evidence that you can to support your conclusion. Being a persuasive writer also requires that you treat the opposing position fairly and accurately, and present reasons that show why you reject this position.

Participation Grade

Your participation grade is based on whether you contribute to class discussion, and whether your contribution demonstrates that you have read, and thought about, the readings for that day. You can contribute to class in many ways: By asking questions about the lecture or reading, by clarifying something another student has said, by raising thoughtful objections to the reading, by conveying how your beliefs are challenged or confirmed by what we've read and so on. Please see me if you think it will be difficult for you to speak in class, or if you find it difficult later in the semester. Coming to see me in office hours to discuss class material also contributes to your participation grade.

Attendance Policy

Your presence in class is a minimum condition of your success in this course. Attendance as well as lateness will be noted and factored into your final grade, as follows:

4 absences: final grade lowered by ½ grade (e.g. from B- to C+)

5 absences: final grade lowered by a full grade (e.g. from B- to C-)

6 absences: failure; no credit given

In general, the distinction between "excused" and "unexcused" absences is not recognized (an absence is an absence). **After 3 times, arriving late to class will count as an absence.**

Other Important Information:

1. **UMB email:** You need to have a working UMB email so that I can contact you through the Wisers system. I send out notifications through email, so make sure yours is working.
2. **Homework:** The readings for this class are listed above by the week. If homework is not explicitly assigned in class, these readings are your homework. The reading schedule may change due to events. If it does I will notify you and update the schedule on my website.
3. **Late Policy:** Paper will be penalized a whole grade if it is up to one week late. Thereafter, it will be penalized a whole grade each additional week that it is late. **I do not accept emailed papers.**
4. **Incompletes:** I only give an incomplete for the class if there is an extreme emergency. To get an incomplete in that event you must contact me and work out a schedule to get your work in.
5. **Class Preparation and Reading Philosophy:** Your main task in this class is to understand the class readings. But reading philosophy is hard. It is therefore essential that you acquire and read the texts carefully before each class. It is an extremely good idea to take notes on whatever you read, and to re-read the material at least once. Come to class familiar with the material and be prepared to ask questions about things that you did not understand or things you understood but found strange or not plausible. For readings that you download, you must print the article out and bring it to class.
6. **Office Hours and Writing Papers:** If you have difficulty writing papers contact the CAS center at 287-6560 or 6550. But a better thing to do is to make use of my *office hours*. Come and talk to me about things you do not understand in class, and for help with your papers. I am happy to help you plan your papers.

Policy on Academic Honesty

Plagiarism involves presenting someone else's work as your own. You need to be careful to avoid even the appearance of plagiarism. This means that if you ever use a phrase, a sentence, or an idea from a text, you must provide a citation. If it is something we read for the class, it is acceptable to give the source and page number. E.g.: (Rawls, "The Justification of Civil Disobedience, p. 100). When utilizing other material, you must provide full bibliographic information of that text. If you don't provide appropriate citations, this will affect your grade. If you have gone so far as to misrepresent another person's work as your own by copying from another's paper, using a paper writing service, copying something off the web or out of a book or in any other way I will assume you intend to commit plagiarism and will give you an 'F' for the course. The current Code of Student Conduct which includes information about academic dishonesty is available online at:

http://www.umb.edu/life_on_campus/policies/community/code

Students with Disabilities

If you have a disability that may have some impact on your work in this class and for which you may require accommodations, please contact the Ross Center for Disability Services. The Ross Center for Disability Services is located in the Campus Center, UL 211. You can contact them by calling: 617-287-7430 or sending an email to: ross.center@umb.edu. Once you have received your accommodation letters, please meet with me to discuss the provisions of those accommodations as soon as possible.