

9-2002

PHIL 465.01: Schopenhauer and Nietzsche

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SCHOPENHAUER AND NIETZSCHE
PHIL 465, SECTION 01 (73532)
DAVIDSON HONORS COLLEGE, ROOM 118
TR 12:40-2:00 PM
FALL SEMESTER 2002

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COURSE DESCRIPTION:

In the aftermath of the heady days of the early nineteenth century -- when the enlightenment seemed on the verge of realizing its promise in Germany through the political labors of Napoleon and the philosophical ones of Hegel -- the sociopolitical scene, as well as the philosophy that it gave rise to, turned sour. Hegel's optimism, easily apprehended in the *Phenomenology of Spirit*, evaporated, as evidenced by the *Philosophy of Right*, in which he nominally defends the Prussian State and says of philosophy that it merely "paints its grey in grey." The pessimism of these times is best captured, however, by Schopenhauer's masterpiece, *The World as Will and Representation*. Rejecting the pretensions of the Hegelian philosophy, in which reason manifests itself in the movement of history, Schopenhauer returns with a vengeance to the dualities inherent within Kant's "critical philosophy" -- and, even as compared with Kant, makes no attempt to mediate these dualities. In response to what he takes to be the travails of an existence marked by alternating pain and boredom, Schopenhauer offers two options: willing against the will (Buddhism) and (disinterested) art. Nietzsche, who is heavily influenced by Schopenhauer's thought in his earlier writings, increasingly distances himself from it in the name of affirming life, while maintaining the emphases on will (will to power) and aesthetic experience (very interested) that were the cornerstones of Schopenhauer's notion of transcendence.

We shall begin the course with the *The World as Will and Representation*. We shall then consider the effects of this book on Nietzsche's early works, most notably *The Birth of Tragedy*. Then, moving toward Nietzsche's so-called "middle period," we shall consider his literary masterpiece, *Thus Spake Zarathustra*, as well as *The Gay Science*. We shall conclude by considering two extremely important works from Nietzsche's later period, namely, *The Genealogy of Morals* and *Twilight of the Idols*.

REQUIRED TEXTS:

Schopenhauer *World as Will and Idea*, Vol. 1 (tr. Berman), Everyman ("WWI")

Nietzsche *The Birth of Tragedy* (tr. Whiteside), Penguin ("BT")
The Portable Nietzsche (tr. Kaufmann), Penguin ("___-PN")
The Gay Science (tr. Kaufmann), Vintage ("GS")
On the Genealogy of Morals and Ecce Homo (tr. Kaufmann), Vintage ("GM")

COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND EVALUATION:

Your grade for the course will be based upon two exams (30% each) and one paper due at the end of the semester (40%). For undergraduates, this paper should be at least 3000 words; for graduate students, at least 4500 words.

In addition I reserve the right to modify your overall grade by one increment on the basis of your attendance and class participation, which shall include a short presentation on a section (or sections) from *Thus Spake Zarathustra*.

TENTATIVE SCHEDULE

Sept 3 Sept 5	Introduction: Schopenhauer's Philosophical Predecessors Overview of WWI
Sept 10 Sept 12	WWI, Bk 1, pp. 3-24 WWI, Bk 2, pp. 27-94
Sept 17 Sept 19	WWI, Bk 3, pp. 97-124 WWI, Bk 3, pp. 124-172
Sept 24 Sept 26	WWI, Bk 4, pp. 175-209 WWI, Bk 4, pp. 209-262
Oct 1 Oct 3	BT, ch. 1-5 BT, ch. 6-10
Oct 8 Oct 10	BT, ch. 11-15 (and selected entries from the remainder) FIRST EXAM
Oct 15 Oct 17	GS, Bk 1 (pp. 73-118) GS, Bk 2 (pp. 121-164)
Oct 22 Oct 24	GS, Bk 3 (pp. 167-220) GS, Bk 4 (pp. 223-275)
Oct 29 Oct 31	GS, Bk 5 (pp. 279-348) Z-PN, First Part – Z's Prologue "(pp. 121-137)
Nov 5 Nov 7	Z-PN, First Part – Z's Speeches (pp. 137-191) Z-PN, Second Part (pp. 195-259)
Nov 12 Nov 14	Z-PN, Third Part (pp. 264-343) Z-PN, Fourth Part (pp. 349-439)
Nov 19 Nov 21	GM, Preface and First Essay: "Good and Evil, Good and Bad" (pp. 15-56) GM, Second Essay: "Guilt, Bad Conscience, and the Like" (pp. 57-96)
Nov 26 Nov 28	GM, Third Essay: "What is the Meaning of Ascetic Ideals?" (pp. 97-163) THANKSGIVING
Dec 3	TWI-PN, "The Problem of Socrates," "'Reason' in Philosophy," and "How the 'True World' Finally Became a Fable" (pp. 473-486)
Dec 5	TWI-PN, "Morality as Anti-Nature," "The Four Great Errors," "The Improvers of Mankind," and "What the Germans Lack" (pp. 486-513)
Dec 10	TWI-PN, "Skirmishes of an Untimely Man," "What I owe to the Ancients," and "The Hammer Speaks" (pp. 513-563)
Dec 12	SECOND EXAM
Dec 16	PAPERS DUE