

McGill University
Department of Philosophy
19th Century Philosophy PHIL 367 (Fall 2014)

Prof. Susan-Judith Hoffmann

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Teaching Assistant: TBA

In this course we will study some of the most illustrious and complex continental thinkers of the nineteenth century, paying particular attention to the *moral dimension* in their thought. We will examine the role of reason, aesthetics and religion in their accounts of morality. We will study systematic thinkers such as Fichte, Hegel and Schopenhauer, as well as anti-systematic thinkers, such as Nietzsche and Kierkegaard. We will read Fichte's *Introduction to the Science of Knowledge* (both the first and the second) and selections from Hegel's *Introduction to the Lectures on the History of Philosophy*. We will read *The Birth of Tragedy* as well as *Fear and Trembling* in their entirety. We will be especially interested in Fichte's systematic philosophy of freedom and Kierkegaard and Nietzsche's profound critiques of reason and systematic philosophies. Both Kierkegaard and Nietzsche held that an overemphasis on reason and coherence failed to do justice to the complexity and open ended nature of human being. More importantly, they both argued that attempts to systematize human spirit signaled not only intellectual, but indeed, *moral impoverishment*.

The course will consist of one lecture a week and one conference style class in which students will have an opportunity to discuss the readings with their fellow students and with the instructor. The classes will consist of one formal lecture on Tuesdays. On Thursdays, I will wrap up unfinished material from the first lecture, if necessary, in the first 20 minutes or so. The second hour will be a conference style class during which students will discuss questions for class discussion together, and, some students will give short class presentations.

Students assigned to give the class presentation for Thursday's conference must submit their presentation on Wednesday by 4:00 pm. The presentation consists of a thoughtful summary of the assigned readings as well as two thoughtful questions for class discussion.

Required Reading

Texts will be available at the Paragraphe Bookstore on McGill College. The shorter excerpts will be posted on My Courses.

- Fichte, J.G. *First Introduction to the Science of Knowledge; Second Introduction to the Science of Knowledge, for readers who already have a philosophical system* (in its entirety)
- Hegel, G.W.F. *Introduction to the Lectures on the History of Philosophy* (selections)
- Hegel, G.W.F. *The Phenomenology of Spirit* (brief excerpts)
- Kierkegaard, Soren. *Concluding Unscientific Postscript to Philosophical Fragments* (selections)
- Kierkegaard, Soren. *Fear and Trembling* (please buy)
- Nietzsche, Friedrich. *The Birth of Tragedy. On Truth and Lying in an Extra Moral Sense* (in its entirety, please buy)
- Nietzsche, Friedrich. *Twilight of the Idols* (please buy)

There will be additional required reading for your essays. For example, if you are writing on Kierkegaard, you may be required to read additional sections in the *Postscript* in order to do

justice to the topic you have chosen. Please expect to do some additional reading and research for your essays.

Highly Recommended Reading

- Kant, Immanuel. *Prolegomena to any Future Metaphysics*

It is important to be familiar with Kant when you start this course. If you have not read Kant, some independent reading on your part will be required.

- Fichte, J.G. *The Vocation of Man*
- Schopenhauer, Arthur. *The World as Will and Representation Volume I* (very brief selections)

Method of Evaluation

Please note that the method of evaluation is subject to enrolment and may change at the beginning of the semester. I do not anticipate that a change in the evaluation is likely.

Class Presentation: 25% (penalty for late written submissions 5 % a day)

Midterm examination: 35% (date TBA)

Essay: One 2000 to 2500 word essay worth 40% (due at the end of the semester). Students must submit all notes and rough drafts for their essays. Essays without notes and drafts will not be graded. They will be returned to the student and the late penalty of 1% a day will apply.

The penalty for late essays is 1% a day including weekends. The penalties are percentage points of your final grade for the course. So, for example, if you hand in a late presentation, then you have lost 5% of the possible 100% you could get in the course.

The midterm, essay and class presentation are graded on your understanding of the material you have been assigned to read, your understanding of the lectures, your ability to draw on that material where relevant, and on your ability to write in a clear, thoughtful and mature manner. The summaries of the readings and the questions for class discussion that you are presenting should be focus on the assigned readings *not on the lectures*. The questions should demonstrate that the student has done the reading and has a carefully formulated and interesting question about the reading. Students are expected to quote from, and, to refer to the reading in their question. Students must submit their questions on My Courses.

If I have a message for students I will post it on My Courses so please check regularly. Please do not leave messages for me on My Courses, please email me at susan.hoffmann@mcgill.ca

Please note that eating and drinking is not permitted in class. I prefer that students take their notes by hand and not use laptops in class. Students who wish to use laptops should request permission and restrict their activity to note taking so as not to disturb the concentration of their fellow classmates and the instructor.

McGill University values academic integrity. Therefore all students must understand the meaning and consequences of cheating, plagiarism and other academic offences under the Code of Student Conduct and Disciplinary Procedures (see <http://www.mcgill.ca/integrity> for more information).