
FREUD & NIETZSCHE in Spring 2021 (PL2072)

Course Code	PL2072	Professor(s)	Oliver Feltham
Prerequisites	None	Office Number	GL-19
Class Schedule	M: 10:35-11:55 in Q-509 R: 15:20-16:40 in Q-509	Office Hours	Tuesdays and Fridays 15h30-16h30
Credits	4	Email	ofeltham@aup.edu
Semester	Spring 2021	Office Tel. Ext.	x618

Course Description

The goal of this course is to introduce students to one of the key orientations of modern philosophy, critical genealogy and its central problematic, the identity and formation of the subject. The aim of critical genealogy is to unearth the hidden and unsuspected mechanisms, whether they be institutional or familial, which lie behind the formation of individual and social identities. The standard accepted histories of such identities are thus disrupted and replaced with *transversal* histories; that is, accounts of mechanisms that cross the boundaries of institutions, social techniques and spheres of knowledge. The first section of the course examines Nietzsche's interrogation of traditional concepts of moral philosophy; an investigation which reduces concepts such as free will, conscience, and responsibility to the status of epiphenomena of an unsuspected mechanism. It is the theory of this mechanism—the will to power, the eternal return—that forms the object of the subsequent section, an enquiry into Nietzsche's thinking of the generation of values. The course then turns to Freud and his development of a clinical technique designed to reconstruct the layers of meaning, the active and passive roles of memory and forgetting—in short, the mechanisms of the unconscious—in the formation of individual identity. The fourth section will examine the consequences of this discovery of the subject of the unconscious for the theorization of social groups, looking at Freud's *Group Psychology* and *Civilization and its Discontents*. Finally the course concludes with a set of pointers towards contemporary uses of critical genealogy in the work of Michel Foucault and Deleuze and Guattari. The philosophical orientation of the course will be crystallized around two questions: how can an individual subject form part of a group and is there any such a thing as rational agency for the critical genealogist?

Course Learning Outcomes

To be able to develop and also to contextualize Freud and Nietzsche's main questions in

depth, and, in the case of Nietzsche, to reconstruct in elementary form the targets of his critique – classical moral philosophy, Christianity, socialism.

To be able to identify and interpret, on the basis of close reading, Nietzsche's and Freud's main concepts and theses.

To explain the key discoveries and conceptual steps that led to Freud's theory of the unconscious and his account of the interpretation of dreams.

To be able to reconstruct, in analytic form, some of Nietzsche and Freud's key arguments with regard to social and political phenomena

General Education

Course Outline

Section I. Nietzsche and the *Genealogy of Morality*

Week 1 18th – 22nd January

Session 1 Monday 18th Jan

Topic: Introduction to Nietzsche's philosophy.

Nietzsche's diagnosis of European modernity: the critique of humanism

and Christianity as slave morality. The existence of other systems of value such as 'master morality'. What is a 'genealogy of morality'? Close reading of an aphorism from *Beyond Good and Evil*

Reading: The 1st essay of *On the Genealogy of Morality*

Session 2 Thursday 21st January

Topic: Close reading of the 1st essay. Ontological critique.

Reading: The 1st essay of *On the Genealogy of Morality*

Week 2 25th – 29th January

Session 3 Monday 25th January

Topic: Overview of the 2nd essay of *On the Genealogy of Morality*

Reading: The 2nd essay of *On the Genealogy of Morality*

Session 4 Thursday 28th January

Topic: Close reading exercises on the 2nd essay of *On the Genealogy of Morality*

Reading: The 3rd essay of *On the Genealogy of Morality*

Thurs 28th 1st essay questions handed out

Section II. The ground of genealogy and the ontology of life

Week 3 1st – 5th February

Session 5 Monday 1st February

Topic: Overview of the 3rd essay on ascetic ideals

Reading: The 3rd essay of *On the Genealogy of Morality*

Session 6 Thursday 4th February

Topic: Close reading exercises on the 3rd essay on ascetic ideals

Reading: The 3rd essay of *On the Genealogy of Morality*

Week 4 8th – 12th February

Mini-break 8th -10th February

Session 7 Thursday 11th February

Topic: Modern philosophy and asceticism. Asceticism and nihilism. Perspectivism From the genealogy of ascetic ideals to an ontology of the will to power

Reading: The 3rd essay of *On the Genealogy of Morality*

Extracts from *The Gay Science* on the course Blackboard site

Assessment: 1st essay due

Week 5 15th – 19th February

Session 8 Monday 15th February

Topic: Nietzsche's critique of metaphysics. Nietzsche's ontology of power and events

Reading: Extracts from *The Will to Power* on the course Blackboard site

Session 9 Thursday 18th February

Topic: Nietzsche's critique of free will, of individual rational agency, and of Darwinism. The influence of Heraclitus on Nietzsche.

Reading: Extracts from *The Will to Power* and *Beyond Good and Evil* on the course Blackboard site

Week 6 22nd – 26th February

Session 10 Monday 22nd February

Topic: Recapitulation of Nietzsche's ontology of the will to power and its corresponding discursive form of genealogy

Reading: Extracts from *The Will to Power* on the course Blackboard site

Assessment: Research paper topic due

February 24th-28th Mini-break

Week 7 1st – 5th March

Session 11 Monday 1st March

Topic: The will to power in the organic world and Nietzsche's critique of Darwin's evolutionary theory

Reading: Extracts from *The Will to Power* on the course Blackboard site

Session 12: Thursday 4th March

Topic: Nietzsche's philosophy of history compared to Kant. Theory of historical change between epochs. The eternal recurrence.

Reading: Review of *On the Genealogy of Morality* notes.

Section III. Freud: the clinic and the interpretation of the unconscious

Week 8 8th – 12th March

Session 13 Monday 8th March

Topic: Introduction to psychoanalysis. Infant sexuality, libido, drives,

Reading: "Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality"

Assessment: Research paper bibliography and outline due

Session 14 Thursday 11th March

Topic: The three stages of sexuality, component drives, polymorphous perversity, infantile theories of sexuality, overturning the normal versus the pathological dichotomy, and the Oedipus complex

Reading: "Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality"

Week 9 15th – 19th March

Session 15 Monday 15th March

Assessment: Students' oral presentations of their research topics in class

Midterm 17th March

Session 16 Thursday 18th March

Symptoms, trauma and hysteria in *Studies in Hysteria*

The 'first topic', or metapsychological theory of mind, in Chapter 7 of the *Interpretation of Dreams*

Reading: Chapter 7 of the *Interpretation of Dreams*

Week 10 22nd – 26th March

Session 17 Monday 22nd March

Topic: Repetition and the death drive in *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*

Reading: *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*

Session 18 Thursday 25th March

Topic: The 'second topic', or metapsychological theory of mind (ego, id, superego), resistance, the pleasure principle and the reality principle

Reading: *The Ego and the Id*.

Section IV. The subject of the unconscious in society

Week 11 29th March – 2nd April

Session 19 Monday 29th March

Topic: Explaining the phenomenon of uniformity in artificial groups (institutions such as the army, church) through belief in a leader as an ideal ego

Reading: *Mass Psychology and the Analysis of the 'I'*

Session 20 Thursday 1st April

Topic: Freud's standpoint for evaluating civilization. The question of religion. Suffering and techniques for its alleviation.

Reading: *Civilization and its Discontents*

Week 12 5th – 9th April

Mon 5th – Tuesday 6th no classes (Easter Monday then Faculty Retreat)

Session 21 Thursday 8th April

Topic: Hostility to civilization. Genealogy of group formation via the drives. Aggressivity, the superego and guilt. Civilisation as an uneasy contest of the forces of *Eros* and *Thanatos*.

Reading: *Civilization and its Discontents*

Assessment: Research essay due

Section V. Contemporary genealogies

Week 13 12th – 16th April

Session 22 Monday 12th & Session 23 Thursday 15th April

Note that by this point in the semester we may well need another 2 sessions to finish off Freud, in which case Foucault and Deleuze will be reduced to one session each in week 14.

Topic: Foucault – from archaeology to genealogy in *Discipline and Punish* and *The History of Sexuality*

Reading: Foucault, “The Subject and Power” and “On the Genealogy of Ethics: Overview of a Work in Progress” in Dreyfus, H. & Rabinow, P., *Michel Foucault, Beyond Structuralism and Hermeneutics*, 2nd ed’n, 1983.

Week 14 19th – 23rd April

Session 24 Monday 19th & Session 25 Thursday 22nd

Topic: A new philosophy of nature and the deformation of the subject

Reading: Deleuze and Guattari, “The Geology of Morals”, in *A Thousand Plateaux*.

Week 15 26th – 28th April

Session 26 Monday 26th April

Revision for oral presentations of research projects

Last classes Wednesday 28th April

Reading days April 29th– May 2nd

Exams May 3rd– 12th

Exam: TBD Class presentations

Textbooks

Title	Author	Publisher	ISBN	Required
The Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud v. 7: A Case of Hysteria, Three Essays on Sexuality and Other Works	Sigmund Freud	Vintage Classics	9780099426585	Yes
Civilization and its Discontents	Sigmund Freud	Penguin	9780141182360	Yes
Mass Psychology and Other Writings	Sigmund Freud	Penguin	9780141182414	Yes
Beyond the Pleasure Principle and Other Writings	Sigmund Freud	Penguin	9780141184050	Yes
On the Genealogy of Morality and Other Writings	Nietzsche	Cambridge UP	9781316602591	Yes

Attendance Policy

Students studying at The American University of Paris are expected to attend ALL scheduled classes, and in case of absence, should contact their professors to explain the situation. It is the student's responsibility to be aware of any specific attendance policy that a faculty member might have set in the course syllabus. The French Department, for example, has its own attendance policy, and students are responsible for compliance. Academic Affairs will excuse an absence for students' participation in study trips related to their courses.

Attendance at all exams is mandatory.

IN ALL CASES OF MISSED COURSE MEETINGS, THE RESPONSIBILITY FOR COMMUNICATION WITH THE PROFESSOR, AND FOR ARRANGING TO MAKE UP MISSED WORK, RESTS SOLELY WITH THE STUDENT.

Whether an absence is excused or not is ALWAYS up to the discretion of the professor or the department. Unexcused absences can result in a low or failing participation grade. In the case of excessive absences, it is up to the professor or the department to decide if the student will receive an "F" for the course. An instructor may recommend that a student withdraw, if absences have made it impossible to continue in the course at a satisfactory level.

Students must be mindful of this policy when making their travel arrangements, and especially during the Drop/Add and Exam Periods.

Grading Policy

One essay (due Thurs 10thFeb)	20%
One midterm class presentation (Monday 15thMarch)	20%
One research essay (due Thurs 8th April)	30%
Final Exam	20%
Attendance & participation	10%

Other
