

McGill University
Department of Philosophy
19th Century Philosophy PHIL 367 (Fall 2017)

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In this course we will study some of the most illustrious and interesting continental thinkers of the nineteenth century, paying particular attention to the moral dimension in their thought as well as their groundbreaking contributions in aesthetics. For Fichte, Schiller and Nietzsche, we will examine the close connection between the moral dimension in their thought and their aesthetics. Fichte's systematic philosophy of freedom centers around the role of the creative or productive imagination, and Schiller, disenchanted with the French Revolution, suggested that an understanding of beauty and the cultivation of artistic creative culture would address the moral impoverishment of his fellow citizens. Nietzsche felt that his modern society was morally, politically and intellectually corrupt and wanted to create a whole new society and culture that recognized the value, indeed the *lifesaving power* of great art. *Art* is the only activity that makes human life worth living, Nietzsche argues in *The Birth of Tragedy*, and he turns to the great art of the ancient Greeks such as Aeschylus, Homer and Sophocles to make his case. We will be especially interested in his arguments.

We will study *systematic* thinkers such as Fichte, Schiller, Hegel and Schopenhauer, as well as *anti-systematic* thinkers, such Nietzsche and Kierkegaard and we will examine the debate in the nineteenth century about the role and the value of systematic philosophy.

The course will consist of two formal lectures a week and one 50 minute conference style in which students will have an opportunity to discuss the readings with their fellow students and with the instructor and/or teaching assistant. Students are expected to keep up with the readings and to prepare a question for class discussion that must be submitted weekly. Questions will be submitted on My Courses and are expected to demonstrate that the student has done the reading and has an interesting question for class discussion for the class. Questions should be no longer than approximately 150 words. Late questions cannot be accepted for grades.

Required Reading

Texts are available at the Paragraphe Bookstore on McGill College. Where indicated, texts will be posted on My Courses.

- *Friedrich Schlegel and the Emergence of Romantic Philosophy* by Elizabeth Millan-Zaibert. New York: State University of New York Press, SUNY Series, 2008. Excerpts, available on My Courses
- *Vocation of Man* by Johann Fichte, tr. by Peter Preuss. Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing, 1997.
- *The Science of Knowledge* by Johann Fichte, tr. by Peter Heath and John Lachs. Cambridge University Press, 1982. Excerpts. (Available on My Courses.)
- *Fichte: Early Philosophical Writings* by Johann Fichte, tr. by Daniel Breazeale. Cornell University Press, 1988. Excerpts. (Available on My Courses.)
- *On the Aesthetic Education of Man* by Friedrich Schiller, tr. by Reginald Snell. Dover Publications, 2004.
- *The Phenomenology of Spirit* by G.W.F. Hegel, tr. by A.V. Miller. Oxford University Press, 1979. Excerpts. (Available on My Courses.)
- *The World as Will and Representation Vol I, II* by Arthur Schopenhauer, tr. by E. Payne, Dover Publications. Excerpts. (Available on My Courses)
- *The Birth of Tragedy* by Friedrich Nietzsche, tr. by Raymond Geuss and Ronald Speirs. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999.
- *Twilight of the Idols* by Friedrich Nietzsche, tr. by Michael Tanner, Penguin, 1990. Excerpts. (Available on My Courses).
- *Kierkegaard Anthology*, edited by Robert Bretall. Princeton University Press, 1973. Excerpts.
- *Fear and Trembling* by Soren Kierkegaard, tr. by Alastair Hannay, Penguin, 1986.

Please note that the instructor may add additional required reading that will be uploaded onto My Courses.

Recommended Reading

The readings below are for students who would like to develop a broader and deeper understanding of the thinkers we are reading in class.

- Kant, *The Conflict of the Faculties*.
- Kant, *Prolegomena to Any Future Metaphysics*
- Fichte, *The Science of Knowledge*. It is strongly recommended that students consult this work. The instructor will post very short excerpts from *The Science of Knowledge* on My Courses that are required reading and it will be helpful for students to have a look at the entire volume at some point.
- Fichte, *Early Philosophical Writings*.
- Schiller, *On Grace and Dignity*
- Hegel, *The Philosophy of Right*.
- Hegel, G.W.F *Introduction to the Lectures on the History of Philosophy*.

Expect to do some additional reading and research of the primary sources for your essays. The essays should demonstrate an in depth understanding of the primary sources. Any books we read in part can be read in their entirety.

Method of Evaluation

Please note that the method of evaluation is subject to enrolment and may change at the beginning of the semester.

Questions for Class Discussion: 10%

Participation in Class Discussion: 10%

Midterm examination: 25% (date TBA)

Essay: One 2000 word essay worth 30% (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.

Final Examination: 25% (date TBA)

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 your essay five days late, then you have lost 5% of the possible 100% you could get in the course.

The midterm, essay, final exam and questions for class discussion 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 questions for class discussion should focus on the assigned readings only, *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 refer to the assigned 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

Students who wish to use laptops should restrict their activity to note taking so as not to disturb the concentration of their fellow classmates and the instructor. Students are kindly asked to refrain from using their cell phones during the lecture. The constant use of cell phones is distracting for 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).

