

From Hegel to Nietzsche: Freedom and Alienation in 19th-Century German Philosophy

Instructor: Caroline Bowman [email cb3691@nyu.edu]

Meeting: MTWR 3:30-5:05 EDT

Office hours: Wednesday, 2-3pm EDT, or by appointment

Course content and objectives

This course is a survey of German philosophy in the 19th century, with a focus on social and political philosophy. Much of the course will center on the social and political philosophy of G.W.F. Hegel and Karl Marx. We'll begin with Hegel's account of freedom and his use of the ideal of freedom as standard with which to evaluate social and political institutions. We will then turn to examine Marx's radical transformation of the Hegelian project, including his development of the notion of "alienation" as a tool with which to criticize institutions and systems of social relations. We will then consider the theme of freedom as it is present in the demands for women's liberation made by socialist feminists Lily Braun and Clara Zetkin. In the last part of the course, we will consider the critical potential of Friedrich Nietzsche's notion of a "genealogy" of morality.

This is a reading-intensive course. We will be focusing on reading selected texts carefully to examine 1) the particular positions presented within each text, and 2) the arguments given in support of those positions. Many of the texts are quite dense, and understanding them will require you to read them multiple times. However, these texts are also very rich and will reward your perseverance in reading them.

Course goals: In this course, you will:

1. Develop a grasp of key issues, themes, and arguments in 19th-century social and political philosophy
2. Develop skills reading, interpreting, and writing about difficult historical texts
3. Develop skills engaging with peers in a way that allows you to advance your understanding of the ideas and arguments and your own critical assessment of them

Required texts (make sure to get these editions):

G.W.F. Hegel, *Elements of the Philosophy of Right* (Cambridge, ISBN 9780521348881)

K. Marx and F. Engels, *The Marx-Engels Reader* (Norton, second ed., ISBN 9780393090406)

F. Nietzsche, *On the Genealogy of Morality* (Hackett, ISBN 978-0872202832)

Optional texts (this is just if you want to have physical copies of any of these—I'll be providing digital copies of assigned excerpts):

G.W.F. Hegel, the *Phenomenology of Spirit* (Miller translation, Oxford, ISBN 9780198245971)

L. Feuerbach, *The Essence of Christianity* (ISBN 9781420945270)

L. Braun, *Selected Writings on Feminism and Socialism* (ISBN 978-0253351012)

C. Zetkin, *Clara Zetkin: Selected Writings* (ISBN 978-1608463909)

Course Requirements

Reading responses: There daily required reading response questions (linked on NYU Classes), due by 1pm EDT on the day of each class. These reading responses will consist of a) responses to several short questions about the text for that day and b) one discussion question of your own. The completion of these, not their correctness, will count towards the grade of the class. You have two free “passes” on reading responses throughout the semester, no need to email me. After that, if you need to turn in a reading response late due to exceptional circumstances, you should email me. For every missing reading response, I will deduct a third of a letter grade from the “reading response” category (see below).

Attendance and Participation: Since this is a discussion-based course, attendance and participation make up 20 percent of the grade. You should come to class having done all the reading, and with questions, objections or alternative views. In class, I expect you to contribute to discussion. Participating does *not* necessarily mean speaking as frequently as you can. While I won’t be assessing the content of your comments, I will be looking for thoughtful contributions that demonstrate an attempt to think seriously about the ideas at hand. You have two free “passes” on attendance throughout the semester, no need to email me. After that, if you are unable to attend class, you should email me in advance to let me know (Keeping in mind the circumstances, I intend to be lenient about granting excused absences, but please be in touch). For every unexcused absence, I will deduct a third of a letter grade from the “attendance” category (see below).

For students who cannot regularly attend live lectures: you are expected to watch recorded class sessions and write down questions and comments based on the discussion (at least one question or comment per session). This is due each week by Friday at 11:59pm EDT. We will also find a time to meet every other week to discuss your questions.

Finally: as part of the participation grade, I am asking everyone to sign up for a 10-minute meeting with me the first week of classes so I can get to know you a little better.

Papers and Exam: There are two 5-7 page papers and one exam. For the first paper, you will swap papers with a classmate for comments, which will be factored into your grade as shown below. The exam will consist of short and long answer questions. The exam will be take-home and open book, and you will have at least 36 hours to complete it (but it will require much less time). Here are the deadlines:

- First draft of paper one emailed to peer reviewer due Thursday, June 11 at 11:59p.m. EDT
- Peer review comments due Saturday, June 13 at 11:59p.m.
- Final draft of paper one due on NYU Classes by Friday, June 19 at 11:59 p.m.
- Paper two due on NYU Classes by Tuesday, June 30 at 11:59 p.m.
- Exam due Sunday, July 5 at 11:59pm

Grade breakdown: I’ll calculate all grades using a 4.0 scale. The final grade will be:

20% Reading Responses

20% Attendance and Participation

15% Paper 1

5% Paper 1 swap

20% Paper 2

20% Final Exam

Course Policies

COVID and health & wellbeing: College life is challenging in regular circumstances, and taking courses online amidst a global pandemic poses a range of new difficulties that we are all confronting. Please know that I am keeping this in mind, and that you can teach out if you feel that you are struggling in any way.

Classroom conduct: I expect discussion to be respectful and constructive; always try to engage with your classmates as charitably as possible. Offensive (including racist, sexist, homophobic, transphobic, classist, and ableist) comments will not be tolerated. To facilitate discussion over Zoom, I will ask that you keep your cameras on during class; if you are not able to do this or feel uncomfortable doing so, please write to me.

Academic integrity: You are expected to know and follow the university's guidelines for academic honesty. Academic misconduct can occur in a variety of ways, including (but not limited to) cheating, fabrication, and plagiarism. When in doubt about whether some academic practice is acceptable, ask the instructor for assistance. Always err on the side of avoiding misconduct. Any suspected violation of university policy regarding academic conduct will be reported directly to the CAS Associate Dean for Students. There are no exceptions.

Extensions: To ask for an extension, you should reach out to me at least 36 hours (preferably more) before the due date and let me know what's going on and work out a new due date. Exceptions to the 36-hour notification rule will be made for cases of medical, mental health, and family/friend emergencies.

Office hours and email: You are encouraged to come to office hours to discuss course material. For my regular slot, you do not need to make an appointment. If you cannot make my regular slot office hours, you are encouraged to email me to set up an appointment. I will not comment on drafts of papers, but I will read outlines during office hours. I will typically only respond to email during weekday business hours (9-6), and will aim to respond to emails within 24 hours.

Schedule

Week 1

- May 26 Introduction
May 27 Rousseau, *The Social Contract* (1762), Book I Ch. 6 and 8, Book II Ch. 4; Hegel, Excerpts from *Lectures on Philosophy of History* (1822) (12-14, 19-28, 40-45) [on NYU Classes]
May 28 Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit* (1807), §§174-196 [on NYU Classes]

Week 2

- June 1 Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit* (1807), §§197-230 [on NYU Classes]
June 2 Hegel, *Philosophy of Right* (1820), Preface (pg. 9-23; focus esp. on p. 11-12 and 20-23) and Introduction (§§4-11; 19-23; 27-30; 33)
June 3 Hegel, *Philosophy of Right* (1820), Abstract Right (§§34-48, 65-67, 71-72)
June 4 Hegel, *Philosophy of Right* (1820), Morality (§§105-107, 129-141*) [only main text of §140]

Week 3

- June 8 Hegel, *Philosophy of Right* (1820), Introduction to Ethical Life and the Family (§§142-163; 169-170)
- June 9 Hegel, *Philosophy of Right* (1820), Civil Society (§§181-205, 230, 236-248; 253-256)
- June 10 Hegel, *Philosophy of Right* (1820), the State (§§257-269*, 273 main text; 276-278) [*skip Hegel's note that starts at the bottom of pg. 278]
- June 11 Feuerbach, *Essence of Christianity* (1841), introduction [on NYU Classes]

Week 4

- June 15 Marx, Part 1 of "On the Jewish Question" (1843) (*Reader* pp. 26-46)
- June 16 Marx, *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844* (*Reader* pp. 66-81), *Excerpts from James Mill's Elements of Political Economy* (1844) [on NYU Classes]
- June 17 Marx, Theses on Feuerbach (1846) (*Reader* pp. 143-5); Marx and Engels, Part 1 of *The German Ideology* (1845-6) (*Reader* pp. 146-175)
- June 18 Marx and Engels, *Manifesto of the Communist Party* (1848) (*Reader* pp. 473-500)

Week 5

- June 22 Marx, "Wage Labor and Capital" (1849) (*Reader* pp. 203-217), selections from Vol. 1 of *Capital* (*Reader* pp. 329-343)
- June 23 Marx, selections from Vol. 1 of *Capital* (*Reader* pp. 344-376)
- June 24 Braun, selections [on NYU Classes]
- June 25 Zetkin, "For the Liberation of Women" (1889), "Only in Conjunction with the Proletarian Woman Will Socialism Be Victorious" (1896) [on NYU Classes]

Week 6

- June 29 Nietzsche, *On the Genealogy of Morality* (1887), Preface and First Treatise
- June 30 Nietzsche, *On the Genealogy of Morality* (1887), Second Treatise
- July 1 Nietzsche, *On the Genealogy of Morality* (1887), Third Treatise
- July 2 Wrap-Up

Recommended secondary literature:

Hegel:

- Fred Neuhouser, "Desire, Recognition and the Relation between Bondsman and Lord"
"Hegel's Social Philosophy" in *The Cambridge Companion to Hegel and Nineteenth-Century Philosophy* (available online through NYU Library)
Foundations of Hegel's Social Theory
- Alexandre Kojève, first chapter of *Introduction to the Reading of Hegel*
- Allen Wood, *Hegel's Ethical Thought*
"Hegel's Political Philosophy" in *Blackwell Companion to Hegel* (available online through NYU Library)

Marx:

- Allen Wood, *Karl Marx*
Lectures on Marxism, Raymond Geuss, University of Cambridge (Youtube:
<https://youtu.be/tFW6EjxP2K8>)

Nietzsche:

Raymond Geuss, "Nietzsche and Genealogy"

Michel Foucault, "Nietzsche, Genealogy, History"

Lectures on Nietzsche, Raymond Geuss, University of Cambridge (Youtube:

https://youtu.be/2fTnEB_r_6Q)

University Resources

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

Academic accommodations are available to any students with a chronic, psychological, visual, mobility, learning disability, or is deaf or hard of hearing. Students should register with NYU's Henry and Lucy Moses Center for students with Disabilities. Tel. (212) 998-4980. Web site: www.nyu.edu/csd. Please also get in touch with me if you need accommodations.

Counseling Services

Information about NYU's counseling services is available at <https://www.nyu.edu/students/health-and-wellness/counseling-services.html>. Tel. (212) 998-4780. Email: wellness.exchange@nyu.edu

NYU Immigrant Defense Initiative (IDI)

The NYU Immigrant Defense Initiative (IDI) offers free and confidential legal services to NYU students and employees, and their immediate family members, on their immigration cases. IDI can assist with DACA, TPS, asylum, legal permanent residency, citizenship, employment authorization, representation in immigration court, humanitarian visas, and consultations for those who have had contact with the criminal system (i.e. arrest or conviction) or have violated their visa. IDI also provides foreign travel monitoring for those affected by the Travel Ban, or who are at risk of being denied entry to the US, Know-Your-Rights trainings, and advocacy within NYU departments (financial aid, housing, student groups). Contact IDI at immigrant.defense@law.nyu.edu or 212- 998-6435 (no walk-ins). More information at <https://www.law.nyu.edu/immigrantrightsclinic/IDI>

University Learning Center: www.nyu.edu/ulc

NYU Writing Center: <http://cas.nyu.edu/ewp.html>