

**PHST 4380: The Masters of Suspicion:
Hermeneutic Strategies in Freud, Marx and Nietzsche**

Dominican School of Philosophy and Theology

Spring 2019

Fr. Justin Gable, O.P., Ph.D.

Fridays, 12:40—3:30 PM

Office: DSPT 119

DSPT 2

Office Hours: Fridays 9-11 AM

e-mail: jgable@dspt.edu

Course Description and Objectives:

Freud, Marx and Nietzsche are three of the greatest critics of religion in general, and Christianity specifically. While all three of them hold religion to be false, their critique of it is not that of classic skepticism. They do not seek to show the weakness or uncertainty of classical theistic positions by presenting arguments for God's non-existence. Rather, they are engaged in what Paul Ricoeur has characterized as the "hermeneutics of suspicion." Each of these thinkers attempts to uncover religious belief as serving a certain social, political, moral or psychological function, while simultaneously masking this function. The work of Freud, Marx and Nietzsche requires, then, more than a mere endorsement or refutation of their views, but an appreciation of their critique of religion as a set of hermeneutical strategies designed to uncover the ideological uses to which faith and religious practice are frequently put. In this course, we will examine the insights of these great "masters of suspicion" through a close reading of representative works. A careful analysis of their writings in their historical context will enable students to assess their evaluation of religion (particularly Christianity), and discern the key features and limitations of their hermeneutic approach. Although this course, an advanced seminar for M.A. and Ph.D. students, presumes a certain familiarity with the history of philosophy on the part of the student, no prior coursework on Freud, Marx, or Nietzsche is presumed.

By the end of the semester, students will have gained an appreciation of the basic concepts of the philosophies of Freud, Marx, and Nietzsche, including illusion, psychoanalytic method,

egoic and libidinal drives, and the unconscious (Freud); alienation, ideology, capital, emancipation, and the materialist and dialectical conception of history (Marx); *ressentiment*, “the death of God,” perspectivism, the will to power, the eternal return, and the *Übermensch* (Nietzsche). Students should also be able to articulate the common traits of the hermeneutic approach of these thinkers (the “hermeneutics of suspicion”), as well as the essence of the critique of religion of Freud, Marx, and Nietzsche, seeking to critically evaluate for themselves the value and limits of each of these thinkers’ contribution to understanding the truth of religion and its place in the life of individual persons and communities.

Course Requirements:

As an advanced seminar course, this class will focus primarily on the discussion of assigned texts, although the instructor will provide background material in lecture form from time to time. Students will be expected to carefully prepare assigned readings in order to actively participate in the conversation and raise thoughtful questions in class. Each week a student will be asked to begin the class discussion by introducing a particular text and raising several substantive questions for discussion. Presentations and the careful preparation of assigned readings are meant to foster student capacities for self-direction and collaborative learning (DSPT Institutional Goals A3 and B1). Because this class is structured as a seminar, attendance and participation in the discussion is essential. Absences will significantly affect a student’s final grade. Students with disabilities or whose first language is not English are encouraged to speak with the instructor about any special needs they might have.

Students will be evaluated according to the quality of their class participation and leadership of class discussions, and a final research paper of 15-20 pages. These assignments are designed to help students develop their own critical thinking with regard to the fundamental concepts, hermeneutic strategies, and critiques of religion present in the thought of Freud, Marx, and Nietzsche, and to articulate their understanding of these topics both orally and in writing. They also offer students the opportunity to show their growth in the DSPT’s institutional goals of integrative thinking, self-direction, collaborative learning, and leadership (Institutional Goals A1-3 and B1). All sources in the final research paper should be cited using proper “Turabian” format (see Kate L. Turabian, *A Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Theses, and*

Dissertations. Eighth Edition. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2013). Students should conscientiously avoid plagiarism, and are asked to consult the *DSPT Student Handbook* for the DSPT's policies regarding academic honesty. A **paper proposal** consisting of a description of the student's thesis, the methodology to be used, and the significance of the project, along with a preliminary bibliography of a minimum of 10 sources in Turabian format, should be submitted by **April 26**, and will be factored into the final grade for the research paper. The **final research paper** is due no later than **May 24, 2018**. Late papers will be accepted, but will be penalized 1/3 of a letter grade (e.g., from an A to A-) for each day past the date due.

Grading: Weekly Class Participation: 25%

Class Presentations and Discussion Leadership: 25%

Final Research Paper: 50%

Assigned Texts:

Freud, Sigmund. *Civilization and Its Discontents*. Reprint Edition. New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 2010. ISBN-13: 978-0393304510. Paperback. \$14.95

Freud, Sigmund. *Moses and Monotheism*. New York: Vintage Books, 1955. ISBN-13: 978-0394700144. Paperback. \$10.95.

Gay, Peter, ed. *The Freud Reader*. New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 1989. ISBN-13: 978-0393314038. \$23.95.

Nietzsche, Friedrich. *The Gay Science*. Translated by Walter Kaufmann. New York: Vintage Books, 1974. ISBN-13: 978-0394719856. Paperback. \$13.95.

Nietzsche, Friedrich. *On the Genealogy of Morals*. Translated and edited by Walter Kaufmann. New York: Vintage Books, 1989. ISBN-13: 978-0679724629. Paperback. \$14.95.

Tucker, Robert C., ed. *The Marx-Engels Reader*. Second Edition. New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 1978. ISBN-13: 978-0393090406. Paperback. \$19.98.

Weekly reading assignments will be taken from these assigned texts (all of which are available at online book retailers substantially cheaper than their list prices, reflected above), as well as from readings posted on Moodle (<http://moodle.gtu.edu>).

Course Schedule:

2/8: Introduction to the Course

The Hermeneutics of Suspicion and the Uses of Atheism

Introduction to “the Masters”

Merold Westphal, *Suspicion and Faith: The Religious Uses of Modern Atheism*, Chs. 1-4.

Selections from Paul Ricoeur, *Freud and Philosophy*

2/15: Freud on Drives, Desires, and the Interpretation of Dreams

Sigmund Freud, selections from *On Dreams*, “On Narcissism,” and *The Ego and the Id*

(in *The Freud Reader*)

2/22: Freud on Religious Practices

Sigmund Freud, selections from *Totem and Taboo* and *The Future of an Illusion*

(in *The Freud Reader*)

3/1: Freud's Philosophy of Religion and Culture

Freud on Judaism and Christianity

Sigmund Freud, *Civilization and Its Discontents* and

selections from *Moses and Monotheism*

3/8: Marx on Hegel, Religion, and Revolution

G.W.F. Hegel, Introduction and Part I, Section 1 of *Elements of*

the Philosophy of Right

Karl Marx, “Towards a Critique of Hegel’s *Philosophy of Right*: An Introduction,”
“Critique of Hegel’s *Philosophy of Right*,” and “On the Jewish Question”
(in *The Marx-Engels Reader*)

3/15: Marx on Feuerbach, Alienation, and the Materialist Conception of History

Ludwig Feuerbach, Introduction to *The Essence of Christianity*

Karl Marx, “Theses on Feuerbach” and “Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts” and
The Holy Family (in *The Marx-Engels Reader*)

Georg Lukács, “What is Orthodox Marxism?”

3/22: Marx on Economics and Ideology

Karl Marx, selections from *The German Ideology* and *Das Kapital* (Volume 1)
(in *The Marx-Engels Reader*)

Louis Althusser, “Contradiction and Overdetermination”

3/29: No Class (Reading Week)

4/5: Marx and the Communist Ideal

Karl Marx, *The Communist Manifesto* (and its prefaces) and *The Eighteenth Brumaire of
Louis Bonaparte* (in *The Marx-Engels Reader*)

Optional: Denys Turner, “Religion: Illusions and Liberation”

4/12: Nietzsche on Truth, Lies, and the Death of God

“On Truth and Lies in a Non-Moral Sense” and *The Gay Science*, Books 1–3

Optional: Heidegger, “The Word of Nietzsche: ‘God is Dead’”

4/19: No Class (Good Friday)

4/26: Nietzsche on *Ressentiment*

The Gay Science, Books 4–5 and *On the Genealogy of Morals*, First Essay

Optional: Deleuze, “Active and Reactive” from *Nietzsche and Philosophy*

5/3: Nietzsche on the Ascetic Ideal

Nietzsche, *The Genealogy of Morals*, Second and Third Essays
Foucault, "Nietzsche, Genealogy, History"

5/10: Nietzsche on Christianity

Nietzsche, *The Antichrist*
René Girard, "Nietzsche versus the Crucified"
Optional: Nietzsche, selections from *The Late Notebooks*

5/17: The Uses and Abuses of Suspicion

Westphal, *Suspicion and Faith: The Religious Uses of Modern Atheism*, Conclusion
selections from Paul Ricoeur, *Freud and Philosophy*
Henri de Lubac, *The Drama of Atheist Humanism*, Part One, Chapter One

5/24: Final Research Paper Due by 5 PM

N.B.: The instructor reserves the right to revise the course syllabus as the need arises.

Additional Resources

The following is a list of supplemental and suggested readings. They are by no means required reading for the course, but may be a useful place to start for your final research paper, or of interest to those wishing to do additional research centered on the hermeneutics of suspicion or the thought of Sigmund Freud, Karl Marx, or Friedrich Nietzsche.

Primary Sources

Freud, Sigmund. *Gesammelte Werke in achtzehn Bänden mit einem Nachtragsband*, ed. Anna Freud, et al. Berlin: S. Fischer Verlag, 2001.

- . *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*. 24 Volumes. Translated from the German under the General Editorship of James Strachey, in collaboration with Anna Freud. 24 volumes. New York: W.W. Norton, 1952-64.
- . *The Freud Reader*, ed. Peter Gay. New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 1995.
- . *A Penguin Freud Reader*, ed. Adam Phillips. London: Penguin Books, 2006.
- Marx, Karl and Friedrich Engels. *Gesamtausgabe* (MEGA). Berlin: Karl Dietz Verlag, 1975-.
- , *Collected Works*. New York and London: International Publishers. 1975.
- , *Selected Works*. Two Volumes. Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing, 1962.
- . *The Marx-Engels Reader*, ed. Robert C. Tucker. Second Edition. New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 1978.
- Marx, Karl. *Karl Marx: Selected Writings*, ed. David McLellan. Second Edition. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000.
- Nietzsche, Friedrich. *Sämtliche Werke: Kritische Studienausgabe in 15 Bänden (KSA)*, ed. G. Colli and M. Montinari. Berlin: De Gruyter, 1980.
- . *Selected Letters of Friedrich Nietzsche*. Edited and Translated by Christopher Middleton. Indianapolis, IN: Hackett Publishing, 1996.
- . *The Anti-Christ, Ecce Homo, Twilight of the Idols, and Other Writings*, trans. Judith Norman, ed. Aaron Ridley and Judith Norman. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005.
- . *Beyond Good and Evil: Prelude to a Philosophy of the Future*, trans. Walter Kaufmann. New York: Vintage Books, 1989.
- . *The Birth of Tragedy and the Case of Wagner*, trans. Walter Kaufmann. New York: Vintage Books, 1967.
- . *Daybreak: Thoughts on the Prejudices of Morality*, trans. R. J. Hollingdale, ed. Maudemarie Clark and Brian Leiter. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997.
- . *The Gay Science, with a Prelude in Rhymes and an Appendix of Songs*, trans. Walter Kaufmann. New York: Vintage Books, 1974.
- . *Human, All-Too Human: A Book for Free Spirits*, trans. R. J. Hollingdale. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996.
- . *On the Genealogy of Morals and Ecce Homo*, trans. Walter Kaufmann. New York: Vintage Books, 1989.
- . *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, trans. Adrian Del Caro, ed. Adrian Del Caro and Robert Pippin. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006.

- . *Untimely Meditations*, trans. R. J. Hollingdale, ed. Daniel Breazeale. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997.
- . *The Will to Power*, trans. Walter Kaufmann and R. J. Hollingdale, ed. Walter Kaufmann. New York: Vintage Books, 1968.
- . *Writings from the Early Notebooks*, trans. Daniel Breazeale, ed. Raymond Geuss and Alexander Nehamas. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009.
- . *Writings from the Late Notebooks*, trans. Kate Sturge, ed. Rüdinger Bittner. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003.

Secondary Sources

I. Freud

- Bernstein, Richard J. *Freud and the Legacy of Moses*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998.
- Cavell, Marcia. *Becoming a Subject: Reflections in Philosophy and Psychoanalysis*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006.
- . *The Psychoanalytic Mind: From Freud to Philosophy*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1993.
- Church, Jennifer. "Morality and the Internalized Other." In *The Cambridge Companion to Freud*, ed. Jerome Neu: 209-23. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991.
- Deigh, John. *The Sources of Moral Agency: Essays in Moral Psychology and Freudian Theory*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996.
- . "Freud's Later Theory of Civilization" Changes and Implications." In *The Cambridge Companion to Freud*, ed. Jerome Neu: 287-308. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991.
- Derrida, Jacques. *The Post Card: From Socrates to Freud and Beyond*. Translated by Alan Bass. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987.
- Gardner, Sebastian. "The Unconscious." In *The Cambridge Companion to Freud*, ed. Jerome Neu: 136-60. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991.
- Gay, Peter. *Freud: A Life for Our Time*. London: W.W. Norton and Company, 2006.

- Grünbaum, Adolf. *The Foundations of Psychoanalysis: A Philosophical Critique*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1984.
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- Jung, Carl Gustav. *The Collected Works of C. G. Jung Volume 4: Freud and Psychoanalysis*. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1961.
- Kreeft, Peter. *Socrates Meets Freud: The Father of Philosophy Meets the Father of Psychology*. South Bend, IN: St. Augustine's Press, 2014.
- Leiter, Brian. "The Hermeneutics of Suspicion: Recovering Marx, Nietzsche, and Freud." In *The Future for Philosophy*, ed. Brian Leiter: 74-105. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004.
- Marcuse, Herbert. *Eros and Civilization: A Philosophical Inquiry into Freud*. Boston: Beacon Press, 1974.
- Palmer, Michael. *Freud and Jung on Religion*. London: Routledge, 1997.
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- . *Freud and Philosophy: An Essay on Interpretation*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1970.
- Robinson, Paul. *Freud and His Critics*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993.
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- Westphal, Merold. *Overcoming Onto-Theology: Toward a Postmodern Christian Faith*. New York: Fordham University Press, 2001.
- . *Suspicion and Faith: The Religious Uses of Modern Atheism*. New York: Fordham University Press, 1998.
- . "Paranoia and Piety: Reflections on the Schreber Case." In *Psychoanalysis and Religion*, ed.

Joseph H. Smith and Susan A. Handelman. Baltimore, MD: John Hopkins University Press, 1990.

II. Marx

Althusser, Louis. *For Marx*. London: Verso Books, 2006.

Althusser, Louis and Étienne Balibar. *Reading Capital*. London: Verso Books, 2009.

Carver, Terrell. *The Post-Modern Marx*. Manchester, UK: Manchester University Press, 1998.

----. *Marx's Social Theory*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982.

Cohen, G. A. *Karl Marx's Theory of History: A Defense*. Second Edition. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001.

---. *History, Labour and Freedom*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988.

De Lubac, Henri. *The Drama of Atheist Humanism*. San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1995.

Derrida, Jacques. *Spectres of Marx: The State of the Debt, the Work of Mourning, and the New International*. London: Routledge, 1994.

Dupré, Louis. *The Philosophical Foundations of Marxism*. New York: Harcourt, Brace, and World, 1966.

Farr, James. "Science: Realism, Criticism, History." In *The Cambridge Companion to Marx*, ed. Terrell Carver: 106-23. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991.

Harvey, David. *A Companion to Marx's Capital*. Two Volumes. London: Verso Books, 2010; 2013.

Heinrich, Michael. *An Introduction to the Three Volumes of Karl Marx's Capital*. Translated by Alexander Loscacio. New York: Monthly Review Press, 2012.

Hook, Sidney. *From Hegel to Marx*. New York: Humanities Press, 1950.

Kolakowski, Leszek. *Main Currents of Marxism*. 3 Volumes. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1978.

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III. Nietzsche

- Allison, David B. *Reading the New Nietzsche: The Birth of Tragedy, The Gay Science, Thus Spoke Zarathustra, and On the Genealogy of Morals*. Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2001.
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- Babich, Babette. "Nietzsche's Performative Phenomenology: Philology and Music." In *Nietzsche and Phenomenology: Power, Life, Subjectivity*, ed. Élodie Boubilil and Christine Daigle: 117-40. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2013.
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- . *Nietzsche: Volume One: The Will to Power as Art*. Translated by David Farrell Krell. New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 1979.
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