

PHILOSOPHY 480

NIETZSCHE

Spring 2019

Final Essay Assignment

Due Monday, May 6

Write a 7-10 page essay in which you explain and reflect on some aspect of Nietzsche's thinking covered in this course. Upload your essay to Laulima by the end of the final exam period (4:00 PM)

Here are some essay topic suggestions:

Philosophy, Art, and Lucid Dreaming

How does Nietzsche's mature thought develop the theme of his early work focused on art? What does he mean when he suggests that the "philosophers of the future" will recognize that they are artists, or like lucid dreamers who have woken up to the fact that they are dreaming but continue to dream. Compare, for example, when he writes in the aphorism titled *The consciousness of appearance*: "I suddenly woke up in the midst of this dream, but only to the consciousness that I am dreaming and that I must go on dreaming lest I perish—as a somnambulist must go on dreaming lest he fall" (GS §54) to what he writes in one of his late notebook entries: "We possess art lest we *perish of the truth*" (WP §822).

Thus Spoke Zarathustra

Why did Nietzsche, as expressed in his autobiography *Ecce Homo*, seem to regard this book as his most important? What might he mean when he introduces the text with "*Incipit tragoedia* [the tragedy begins]" (GS §342)? Explain and reflect upon the main teachings of the overhuman, the will to power, and the eternal recurrence?

The Will to Power and What is Noble

Explain and reflect upon what Nietzsche means in *Beyond Good and Evil* when he writes that "life itself is essentially appropriation, injury, overpowering of what is alien and weaker; suppression, hardness, imposition of one's own forms, incorporation and at least, at its mildest, exploitation" and when he concludes this aphorism by stating: "'Exploitation' does not belong to a corrupt or imperfect and primitive societies: it belongs to the essence of what lives, as a basic organic function; it is a consequence of the will to power, which is after all the will of life" (BGE §259)?

The History of an Error

Explain and reflect upon what Nietzsche means when he sums up the History of Western Philosophy as "The History of an Error" in *Twilight of the Idols*? What does he mean when he suggests in the subtitle of this work about philosophizing with a hammer?

Genealogy of Morality

How does the text *On the Genealogy of Morals* develop his long concern with examining the origins of morality in the evolutionary development of human beings? What does he mean by the distinction between *master morality* and *slave morality*? In his preface to the *Genealogy* he suggests that the entire third essay is an example of *exegesis*, what is required in properly reading an aphorism. How is the third essay of the *Genealogy* an exegesis of the aphorism from *Zarathustra* that suggests wisdom is a woman and always loves only a warrior? Why does he suggest in that essay that philosophy, the quest for truth, and even science, are expressions of the ascetic ideal?

The Death of God

What did Nietzsche mean by the "death of God"? What is the cataclysm that he sees coming as a result of this event? Why does Nietzsche find a reason for cheerfulness? What is Nietzsche's "open sea"? What is Nietzsche's response to the crisis of nihilism?

Nietzsche's Critique of Christianity

Why does Nietzsche consider the Christian conception of God a “declaration of war against life, against nature, against the will to live” (A §18)? Why does he think that Christian morality is an expression of *ressentiment*?

Write an essay as an exegesis of one of Nietzsche's aphorisms:

“Convictions are more dangerous enemies of truth than lies.” (*Human, All Too Human*, §483)

“For believe me: the secret for harvesting from existence the greatest fruitfulness and the greatest enjoyment is—to live dangerously! Build your cities on the slopes of Vesuvius!” (*The Gay Science* §283)

“Whoever praises him as a god of love does not have a high enough opinion of love.” (*Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, Pt. IV, “Retired”)

“Whoever fights monsters should see to it that in the process he does not become a monster. And when you look into the abyss, the abyss also looks into you.” (*Beyond Good and Evil* §146)

“What? Is man merely a mistake of God's? Or is God merely a mistake of man's?” (*Twilight of the Idols*, Maxims and Arrows, §7)

“*Out of life's school of war*: What does not kill me, makes me stronger.” (*Twilight of the Idols*, Maxims and Arrows, §8)

“If we have our own *why* of life, we shall get along with almost any *how*. (*Twilight of the Idols*, Maxims and Arrows, §12)

For the new year.— I still live, I still think: I still have to live, for I still have to think. *Sum, ergo cogito: cogito, ergo sum*. Today everybody permits himself the expression of his wish and his dearest thought; hence I, too, shall say what it is that I wish from myself today, and what was the first thought to run across my heart this year— what thought shall be for me the reason, warranty, and sweetness of my life henceforth. I want to learn more and more to see as beautiful what is necessary in things; then I shall be one of those who make things beautiful. *Amor fati*: let that be my love henceforth! I do not want to wage war against what is ugly. I do not want to accuse; I do not even want to accuse those who accuse. *Looking away* shall be my only negation. And all in all and on the whole: some day I wish to be only a Yes-sayer. (*The Gay Science* §276)

Have I been understood?—*Dionysus versus the Crucified*. (*Ecce Homo*, “Why I am a Destiny,” §9)