

# PHILOSOPHY 480

## NIETZSCHE

Spring 2019

Mid-term Exam

Due Monday, March 4

Write a 5-6 page essay in which you explain and reflect on some aspect of Nietzsche's thinking so far covered in this course. Upload your essay to Laulima by the beginning of class on the due date.

Here are some essay topic suggestions:

### *The Birth of Tragedy*

Explain how Nietzsche understood Greek tragedy as arising from the coupling of Apollonian and Dionysian art drives. How does Nietzsche's thinking about the Apollonian and Dionysian show the influence of Romanticism and yet also suggest a preview of his mature thought? Why did Nietzsche regard the tragedies of Aeschylus and Sophocles to have been the high point of Greek culture rather than the philosophy of Socrates and Plato? Why did Nietzsche think that Greek Tragedy died at the hands of Socrates, through his influence upon Euripides? How is this expressed in the 1977 Greek film *Iphigenia* based on the tragedy by Euripides? At the end of the book, how does Nietzsche suggest the beginning of modern art, and what does he suggest is the highest aim of art?

### *Truth and Lies*

In the essay "On Truth and Lies in a Nonmoral Sense" what is the point of the opening paragraph when Nietzsche considers how the human intellect looks within nature? What does he mean when he goes on to suggest that the "intellect unfolds its principle powers in dissimulation? What did Nietzsche mean when he suggests that truths are worn out metaphors, illusions which we have forgotten are illusions? How does his thinking about language threaten the traditional conception of philosophy? Influenced by Nietzsche's essay, what did Derrida mean when he suggested that Western philosophy was "white mythology"?

### *Philosopher as Artist*

How does Nietzsche's thinking in the middle-period writings continue to develop the theme of the philosopher as artist? How are the themes of the Apollonian and Dionysian art drives Nietzsche introduced in *The Birth of Tragedy* still evident in the middle-period writings? What does he say about truth, the origin of knowledge, perspectivism, and lucid dreaming that suggests the philosopher is necessarily an artist?

### *Human Nature and the Development of Morality*

What does Nietzsche's thinking in the middle-period writings suggest about human nature and the development of morality? What does Nietzsche suggest about the importance of psychology for understanding morality? What does Nietzsche suggest about the importance of dreams in understanding human psychology? What are some of the suggestions Nietzsche makes about the future development of humanity?

### *Socrates's Last Words*

How is Nietzsche's critique of Plato and the subsequent history of Western philosophy summarized in his response to Socrates's last words?

### *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"?