

NIETZSCHE'S *BEYOND GOOD AND EVIL*
FNDL 25703

Brian Leiter
University of Chicago
Spring 2013
T, Th: 4:30-5:50 pm
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Required Text: Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*, ed. R-P. Horstmann & J. Norman (Cambridge University Press, 2002).

Optional text: Brian Leiter, *Nietzsche on Morality* (Routledge, 2002).

Course Description: This course will be a close reading of one of the major works of Nietzsche's mature period, *Beyond Good and Evil* (1886), which allows us to consider the major themes of his thought: his conception of philosophy and philosophical method, his critique of morality and objections to democracy, his idea of will to power, and his reflections on the nature and value of truth and knowledge. Some background in philosophy (especially Plato and Kant) will be useful, but is not required.

Course Requirements: Students will be expected to write a paper of not more than ten pages on a topic chosen in consultation with the instructor; some suggested paper topics will be distributed shortly after the middle of the term. Attendance is required; students may miss two classes if they notify the instructor in advance.

Office Hours: Regular office hours will be Thursdays from 1:30 to 3 pm, but feel free to e-mail me to make an appointment for a different time.

Reading Assignments. *Beyond Good and Evil* is abbreviated by BGE; Leiter's *Nietzsche on Morality* as NOM. References to BGE are by chapter (Roman numerals) and sections (Arabic numerals). Thus BGE I:1-15 would mean Chapter 1, "On the Prejudices of Philosophers," sections 1 through 15 (not pages 1-15). None of the secondary sources are required reading, but are there

for those who would like to do additional reading on the assignment; the *required* reading each session is from BGE.

April 2: BGE Preface.

April 4: no class (make-up will be scheduled in consultation with the class).

April 9: BGE I: 1-11.

April 11 & 16: BGE I:12-23, also BGE II: 36. *Optional:* Maudemarie Clark, *Nietzsche on Truth and Philosophy* (Cambridge University Press, 1990), pp. 205-227; Brian Leiter, "Nietzsche's Theory of the Will," *Philosopher's Imprint* 7 (2007): 1-15, at:

<http://quod.lib.umich.edu/p/phimp/3521354.0007.007/1/--nietzsche-s-theory-of-the-will?view=image>

April 18: BGE II: 24-35.

April 23: BGE II: 37-44.

April 25: BGE III: 45-62

April 30: BGE IV: 63-185.

May 2: BGE V: 186-193

May 7: BGE V: 194-203

May 9: BGE VI: 204-214. *Optional:* Leiter, NOM, pp. 35-38, 63-81.

May 14: BGE VII: 214-230. *Optional:* Leiter, NOM, pp. 113-136.

May 16: BGE VII: 231-239. *Optional:* Maudemarie Clark, "Nietzsche's Misogyny," *International Studies in Philosophy* 26 (1994): 3-12. (I will provide students a copy of this article.)

May 21: BGE VIII: 240-256.

May 23: BGE IX: 257-260. *Optional:* Leiter, NOM, Chapter 3 and pp. 206-217.

May 28: BGE IX: 261-287. *Optional:* Leiter, NOM, pp. 115-125.

May 30: BGE IX: 288-296.

June 4: catch-up session (open for now).

Other recommend secondary sources:

Maudemarie Clark, *Nietzsche on Truth and Philosophy* (Cambridge, 1990). Seminal interpretation of Nietzsche's views on truth and knowledge; important for its careful defense of the claim that Nietzsche's views evolved significantly between the early 1870s and the *Genealogy* (1887). For some modifications of Clark's view, see her contribution to the Janaway volume, below.

Maudemarie Clark & David Dudrick, *The Soul of Nietzsche's Beyond Good and Evil* (Cambridge University Press, 2012). A book-length reading of the first chapter of BGE. Some interesting discussions of particular passages, but the overall interpretive framework is both anachronistic and implausible. It does raise some notable challenges to the interpretive framework in NOM.

Christopher Janaway (ed.), *Willing and Nothingness: Schopenhauer as Nietzsche's Educator* (Oxford, 1998). Considers Nietzsche in relation to Schopenhauer; essays by Janaway, Clark, and Leiter are most useful (the Leiter essay also appears in the Richardson & Leiter volume, below).

Brian Leiter, "Nietzsche's Moral and Political Philosophy," *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*: <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/nietzsche-moral-political/>. A short version of the main themes of the first half of NOM.

Brian Leiter & Neil Sinhababu (eds.), *Nietzsche and Morality* (Oxford, 2007). A more demanding set of essays exploring different aspects of Nietzsche's moral philosophy.

John Richardson, *Nietzsche's System* (Oxford, 1996). A systematic interpretation of Nietzsche's corpus as organized around an ontology based on

“will to power”; pursues, with greater clarity and philosophical sophistication, the style of interpretation that Deleuze and Heidegger introduced in their influential works.

John Richardson & Brian Leiter, *Nietzsche* (Oxford, 2001). A collection of previously published articles; of particular use in this course may be the essays by Clark, Foot, Gemes, Leiter, Nehamas, and Richardson.

Rudiger Safranski, *Nietzsche: A Philosophical Biography* (Norton, 2003). A readable biography, that also includes useful, albeit philosophically superficial, summaries of Nietzsche’s major works.

Richard Schacht, *Nietzsche* (Routledge, 1983). The best introductory overview of the Nietzschean corpus; careful and thorough, though not philosophically deep, and sometimes long-winded. Relies heavily on Nietzsche’s *Nachlass* (the notebooks unpublished at the time of his mental collapse) at many points in its interpretation.

Julian Young, *Nietzsche: A Philosophical Biography* (Cambridge, 2010). A much more detailed and philosophically ambitious biography than Safranski, but ultimately defends an idiosyncratic interpretive line of dubious merit.