

TOPICS IN MORAL, POLITICAL & LEGAL PHILOSOPHY: NIETZSCHE AND MORAL PSYCHOLOGY

Spring 2011

Michael Forster, Brian Leiter
University of Chicago
Room C, Law School
Tuesdays, 4-6:30 pm

Office: 203 Stuart (Forster); 425 Law School (Leiter)
Phone: 702-0953 (Leiter)
E-mail: mnforste@uchicago.edu; bleiter@uchicago.edu
Secretary: Ms. Wehrs (lrailand@uchicago.edu)

Description:

Moral psychology is a broad area of philosophical and empirical inquiry encompassing a range of issues in ethics, metaethics, philosophy of mind, and philosophy of action. Its questions include: (1) What is the nature of moral judgment and what are its (emotional? rational?) sources? (2) What role does moral judgment and motivation play in action? (3) What role does conscious reflection play in action? (4) Are agents morally responsible for what they do? If so, what must be true of their agency? Obviously Nietzsche has views on all these questions, and it will be our aim to try to understand his views and to assess, as much as possible, their plausibility. We will focus on questions (1) through (3), in particular, trying to get clear about the sources of moral motivation (in both action and judgment) and the character of the “will” on Nietzsche’s view. (The Spring 2012 seminar will focus on issues connected to [4], in both Nietzsche and contemporary philosophers.) We will spend the most time on Books I and II and parts of III and V of *Daybreak*, several chapters *Twilight of the Idols*, with briefer selections from Books IV and V of *The Gay Science*, and Chapters I and V of *Beyond Good and Evil*. Jesse Prinz’s *The Emotional Construction of Morals* (OUP, 2007), an empirically informed account of morals and moral judgment inspired by Hume and Nietzsche, will serve as our main contemporary interlocutor.

We will spend the first two weeks on the first four chapters (Part I) of Prinz’s book; Prinz will participate in the seminar on April 5 to discuss his views. We will then proceed largely, though not wholly, chronologically through the material from *Daybreak*, *The Gay Science*, *Beyond Good and Evil* and *Twilight*. In conjunction with the primary texts, there will also be secondary literature on Nietzsche and/or relevant psychological or philosophical literature by some or all of the following: R. Baumeister, M. Clark, J. Haidt, P. Katsafanas, B. Leiter, and D. Rosenthal, among others.

Grading:

Students must write a paper of about 15 pages, either on an interpretive issue, or a philosophical issue suggested by Nietzsche’s texts and related to moral psychology. The paper topic must be approved by the instructors.

Required texts:

Nietzsche, *Daybreak: Thoughts on the Prejudices of Morality*, trans. Hollingdale, ed. Clark & Leiter (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997).

The Portable Nietzsche, edited by Walter Kaufmann (Viking/Penguin, 1954) (hereafter PN).

Jesse Prinz, *The Emotional Construction of Morals* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007). There is a paperback edition.

Supplementary readings (primary and secondary) will be distributed by the instructors and/or provided for free download from the internet.

Translations of Nietzsche by Hollingdale, Kaufmann, or any of the CUP translators (e.g., Judith Norman) are quite acceptable.

Recommended texts:

Brian Leiter, *Nietzsche on Morality* (London: Routledge, 2002), esp. Chapters 1-4. This will be useful as background to the instructor's views on a range of interpretive issues, and will allow us not to spend too much classtime on this.

Christopher Janaway, *Beyond Selflessness* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), esp. Chapters 1, 3, 6-7. Purports to contest the "naturalist" reading of Nietzsche in Leiter and makes a number of interesting points about the role of "affective engagement" for Nietzsche.

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Brian Leiter, "Nietzsche's Naturalism Reconsidered," in *The Oxford Handbook of Nietzsche*, ed. K. Gemes & J. Richardson (Oxford, forthcoming 2011 or 2012). Available for free download at: http://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=1171285
Responds to some of Janaway's concerns, and refines the account of Nietzsche's naturalism about morality. *At a minimum, please read this paper before April 12.*

TENTATIVE SCHEDULE OF READINGS BY WEEK

Here is the tentative schedule of readings—we may yet add some more secondary readings, and will decide later in the quarter about what to do for May 17.

March 29: Prinz, *The Emotional Construction of Morals*, Chapter 1-3

April 5: Prinz, *The Emotional Construction of Morals*, Chapter 4 (Prinz will participate in this session)

April 12: (1) *Daybreak*, Preface; Book I: sections 1-40; Book II: 97-109; (2) Clark & Leiter, “Introduction” to CUP edition of *Daybreak*; (3) Haidt, “The Emotional Dog and Its Rational Tail”:

http://peezer.squarespace.com/storage/moral-reasoning/3_haidt.emotionaldog.pdf;

April 19: (1) *Daybreak*, Book II: 115-148; Book V: 462, 534-542, 552-553; (2) *The Gay Science*, Book IV: 335; Book V: 345, 354, 360, 373-374; (3) Katsafanas, “Nietzsche’s Philosophical Psychology,” forthcoming in *The Oxford Handbook of Nietzsche*.

April 26: (1) *Beyond Good and Evil*, Part I and Part V; (2) *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* (in PN), First Part: “On the Thousand and One Goals”; (3) Leiter, “Nietzsche’s Theory of the Will,” *Philosopher’s Imprint* (2007):

<http://quod.lib.umich.edu/cgi/t/text/text-idx?c=phimp;rgn=main;idno=3521354.0007.007>;

(4) optional: Clark & Dudrick, “Nietzsche on the Will: An Analysis of BGE 19,” in Gemes & May (eds.), *Nietzsche on Freedom and Autonomy* (OUP, 2009).

May 3: (1) *Twilight of the Idols*, “Morality as Anti-Nature,” “The Four Great Errors” and “The Improvers of Mankind”; (2) *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* (in PN), First Part: “On the Despisers of the Body” and “On the Pale Criminal”; (3) Baumeister & Masicampo, “Conscious Thought is for Facilitating Social and Cultural Interactions,” *Psychological Review*, pp. 1-4, available for download:

<http://www.psy.fsu.edu/~masicampo/BaumeisterMasicampo2010.pdf>; (4) Baumeister et al., “Do Conscious Thoughts Cause Behavior?” *Annual Review of Psychology* (2011): <http://www.carlson.umn.edu/assets/165663.pdf>

May 10: (1) *The Gay Science*, section 354 and *The Antichrist* (in PN), section 14; (2) Katsafanas, “Nietzsche’s Theory of Mind: Consciousness and Conceptualization,” *European Journal of Philosophy* (2005), downloadable from a U of C computer at: <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/j.0966-8373.2005.00220.x/full>; (3) Rosenthal, “Consciousness and Its Function,” *Neuropsychologica* (2008).

May 17: open for now, though Forster is likely to continue with the discussion of consciousness. But we’ll see where we are come May 10.

Recommended secondary literature:

M. Clark, *Nietzsche on Truth and Philosophy* (Cambridge, 1990). An influential account of the evolution of Nietzsche’s views on truth and knowledge; also contains important interpretations of will to power and the ascetic ideal—the former is particularly useful for purposes of this seminar.

J.M. Doris et al. (eds.), *The Moral Psychology Handbook* (Oxford University Press, 2010). Chapters 3, 4, and 11 are probably most relevant for this seminar

B. Leiter & N. Sinhababu (eds.), *Nietzsche and Morality* (Oxford University Press, 2007). Chapters 3 (Risse), 4 (Knobe & Leiter), and 5 (Wallace) are most relevant for our purposes. Chapter 7 (Hussain) is an important treatment of Nietzsche's metaethical views.

P. Poellner, *Nietzsche and Metaphysics* (Oxford, 1995). As I wrote in my review of this very fine book in *Mind*: "Poellner's study is less a book, than a collection of loosely related, often quite insightful short essays," many treating issues in his metaphysics and epistemology, but I also recommended "the lovely, brief analysis of the psychological state Nietzsche calls resentment (pp. 128-31; cf. pp. 253-4); the interesting critical discussion of Nietzsche and Freud on the 'unconscious' (pp. 216-22); or the useful treatment of Nietzsche's account of the Christian's 'self-deception', and Poellner's own provocative, if not wholly convincing, critique of this account (pp. 230-6, pp. 240-2)." Chapter V on "The Nature of 'Inner' Experience" is probably most useful for this seminar.

B. Reginster, *The Affirmation of Life: Nietzsche on Overcoming Nihilism* (Harvard, 2007). An intriguing *systematic* account of Nietzsche's philosophy as a whole, linking two "global" themes, the problem of nihilism and the doctrine of will to power. Elegant and esp. illuminating on Nietzsche's debt to Schopenhauer; not as sensitive, though, as one might like to the philosophical or psychological plausibility of the theses ascribed to Nietzsche.

J. Richardson, *Nietzsche's System* (Oxford, 1996). A powerful reconstruction of the Nietzschean corpus as organized around the doctrine of will to power—basically Heidegger's Nietzsche, but grounded in better scholarship and argument. I am skeptical that the robust version of the doctrine of will to power that Richardson attributes to Nietzsche is actually his view; for my doubts, see my review of Richardson's book, and Poellner's, in *Mind*, available via JSTOR: <http://www.jstor.org/view/00264423/di015162/01p00611/0>.

R. Schacht, *Nietzsche* (Routledge, 1983). Comprehensive and attentive to the texts, but does not tell as tightly constructed a systematic narrative about Nietzsche's philosophy as a whole as Reginster or Richardson--also not as philosophically sophisticated or dialectically probing. Still, Schacht's book is a valuable check on any interpretive hypothesis given Schacht's scrupulous attention to all parts of the corpus.