

Course Title: Nietzsche and His Progeny: Heidegger, Foucault, and Kittler

Course Code: PHI 95

Instructor Name and Bio: Josef Chytry

Josef Chytry is the author of *Cosmotheism: Cytherean Sitings between Heraclitus and Kittler*, *The Cytherean Cycle: Rhea Silvia, Paris Alexandros, Nausikaa*; and *The Aesthetic State: A Quest in Modern German Thought*. Chytry was an Alexander von Humboldt postdoctoral fellow in philosophy at the University of Tuebingen. He received a DPhil in politics and the history of ideas from the University of Oxford and a Master of International Affairs (MIA) from Columbia.

Class Sessions and Recording

Meeting days and times: 7:00-9:05pm Wednesdays, 5 October - 7 December 2022

No class on 23 November 2022

Meeting location: Zoom (details will be shared with registered students prior to first class meeting)

The class sessions will be recorded.

Course Features:

- Live session
 - Lecture, discussions, and Q&A
- Assignments & Coursework
 - Course materials posted in Canvas
 - Instructor will provide feedback on final essay

Course Summary

Friedrich Nietzsche is generally recognized as one of the more scandalous figures in the history of Western philosophy, certainly the most irascible. This course introduces the student to Nietzsche's body of work primarily as summed up in his master concepts of will to power, external recurrence of the same, and superman. It then traces the wide and convoluted history of his legacy primarily through three succeeding thinkers: **Martin Heidegger** for German thought and **Michel Foucault** for French thought followed by **Friedrich Kittler** for media theory. We will analyze Heidegger's attempts to absorb Nietzsche's will to power concept into his own metaphysics as a forgetfulness of Being, and his efforts to articulate a post-metaphysical thinking while wrestling with the problem of modern technology and technicity, fully recognizing Heidegger's problematic relationship to German National Socialism. Turning to Foucault, we shall compare his admiration for Heidegger's reading of Nietzsche and his own exploitation of the Nietzschean concept of genealogy to develop new and influential interpretations

of power and resistance, with his later efforts to outline a new aesthetics of existence. After a brief look at the impact of Nietzsche on **Jacques Derrida's** development of deconstruction, **Gilles Deleuze's** efforts to extrapolate Nietzsche's philosophy into an empiricism of pure intensities, and **Alain Badiou's** idiosyncratic reading of Deleuze as a Nietzschean philosopher of the One-All, we conclude with consideration of **Friedrich Kittler** as a distinctive twenty-first century continuator of the Nietzschean project both in his media analysis and in his attempt to formulate a new History of Being through Love.

**Please see course page for full description and additional details.*

Grade Options and Requirements

- No Grade Requested (NGR)
 - This is the default option. No work will be required; no credit shall be received; no proof of attendance can be provided.
- Credit/No Credit (CR/NC)
 - Students may receive CR (credit pass) for passing a final examination.
- Letter Grade (A, B, C, D, No Pass)
 - Students may receive Letter grade credit for passing a final examination and submitting a short essay successfully.

**Please Note: If you require proof that you completed a Continuing Studies course for any reason (for example, employer reimbursement), you must choose either the Letter Grade or Credit/No Credit option. Courses taken for NGR will not appear on official transcripts or grade reports.*

Textbooks/Required Materials

1. Friedrich Nietzsche, **Thus Spoke Zarathustra** (Penguin: R. J. Hollingdale translation), any edition
2. Friedrich Nietzsche, **Twilight of the Idols/The Antichrist** (Penguin: R. J. Hollingdale translation), any edition
3. Martin Heidegger, **Introduction to Metaphysics** (Yale University Press paperback, 2000)
4. Michel Foucault, **Discipline and Punish** (Vintage, 1995), any edition
5. Friedrich A. Kittler, **The Truth of the Technological World** (Stanford University Press, 2013)

These additional texts will be used by instructor

Heidegger, *Nietzsche*

Foucault, "Nietzsche, Genealogy, History"

Derrida, *Positions*

Deleuze (and Guattari), *What is Philosophy?*

Badiou, *Deleuze*

Please contact the Stanford Continuing Studies office with any questions
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Tentative Weekly Outline

Week 1: Introduction to Nietzsche and Nineteenth-Century European Intellectual History

October 5

Friedrich Nietzsche: *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*

The “crisis” mentality of twentieth-century civilization and scholarship. Broad overview of European history in the early modern to the modern period (1500-1900). The role of the rise of German culture and the German political state in the nineteenth century. German culture of the *Goethezeit* and German Idealism, mid-century positivism. The economic and political preconditions of German unification 1852-1870. Brief biography of Nietzsche and his reading of the philosophical and philological literature. Locating Friedrich Nietzsche in the cultural and ideological currents of the nineteenth century. Nietzsche’s career and the special place of *Thus spoke Zarathustra* in his thought.

Week 2: Nietzsche and Zarathustra

October 12

Friedrich Nietzsche: *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*

The nature of *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* as a form of narrative. Comparison with sacred and prophetic literature and its critique. The evolution of Nietzsche’s concepts of superman and the will to power. Comparison with rival theories of time, progress and eternal recurrence. Introduction to the Heideggerian reading of Nietzsche’s theory. The roles of Wagner and Schopenhauer in Nietzsche’s final prophetics in *Zarathustra*.

Week 3: Philosophizing with a Hammer

October 19

Friedrich Nietzsche: *Twilight of the Idols/The Antichrist*

The later Nietzsche: the nature of his final works in terms of his concept of the Dionysian against the Crucified. Discussion of Nietzsche’s idiosyncratic account of the history of philosophy and thought in *Twilight of the Idols*. Consideration of the Nietzsche-interpretations of Foucault and Deleuze. Nietzsche’s works of “breakdown”: *The Case of Wagner, Ecce Homo, The Antichrist*. Account of Nietzsche’s breakdown and treatment 1888-89. Discussion of Nietzsche’s final reading of his relation to Wagner and Wagnerianism. Nietzsche as an “autobiographer”: the strategies of self-aggrandizement. Nietzsche’s final version and critique of Christianity.

Week 4: Martin Heidegger and The Question of Being

October 26

Martin Heidegger: *An Introduction to Metaphysics* (selections)

Lecture on the philosophy of Heidegger and its relation to predominant trends in German and European thought: Kant, German Idealism, Phenomenology, Lebensphilosophie. Basic outline of Heidegger’s project of Being and Time (1925-27)

and its problems. The overall problematics of a “turn” (*Kehre*) in Heideggerian thinkings and its possible relation to cultural and political issues of Weimar and Nazi Germany. The meaning of Being from a grammatical perspective. The history of Being and its four stages of meaning. Heidegger’s relation to German National Socialism during 1933-1934 and later implications.

Week 5: Heidegger’s Nietzsche

November 2

Martin Heidegger: *Nietzsche* (selections)

Heidegger’s reading of Nietzsche in the 1936-1940 lectures. Factors leading to Heidegger’s postwar essay “Letter on Humanism.” Discussion of Heidegger’s critique of the Western tradition of metaphysics and humanism and his alternative of a new attentiveness toward being. Considerations of the influence of Eastern thought (Taoism) on his formulations. Brief introduction to the growing importance of technicity and technology for the later Heidegger. Comparison of the 1938 and 1954 essays on technicity. Discussion of the significance of *Ge-stell* or En-framing for the later Heidegger. The relation of technicity to the theme of forgetfulness of Being: philosophy and “cybernetics.” Heideggerian thought and the emergence of a “network society.”

Week 6: Foucault’s Critique of Reason

November 9

Michel Foucault: “Nietzsche, Genealogy, History”

Introductory lecture on the state of European and French thought in the twentieth century: Bergson, Existentialist thought (Sartre, Camus, Merleau-Ponty), Marxism and the influence of Nietzsche, Husserl and Heidegger. Overall account of Foucault’s career and works. The roles of psychiatric thought, Freud, Lacan and the subject. The influence of linguistics, Saussure and Lévi-Strauss: structuralism. Discussion of the projects of philosophy and the history of systems of thought: the theme of domination and power in a post-structuralist setting. The use of history to elucidate the themes of spatial exclusion and cultural integration. Discussion of the concepts of insanity, madness and folly in Western cultural experience. Consideration of distinctions between reason and unreason; the meaning of passion and delirium. Heidegger’s Nietzsche in Foucault’s project. Foucault and the notion of a genealogy of morals.

Week 7: The Carceral Archipelago

November 16

Michel Foucault: *Discipline and Punish*

Foucault’s turn toward the analysis of modern social practices and the function of punishment and incarceration in its articulation. From the repressive hypothesis to the discussion of the meaning of bio-power. Modernity and normalization. Discussion of the implications of the panopticon. The role of institutional practices in the normalization of bodies. Implications of the thesis of a carceral archipelago diffusing penitentiary techniques throughout disciplines. Brief account of the later Foucault (1977-1984): his relation to hermeneutics, Critical Theory and Deconstruction. The task of a history of sexuality and its relevance to Foucault’s prior work. Foucault’s

relationship to politics, New Age thought, and his experiences as a gay thinker in California. Foucault's death and the status of his project at the time of his death: *The Use of Pleasure*, *The Care of the Self* (1984), and *Confessions of the Flesh* (2018).

NO CLASS: November 23

Week 8: Derrida, Deleuze, Badiou

November 30

Jacques Derrida: *Positions*; Gilles Deleuze: *What is Philosophy?*; Alain Badiou, *Deleuze*
Brief account of Jacques Derrida and the convergence of his work in 1967. Critique of Western philosophy and the privileging of logos and denigration of writing. Deconstruction as a strategy of unraveling logocentrism. Gilles Deleuze and Foucault. Deleuze's works with Felix Guattari: *Anti-Oedipus* and *A Thousand Plateaus*. Desire and psychoanalysis. Philosophy as the invention of concepts. Reading Deleuze's efforts to extrapolate Nietzsche's philosophy into an empiricism of pure intensities: desire, multiplicity, and the fold. A brief consideration of Alain Badiou's idiosyncratic reading of Deleuze as philosopher of the One-All. Concluding thoughts.

Week 9: From Literature to Media; Music and Mathematics

December 7

Friedrich Kittler: *The Truth of the Technological World*

Kittler's career from literary studies to media studies: *Discourse Networks 1800/1900* to *Gramophone, Film Typewriter*. Beyond Marshall McLuhan. Investigating the power elements in digital culture and the role of military history. Strategy and communication. Kittler's relation to Nietzsche and Heidegger: an alternate History of Being. Kittler's grand project of a new History of Being in his envisaged eight-volume work. The results in *Aphrodite* and *Eros*. Kittler's anti-Platonist reading of the history of the origins of philosophy in the voice of the sirens and "love." Implications for an understanding of the evolution of mathesis/mathematics and science. Alan Turing as a partial return to the early Greeks. Overall reflections on Kittler's project.

Overview of course themes and the viability of Nietzschean thinking and perspectives in the early twenty-first century.