

Dr. Benjamin Huff  
benjaminhuff@rmc.edu

office: 240 Copley, x7216  
office hours: Mon-Thur 2:30-3:30pm  
or by appointment

### **Phil 370—19th Century Philosophy**

The 19th century saw dramatic changes in the way people lived: industrialization, separation of church and state, and the advance of democracy into the heart of Europe, to name a few. These new ways of life demanded new ways of thinking. The complex of ideas and phenomena known as “modern” that had taken shape during the Enlightenment era made dramatic advances during the 19th century, but it also provoked a “post-modern” response. In this course, we will read and discuss a selection of works by major philosophers of the 19th century, including Hegel, Feuerbach, Marx, Kierkegaard, and Nietzsche. Though much has changed in the past 100 years or so, we will find that in many ways their thinking has only become more relevant as both “modernity” and “post-modernity” have rapidly progressed. Our authors and texts will lead us to deeply re-examine the relationship of reason to passion, the ethics of Christianity and of the industrial economy, and the challenge of religious faith in an age of science, newspapers, and the internet, among other themes.

#### **Course Texts**

Forrest Baird, ed. *Philosophic Classics vol. IV: Nineteenth-Century Philosophy, 3rd edition*. Prentice-Hall, 2002.

Nietzsche, *The Gay Science*, trans. Kaufmann. Vintage Books, 1974.

Nietzsche, *On the Genealogy of Morals*, trans. Kaufmann. Vintage Books, 1989.

other readings to be handed out in class

Please bring with you the relevant texts for each day’s class. While other editions of these works exist, I highly recommend using these editions to make it easier for us to work together as a class (same pagination, terms translated in the same way, etc.), as well as because they are excellent editions. Unless you can freely draw pictures and diagrams in the margins, and have them stay there, an electronic version is not good enough. Buy the paper book!

#### **Assignments**

Students will be expected to read carefully and will be graded on class participation, three shorter papers (about 5 pages), one longer paper (10-12 pages), a midterm and a final exam.

*Reading and Participation:* Read the material listed for each meeting carefully before class. The reading assignments are not especially long, but they are dense. You should plan to spend about an hour and a half reading for each class meeting. You will need to read most of our texts more than once to understand them well. Read with a pencil or pen in your hand, to mark passages you find interesting, puzzling, or remarkable. Plan to bring up in class passages and ideas you found noteworthy in the reading. Bring questions and comments that show you have given the texts careful thought. These texts are very colorful and provocative and will fuel plenty

of lively discussion. We will also need to process and reflect on them in discussion to fully come to grips with what they are saying. Come prepared, and enjoy the debate!

Because you are formulating your own paper topics, I encourage you to start thinking about topics you might like to write on from the very start of the course. Each day as you read for class, and as we discuss the readings, be thinking about which of the ideas we touch on might make an interesting topic for a paper, and feel free to run topics by me as they occur to you. You don't have to wait until the listed deadlines to formulate a paper topic, or turn in a paper! The idea is for you to use the assignments to explore the topics that appeal to you, so strike while the iron is hot!

*Papers*—You will be selecting the topics for your papers. You should begin thinking about the topics of your papers right away, as we read and discuss the texts, making notes of ideas and passages you may want to write about. For each paper you will turn in a typed paragraph describing your proposed paper topic, no later than one week in advance of the due date for a short paper, and earlier in the case of the long paper. Your topics and papers should strongly engage the course texts. Do not simply choose a topic you are interested in, in general, and then look for some connection with the text. Rather, think of your paper as an opportunity to engage the philosophers we read in conversation. As you read thoughtfully, you will find the course texts provoke a response in you on a wide range of rich and important topics. Use your papers as an opportunity to develop these responses. Because they allow you to develop your thoughts in depth, papers are some of the most academically important and intellectually rewarding portions of your experience in the course.

In particular, papers should engage both the *claims* and the *reasoning* of the course texts, and present *reasoning of your own* in support of a *clear and specific thesis*. Your topic description should make it clear how the paper will meet the criteria just mentioned. I may require a student to meet with me before approving the paper topic. Paper topics are due *by 5pm* on the due dates listed on the course syllabus and may be submitted either electronically or in hard copy. I will not accept a paper unless the topic has been approved in advance. If the topic is submitted late or does not show a serious effort, I may penalize the paper one grade step (e.g. B to B-), or two steps in case of both problems.

You are welcome to turn in paper topics and papers before the listed deadlines. I encourage you to identify topics and work on them earlier where this is feasible.

Your longer (10-12pp) paper may incorporate and build upon one of your shorter papers, if you like. If you encounter a topic that you would like to write on for longer (15-17pp), you may combine your work on two shorter papers (or, with prior permission, turn it in in stages).

Formulating your paper topic represents a substantial portion of the work of writing a good paper, usually around 25-30% of the total. Start with a basic idea of the topic you are interested in, then review the relevant texts and make notes on what you have to say. You should already have a reasonably detailed sketch of how the paper will develop by the time you are turning in your paper topic. If you are concerned about whether I will approve your topic, you may run it by me informally in advance, but don't wait to get started!

*Tests*—There will be a midterm and a final exam. These will involve short-answer and essay questions to test your knowledge and understanding of course texts, and your ability to critically engage with them. I will give you further information on these, including review sheets, as the semester progresses. The best way to prepare for tests is to read actively, and participate thoughtfully in class discussion, throughout the semester.

## **Grade breakdown**

<i>Assignment</i>	<i>% of grade</i>
class participation	12%
3 short papers (about 5pp each)	36% (12% each)
1 long paper (10-12pp)	20%
1 midterm exam	12%
final exam	20%

## **Communicating with me**

The best times to communicate with me are during, before and after class, and at my office hours. You are welcome to come by my office hours to discuss ideas and texts further, or take up topics we did not have time to get to address in class. At a small college like this, you should plan to communicate with me in person for the most part, and to some extent by phone. Email is a wonderful technology, which we will use often for simple communications. Please do check your email regularly. You are welcome to email me with questions that can be answered simply. I will usually respond within 24 hours, not counting weekends. For more complex matters, however, it will usually be much more effective to speak in person. These may include questions about the ideas in the course, about the meaning of particular passages, or ideas you have for your papers. You may email me about these, but do not be surprised if I give only a limited response by email, and invite you to come to my office for more.

I am happy to read drafts of papers if you bring a copy so we can discuss it in person. I will answer specific questions about papers by email, but I normally will not read entire drafts unless you are present.

## **Academic Integrity**

You, your classmates and I will be investing a substantial amount of work, thought, and energy into this course. There are few things more valuable than learning, and we are embarked on a process of learning together. Plagiarism or any other violation of academic integrity is a serious breach of your classmates' and my trust. It undermines our common project, the purposes of the course, and the point of education. Properly cite the sources of all ideas and language that are drawn from someone else. If you are tempted to plagiarize, you need to rethink why you are in college. If you are in a bind, have the self-respect to turn in weak work rather than work that is not your own. If you turn in work that is not your own, you will probably fail the course. It is your responsibility to understand the College's Code of Academic Integrity and to follow it. If you have any questions about how the Code applies to your work in this course, ask me.

## Reading and Assignment Schedule\*

(subject to revision)

Sep	T 7	Introduction—An Age of Revolution	
	H 9	Bentham, <i>Principles of Morals and Legislation</i> Wollstonecraft, <i>A Vindication of the Rights of Woman</i> J.S. Mill, <i>The Subjection of Women</i>	
	T 14	Fichte, <i>Foundation of Our Belief</i> , and <i>Vocation of Man</i>	
	H 16	Hegel, “Master and Servant,” “Who Thinks Abstractly?” <i>Reason in History</i> I-II	
	T 21	Hegel, <i>Reason in History</i> III.1-2	<i>paper topic 1</i>
	H 23	Hegel, <i>Reason in History</i> III.3, “The Final Result”	
	T 28	Comte, “Nature and Importance of the Positive Philosophy” Feuerbach, <i>The Essence of Christianity</i>	<i>paper 1 due</i>
	H 30	Adam Smith, <i>Wealth of Nations</i> , selections (handout) Marx, “Alienated Labor”	
Oct	T 5	Marx, “Private Property and Communism” <i>Manifesto of the Communist Party</i>	
	H 7	James, <i>Pragmatism</i> I, II	
	T 12	James, <i>Pragmatism</i> (to end)	<i>paper topic 2</i>
	H 14	—midterm exam—	<i>midterm exam</i>
		<i>Fall Break</i>	
	H 21	Kierkegaard, <i>Fear and Trembling</i> sel. (handout) <i>Concluding Unscientific Postscript</i> , I.2 sel.	
	T 26	Kierkegaard, <i>Concluding Unscientific Postscript</i> , II.2 sel.	<i>paper 2 due</i>
	H 28	Kierkegaard, <i>Either/Or</i> (selections—handout, pp37-62)	
Nov	T 2	Kierkegaard, <i>Either/Or</i> (selections—handout, pp62-end)	
	H 4	Nietzsche, <i>Beyond Good and Evil</i> (selections—handout)	
	T 9	Nietzsche <i>The Gay Science</i> IV (selections)	
	H 11	Nietzsche, <i>On the Genealogy of Morals (GM)</i> Preface, I.1-11	<i>paper topic 3</i>
	T 16	Nietzsche, <i>GM</i> I.12-II.7	
	H 18	Nietzsche, <i>GM</i> II.8-25	<i>paper 3 due</i>
	T 23	Nietzsche, <i>GM</i> III.1-12	
		<i>Thanksgiving Break</i>	
	T 30	Nietzsche, <i>GM</i> III.13-22	<i>paper topic 4</i>
	H 2	Nietzsche, <i>GM</i> III.23-end	
Dec	T 7	Nietzsche, <i>Thus Spake Zarathustra</i> (selections—handout) <i>The Gay Science</i> V (selections)	
	H 6	Review & reflection	<i>paper 4 due</i>
		<i>Final Exam</i> Tuesday 11 December, 8:30-11:30am	

\*Readings listed through Oct. 26th are from *Philosophic Classics*, vol. IV, except for handouts.