

THE CONTENT OF THIS DESCRIPTION IS NOT A LEARNING CONTRACT AND THE INSTRUCTOR IS NOT BOUND TO IT. IT IS OFFERED IN GOOD FAITH AND INTENDED AS A HELPFUL GUIDE TO THE STUDENT. THE OFFICIAL COURSE SYLLABUS WILL BE PROVIDED AT THE FIRST CLASS.

TITLE: God, History and Human Nature in the 19th Century

TERM: S **YEAR:** 20121 [January to April 2012]

PROFESSOR: Dr. Sean Mulrooney

REGISTRATION: LIMITED TO 14

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

In the 17th century, the thinkers of the Scientific Revolution were looking for explanations of the physical world that were valid everywhere and for all time. In the 18th century, Enlightenment thinkers were also looking for universally valid explanations—not for the physical world, but for human nature, morality and society. That all changed in the 19th century when thinkers realized that the contingency and mutability of existence make once-and-for-all answers impossible. Come find out how Hegel, Kierkegaard, Marx, Darwin, Nietzsche and Freud changed the way we look at the world forever. We will consider the thinkers’ ideas both in their historical context and in light of their implications for our own thinking about human nature, society, history, morality and God. Lectures, discussions, on-line questions. Two 6-8 page papers; class participation; on-line questions; final exam.

CLASS OBJECTIVES:

(A) IN RESPECT OF GENERAL ACADEMIC SKILLS

1. Students will learn how to discuss philosophical positions with which they may disagree.
2. Students will learn how to find and evaluate philosophical arguments.
3. Students will learn how to write a philosophy essay.

(B) IN RESPECT OF THE UNDERSTANDING OF THE CONTENT OF ONE OR MORE THEOLOGICAL DISCIPLINES

1. Students will be able to describe and evaluate Kierkegaard’s arguments that the subjective approach to God is more valuable than the objective approach.
2. Students will be able to describe and evaluate Darwin’s argument that species evolve from one another rather than being separately created by God.
3. Students will be able to describe and evaluate the atheistic arguments of Marx, Nietzsche and Freud.

(C) IN RESPECT OF PERSONAL AND SPIRITUAL FORMATION

1. Students will be invited to reflect on the relations between their faith and scientific & philosophical challenges to their faith.

(D) IN RESPECT OF MINISTERIAL AND PUBLIC LEADERSHIP

1. Students will become conversant with some of the main challenges that the secular world has to the Christian faith.

PREREQUISITES: None.

REQUIRED TEXTS: A course reader that includes

Hegel: selections from the *Phenomenology of Spirit* and the *Philosophy of History*.

Kierkegaard: selections from *Concluding Unscientific Postscript* and *Fear and Trembling*.

Marx: *The Communist Manifesto* and selections from *Philosophical Manuscripts of 1844*.

Darwin: Selections from *The Origin of Species* and *The Descent of Man*.

Nietzsche: Selections from *Beyond Good and Evil* and *The Genealogy of Morals*.

Freud: *5 Lectures on Psychoanalysis* and selections from *Civilization and its Discontents*.

POSSIBLE ASSIGNMENTS/PRESENTATIONS/TESTS:

Weekly Internet questions: 12.5%

Class Participation: 12.5%

2,000 word essay on a single philosopher: 25%

2,000 word essay on the connection between a philosopher and contemporary culture: 25%

Final exam: 25%

ABRIDGED BIBLIOGRAPHY:

Darwin, Charles. *The Origin of Species*. Ed. John Burrow. Harmondsworth and New York: Penguin Books, 1984.

Darwin, Charles. *The Descent of Man and Selection in Relation to Sex*. 2nd ed. London and New York: Penguin Books, 2004.

Freud, Sigmund. *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*. 24 vols. Trans. James Strachey. London: The Hogarth Press, 1953-74.

Hegel, Georg. *Phenomenology of Spirit*. Trans. A. V. Miller. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977.

Kierkegaard, Soren. *A Kierkegaard Anthology*. Ed. Robert Bretall. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1946.

Marx, Karl. *The Marx-Engels Reader*, 2nd edition. Ed. Robert Tucker. New York and London: Norton and Company, 1978.

Nietzsche, Friedrich. *Beyond Good and Evil*. Trans. Walter Kaufmann. New York: Vintage Books, 1989.

Nietzsche, Friedrich. *On the Genealogy of Morals and Ecce Homo*. Trans. Walter Kaufmann New York: Vintage Books, 1967.