



## *Nietzsche & Asian Philosophy*

### *Fall 2008 Syllabus*

Philosophy 494  
Sec 001  
CRN 14150  
MW 3:00-4:15 PM  
Edith Kanaka'ole Hall 111

Dr. Timothy J. Freeman  
The University of Hawaii at Hilo  
office: Old Gym #2  
office: 756-7066; cell: 345-5231  
[freeman@hawaii.edu](mailto:freeman@hawaii.edu)

*Office Hours: MWF 11:00-11:50 and MW 2:00-2:50 or by appointment*

### CATALOG COURSE DESCRIPTION

#### PHIL 494 (WI): Nietzsche & Asian Philosophy

Philosophy of Friedrich Nietzsche with comparisons to themes in Asian Philosophy. Topics: Nietzsche's 'philosophy of the future,' perspectivism, the death of God and the crisis of modernity, the problem of morality, art as the countermovement to nihilism, the relationship between man and nature, self-overcoming and enlightenment. Pre: Senior standing and consent of the instructor.

### REQUIRED TEXTS

*Basic Writings of Nietzsche*. Translated and Edited by Walter Kaufmann. New York: The Modern Library, 2000.

Nietzsche, Friedrich. *The Gay Science*. Translated by Walter Kaufmann. New York: Vintage Books, 1974.

Nietzsche, Friedrich. *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*. Translated by Graham Parkes. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005.

Nietzsche, Friedrich. *Twilight of the Idols*. Translated by Duncan Large. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998.

Solomon, Robert C. *Living with Nietzsche*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003.

**SUPPLEMENTAL TEXTS (OPTIONAL)**

Ridley, Aaron. *Routledge Philosophy Guidebook to Nietzsche on Art*. London and New York: Routledge, 2007

*The Fundamental Wisdom of the Middle Way: Nāgārjuna's Mūlamādhyamakakārikā*. Translated by Jay L. Garfield. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995.

*Zhuangzi: Basic Writings*. Translated by Burton Watson. New York: Columbia University Press, 2003.

**COURSE AIMS & CONTENT**

This course will focus on an examination of the philosophy of Friedrich Nietzsche while also considering comparisons to themes in Asian philosophy. Nietzsche's philosophy has been both highly controversial as well as quite influential, lending itself to multiple interpretations which have had a profound impact on diverse streams of thought within European philosophy. Nietzsche's writings greatly influenced such thinkers as Freud, Jung, Sartre, Heidegger, Foucault and Derrida, proving seminal to the development of Psychoanalysis, and such philosophical movements as Existentialism, Post-Structuralism, and Deconstruction in 20<sup>th</sup> century Continental thought. The primary aim of the course will be to provide an understanding of just why Nietzsche's philosophy has been so influential and controversial. The course will thus focus on developing an understanding of such themes as Nietzsche's critique of traditional philosophy, his conception of the relationship between philosophy and art, the relationship between philosophy and psychology, his 'perspectivism,' his reflections on the genealogy of morality, and his attempt at overcoming nihilism and the crisis of modernity.

Nietzsche's critique of traditional Western philosophy and his tentative exploration of a 'philosophy of the future' have drawn some interesting comparisons to Asian philosophy. Nietzsche's acceptance of the dynamically changing world that appears to the senses, and his rejection of Plato's quest for an unchanging 'true' world of Being which lies beyond the changing world of appearance, have drawn some obvious comparisons to the acceptance of change or impermanence in both Daoism and Buddhism. Nietzsche's insistence on understanding the soul as rooted in the body, and the human being as part of the natural world, also invites comparisons to Daoist thought where there is no split between spirit and nature such as has marked much of Western philosophy. Nietzsche found an affinity with the Buddhist emphasis on psychology, but ultimately had a quite pessimistic understanding of Buddhism, finding in it only another philosophy of nihilism. It is interesting to reflect on how Nietzsche's understanding of Buddhism might have been different had he been more aware of Mahāyāna Buddhism, especially the Mahāyāna notion of the *bodhisattva* and the doctrine of *sūnyatā* or *emptiness*. Since both Nietzsche's philosophy and this Mahāyāna teaching of *sūnyatā* have often been understood as nihilistic, it is interesting to reflect on what Nietzsche might have thought of Nāgārjuna's explanation of *sūnyatā*, in which the nihilistic interpretation is rejected, as well as what he might have thought of Nāgārjuna's argument that there is fundamentally no difference between *samsāra* and *nirvāna*. As this view has led to an understanding of enlightenment as simply another way of being here in the present moment rather than as an escape from *samsāra* and thus a denial of life, it invites a comparison with Nietzsche's notion of self-overcoming and the overcoming of nihilism. The aim of this comparative study is certainly not to find an identity between Nietzsche's thought and the philosophies of Daoism and Buddhism, but rather to reflect on both the resonances and dissonances between these philosophies, as well as their relevance to the world today.

## COURSE FORMAT

Classroom sessions will be both lecture and discussion with emphasis on informal lecture. There will also be an occasional slide show/multimedia presentation and films.

## GRADING POLICY

This course is designated as Writing Intensive (WI) satisfying the degree requirements for Writing Intensive courses. The final grade will be based primarily on a 10-15 page term paper which is due at the end of the course at the time scheduled for the final exam. A draft of the term paper must be submitted by the beginning of week 14 (Nov. 24). There will also be three 3-4 page short responses to the reading material.

1. (30% ) Three take-home writing responses
2. (70 %) Term Paper.

### Grading will be determined according to the following scale:

A	95-100 Excellent	C+	77-79
A-	90-94	C	74-76 Satisfactory
B+	87-89	C-	70-73
B	84-86 Good	D	60-70 Poor
B-	80-83	F	0-59 Failure

## CLASSROOM POLICIES

*All students are expected to come to class on time and to bring their books as well as paper and pen suitable for taking notes of class lectures. Active cellular telephones or paging devices are not permitted in class. No consumption of food is allowed during the class period.*

## ADVISING STATEMENT

*Advising is a very important resource designed to help students complete the requirements of the University and their individual majors. Students should consult with their advisor at least once a semester to decide on courses, check progress towards graduation, and discuss career options and other educational opportunities provided by UH-Hilo. Advising is a shared responsibility, but students have final responsibility for meeting degree requirements.*

## SPECIAL NEEDS

*Any student with a documented disability who would like to request accommodations should contact the University Disability Services Office - Hale Kauano'e A Wing Lounge, 933-0816 (V), 933-3334 (TTY), shirachi@hawaii.edu - as early in the semester as possible.*

## STUDENT CONDUCT CODE

All students are expected to adhere to the Student Conduct Code as explained on pages 65-66 of the 2004-05 UH Hilo Undergraduate Catalogue.

**1 Introduction**

M 08/25 Course Introduction & Orientation: Why Nietzsche?

W 08/27 Nietzsche & Asian Philosophy

**2 Background**

M 09/1 \*Holiday: Labor Day\*

W 09/3 *From Kant to Schopenhauer*

**3 The Preview: *The Birth of Tragedy* and other early writings**

M 09/08 *The Birth of Tragedy* (Sections 1-7)

W 09/10 *The Birth of Tragedy* (Sections 8-15; 24 & 25)  
Selections from the notebooks of the early 1870's

\*\*Sept. 14: Last Day to Drop Classes without a "W"\*\*

**4 A Turning Point: *Human, All Too Human* and *Daybreak***

M 09/15 Selections from *Human, All Too Human*

W 09/17 Selections from *Daybreak*

**5 A New Kind of Science: *The Joyful Science***

M 09/22 Selections from *The Gay Science* (Preface, Books 1 & 2)

W 09/24 Selections from *The Gay Science* (Books 3 & 4)

**6 Philosophy as Art: *Thus Spoke Zarathustra***

M 09/29 *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* (The Prologue, Book One)

W 10/01 *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* (Book Two)

**7 Philosophy as Art: *Thus Spoke Zarathustra***

M 10/06 *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* (Book Three)

W 10/08 *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* (Book Four)

- 8**      ***Prelude to a Philosophy of the Future***  
M 10/13      Selections from *Beyond Good and Evil*  
W 10/15      Selections from *Beyond Good and Evil*

\*\* Oct. 17: Last Day to Withdraw from Courses with "W" \*\*

- 9**      ***Prelude to a Philosophy of the Future***  
M 10/20      Selections from *Beyond Good and Evil*  
W 10/22      Selections from *The Gay Science* (Book Five)

- 10**      **A Critique of Morality: *On the Genealogy of Morals***  
M 10/27      Preface  
W 10/29      The Origin of 'Good' and 'Evil' (First Essay)

- 11**      **A Critique of Morality: *On the Genealogy of Morals***  
M 11/03      Bad Conscience (Second Essay)  
W 11/05      The Meaning of Ascetic Ideals (Third Essay)

- 12**      **1888: The Shattering Climax**  
M 11/10      Selections from *Twilight of the Idols*  
W 11/12      Selections from *Twilight of the Idols*

- 13**      **1888: The Shattering Climax**  
M 11/17      Selections from *The Antichrist*  
W 11/19      Selections from *Ecce Homo*

- 14**      ***Reflections on Nietzsche & Daoism***  
M 11/24      Selections from the *Daodejing*  
W 11/26      Selections from the *Zhuangzi*

**15**      ***Reflections on Nietzsche & Buddhism***

M 12/01      The Problem of Suffering: Selections from *The Pali Canon*

W 12/03      Mahāyāna Buddhism: The Bodhisattva and the Doctrine of Emptiness

**16**      **Conclusions**

M 12/08      Film: *Waking Life*

W 12/10      Film: *Waking Life*

W 12/17      **\*\*Final Exam\*\*** (2:00–4:00 PM)

**\*Final Term Paper Due\***

**\*\*schedule is subject to revision\*\***