Overview:
In this course we will take a careful look at three of the most influential modern philosophers: G.W.F. Hegel, Karl Marx, and Friedrich Nietzsche. I have selected these three particular thinkers not only because they exert the greatest influence on the modern era in philosophy but, additionally, because through them we may also better grasp the dominant philosophical trends of this era, namely, metaphysics, politics, and morality. With Hegel we will confront a radical take on the metaphysics of substance. With Marx we will apply the radicality of this kind of thinking to our economic, social, and political institutions. Finally, we will look to Nietzsche to radicalize our thinking about the meaning, value, and purpose of human existence. It is a shame that we cannot systematically work our way through the many other figures populating this era. However, in order to remind and convey the point that Philosophy never occurs in a vacuum, we will ground our pursuit of these thinkers by first reviewing the Aristotelian and Spinozistic heritage anchoring so many of their central claims.

Our aim, as with any upper-level Philosophy course, will be to comprehend these thinkers so as to think on and beyond their central claims. This means that this course will involve a healthy amount of discussion and conversation, and furthermore that you will be asked in many of your written assignments to apply and/or critique various aspects of their thinking to our contemporary world.

Requirements:
Prior to each class, you are asked to read the material well. This means, in large part, that you will need to read it several times and with considerable care. My own advice would be to read it once early in the week, straight through, and without stopping to try to piece difficult concepts together or even to understand new and/or difficult terms. Your aim in this reading is only to familiarize yourself with the structural themes and dominant claims. Let this sit for a day or two. Then dedicate a greater portion of time to a slow and systematic reading. Here you will try to best understand difficult passages, make notes in your text, jot down some notes etc. The following day or so, go back and read it again – this time maintaining a balance between your first straight-through reading and your second substantive read. Your goal this time around is to bring the broad structure into alignment with specific passages and claims. Through this third reading your comprehension and questions should begin to gel. Now is the time to reflect a bit on it, reading certain passages again, and to then compose your brief summary. Following your summary, you will raise two to three specific and critical questions about the reading. You will submit a summary for each week of the course where there is assigned reading, except the week where you are presenting on an article. Your summaries should be no shorter than 1 single-spaced page and no longer than 1 ½. Each is worth 10 points, and your ten best will determine your percentage for this portion of your final grade. (I will post a rubric in D2L explaining what the different scores mean.)

You will also be asked to select one week of the course where you will work with another classmate to provide a brief presentation on the assigned article for that week. In this assignment I am looking to see only that you can adequately and helpfully summarize the article for your classmates. Your aim is to introduce them to some of the scholarship and scholarly questions of the reading, which the articles will
provide. You and your partner will have 5-10 minutes to present your work, with a few minutes for questions to follow. Your grade will be based on how well you understand and convey the important information from the article. This means that you will be graded both on the depth of your comprehension and the skill with which you present it to your audience.

You are also asked to prepare a 5-10 minute presentation our last two weeks of class. This presentation will take one feature of one of our thinkers, identify its application in our contemporary world, and use this to offer an opinion on whether Philosophy is a worldly or non-worldly pursuit.

Finally, we will have a take-home midterm and final exam, which you will submit to our Dropbox folders.

**Grade Breakdown:**

- Weekly summary and Question papers 30%
- Article Presentation 10%
- Philosophy Made Worldly Presentation 10%
- Midterm Exam 20%
- Final Exam 30%

**Policies:**

Missed classes, late assignments, participation, rudeness etc.

Lastly, students with a documented disability who need accommodations must contact the Disability Services Office at 465-2841. Reasonable accommodations can be made unless they alter the essential components of the class. Contact the instructor and Disability Services Coordinator in a timely manner to formulate alternative arrangements.

**Texts:**


**Schedule:**

**September 3:** Frederick Beiser: The Enlightenment and Idealism (D2L)

**September 10:** Aristotle, *Physics* II.1-3 & II.7-8 (D2L)

**September 17:** Spinoza, *Ethics* I to proposition 15 and *Ethics* II to proposition 7 (D2L)
- Ignore proofs, corollaries, and scholia (except scholium to EIIp7), but read everything else.

**September 24:** Hegel's Preface to the *Phenomenology of Spirit*, pages 63-95 (though 82-95 is largely background), Philosophy as a Science
- Introduction: Hegel and the Problem of Metaphysics, Beiser
October 1: Hegel's Preface to the *Phenomenology of Spirit*, pages 95-134, The Idea of a Phenomenology of Spirit
- Beiser: “Hegel's Historicism”

October 8: Hegel's Preface to the *Phenomenology of Spirit*, pages 134-166, Truth
- Forster: “Hegel's Dialectical Method”

October 15: Karl Marx: Marx on the History of His Opinions (3-6), Discovering Hegel (7-8), To Make the World Philosophical (9-11)
- *Marx-Engels Reader* (MER) introduction xix – xxxviii (recommended as solid background)
- Wood: “Hegel and Marxism”

October 22: Estranged Labour (70-81)
- Carver “Reading Marx: Life and Works” (skim)

October 29: *Theses on Feuerbach* (143-146); *The German Ideology* 147-bottom of 160, 163-bottom of 165 & 176-186.
- Ball: “History: Critique and Irony”

November 5: *Manifesto of the Communist Party* MER 473-493 & 499-500)
- Thomas: Critical Reception: Marx then and now

- Class exercise on aphorisms in Prelude: 1-4, 14, 16, 21, 23, 46-47 & 54
- Hollingdale: “The Hero as Outsider” (skim)

November 19: *On the Genealogy of Morals*, First Treatise: “Good and Evil,” “Good and Bad” (1-10, 13 & 16) and Second Treatise: “Guilt,” “Bad Conscience,” and Related matters (1-6)
- Schacht, “Nietzsche’s Kind of Philosophy”

- Clark, “Nietzsche’s Immoralism and the Concept of Morality” (from *Nietzsche, Genealogy, Morality*)

December 3: Catch-up, Review and Presentations

December 10: Presentations and Exam

**Final Exam** due to Dropbox Tuesday, December 17, by midnight