

**ETH230H1, Morality in Cross-Cultural Perspective:
Nietzsche's *On the Genealogy of Morality* in Historical Context**

Time and day: Thursdays, 3 – 5 PM

Location: Gerald Larkin Building (15 Devonshire Place), room 341

Instructor: Rachel Cristy (“Dr. Cristy,” not “Professor”; I’m a postdoctoral fellow)

Office: Gerald Larkin Building, room 243 (in the Centre for Ethics)

Office hours: Wednesdays and Fridays, 2 – 4 PM

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Course description

Friedrich Nietzsche is one of the most widely known and widely misunderstood among modern philosophers. *On the Genealogy of Morality* is in some respects his most traditional book—it is written in the form of three “essays” or “treatises” rather than aphorisms or Bible parody—and is therefore the work of Nietzsche’s most often assigned to undergraduates in survey courses. But like all of Nietzsche’s writing, it is deceptively readable, highly allusive and elliptical, and requires a lot of historical and contextual knowledge to properly understand. So this course is intended to guide students through a careful reading of the *Genealogy*, providing some of the background information needed to understand where Nietzsche’s sweeping historical and cultural claims are coming from and why the *Genealogy* is a valuable contribution to our understanding of the ethical landscape we find ourselves in today.

Required texts

Basic Writings of Nietzsche, translated and edited by Walter Kaufmann

The Iliad of Homer, translated by Richmond Lattimore

Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, translated by Alan Sheridan

The Bhagavad-Gita, translated by Eknath Easwaran

The Bible, New Revised Standard Version (you can find this for free online from a number of sources; choose whichever one you like best/hate least. I like www.biblestudytools.com/nrs/)

Recommended text

Christopher Janaway (2007), *Beyond Selflessness: Reading Nietzsche's Genealogy*

These books are available at the bookstore; Janaway (2007) can also be accessed online through the U of T library using your login. All other required and recommended readings will be posted on Quercus as PDFs or links to online sources.

Evaluation

The assignments and their contribution to the final grade are as follows:

- One short midterm essay (~1000 words): 25%
- Longer final-ish essay (2000-2500 words): 35%
- Final exam (short answer): 30%
- Class participation: 10%

Course policies

- Assignments are to be turned in via Canvas by 11:59 PM on the designated date. Extensions will be granted for reasons that don't sound bullshit.
- I'm permitting laptops in class because so much of the reading is online and I don't want you all to print out a lot of long PDFs, though this privilege may be withdrawn if they start to be a problem. Tablets that lie flat on the desk are preferable to laptops. Phones are to be on silent and put away.
- Late assignments will be accepted, but I will reduce your score by 2% of the point total for the assignment for each day past the deadline that it is turned in.

Schedule (with readings ranked by importance)

A note about readings: as the course progresses, we will continue to talk about readings from earlier weeks. So if you don't finish a reading before the target week, it's still worth your while to get caught up before the following week. In general, the Nietzsche texts and the philosophical secondary literature on Nietzsche are the things I want you to read most carefully; the literary, religious, and historical texts can be read more for the general idea.

Week 1 (Jan. 10) Introduction: why Nietzsche, and why genealogy?

1. Chronology of Nietzsche's life and works (Schacht 2012)
2. [Optional/recommended: Ansell-Pearson (2012), "Nietzsche: *On the Genealogy of Morality*" (Chapter 9 of *Introductions to Nietzsche*, edited by Robert Pippin)]

Week 2 (Jan. 17) Calling into question the value of values

1. Nietzsche, *Genealogy*, Preface
2. *The Iliad*, Introduction by Richard P. Martin, pp. 9–36 and the paragraph on pp. 52–3
3. Janaway, *Beyond Selflessness*, Chapter 1: Nietzsche's Aims and Targets
4. Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*, section 186; *The Gay Science*, section 345 (on Quercus)
5. *The Iliad*, Book 1, Book 2 through line 483 (skip the catalogue of ships), Book 3
6. [Optional/recommended: Janaway, Chapter 2: Reading Nietzsche's Preface]

Week 3 (Jan. 24) Noble values: warriors and priests

1. Nietzsche, *Genealogy*, First Essay, sections 1–7
2. Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*, sections 257, 260
3. The Bible, Leviticus Chapters 10–15, 21 (read for the basic idea)
4. *The Iliad*, Book 6, line 119 (p. 174) – end; Books 7–9; Book 12, lines 290–328
5. R. Lanier Anderson (2011), “On the Nobility of Nietzsche’s Priests”

Week 4 (Jan. 31) Noble values vs. slave morality

1. Nietzsche, *Genealogy*, sections 10–15
2. The Bible, Isaiah Ch. 11; Matthew Ch. 5 (the Sermon on the Mount); Colossians Ch. 3
3. *The Iliad*, Book 16, Book 18 through line 353 (top of p. 406), Book 19

Week 5 (Feb. 7) The slave revolt in morality

1. Nietzsche, *Genealogy*, First Essay (focus on sections 8–9, 16–17)
2. Nietzsche, *Ecce Homo*, “Why I Write Such Good Books: *The Case of Wagner*,” secs. 1–2
3. Wilhelm Marr (1879), “The Victory of Judaism Over Germandom” (excerpt from *The Jew in the Modern World*, edited by Paul Mendes-Flohr and Jehuda Reinharz)
4. *The Iliad*, Book 22, Book 23 through line 286 (top of p. 480), Book 24
5. [Optional/recommended: D.A. Jeremy Telman (1995), “Adolf Stoecker: Anti-Semite with a Christian Mission”]

➔ Short essay due on Sunday, February 10

Week 6 (Feb. 14) The slave revolt in morality, cont’d

1. Nietzsche, *Genealogy*, First Essay sections 8–9, 16–17 (re-read as necessary)
2. Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*, sections 199, 201–203, 258–259
3. Reginster (1997), “Nietzsche on Ressentiment and Valuation”

No class February 21: Reading Week

Week 7 (Feb. 28) The history of punishment

1. Nietzsche, *Genealogy*, Second Essay, sections 1–15
2. Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, Parts One and Two, pp. 3–131 (I know this is a lot of pages, but I don’t expect you to read it as carefully as the Nietzsche text)

Week 8 (March 7) Reinterpretation and the will to power

1. Nietzsche, *Genealogy*, Second Essay, sections 12–15 (re-read)
2. Nietzsche, *The Gay Science*, section 58
3. Geuss (1994), “Nietzsche and Genealogy”; skip section II, pp. 277–9
4. Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, Part Three, pp. 135–228
5. [Optional/recommended: Janaway, Chapter 9: Will to Power in the *Genealogy*]

Week 9 (Mar. 14) Bad conscience and Christian guilt

1. Nietzsche, *Genealogy*, Second Essay, sections 16–25
2. Sigmund Freud, *Civilization and its Discontents*, Chs. VII and VIII (pp. 70–92)
3. Jonathan Edwards, “Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God” (available online through the Jonathan Edwards Center at Yale University, edwards.yale.edu; read for the basic idea)
4. Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, Part Four, pp. 231–308
5. [Optional/recommended: Janaway, Chapter 8: Guilt, Bad Conscience, And Self-Punishment]

Week 10 (Mar. 21) Asceticism: artists, philosophers, and priests

1. Nietzsche, *Genealogy*, Third Essay, sections 1–13
2. *The Bhagavad-Gita*, Introduction by Eknath Easwaran (pp. 13–67); Chapters 1–2
3. The Bible, Romans chapters 5–8

Week 11 (Mar. 28) Asceticism: the sick and the saintly

1. Nietzsche, *Genealogy*, Third Essay, sections 14–22
2. Janaway (2007), Chapter 4: Selflessness: The Struggle with Schopenhauer
3. *The Bhagavad-Gita*, Chapters 3–11
4. William James, *The Varieties of Religious Experience*, Lectures on Saintliness: pp. 212–4, bottom of p. 230 – p. 249 (stop at the end of the sentence that goes onto p. 250)

➔ Final essay due by 11:59 PM on Tuesday, April 2

Week 12 (Apr. 4) Science and the unconditional will to truth

1. Nietzsche, *Genealogy*, Third Essay, sections 23–28
2. Nietzsche, *The Gay Science*, sections 107–113, 344
3. Cristy (manuscript), “‘Gay Science’ as a Conditional Will to Truth”
4. [Optional/recommended: Janaway, Chapter 13: The Ascetic Ideal, Meaning, and Truth]