

Late Modern Great Philosophers

PHI 314, Winter '17
Prof. David Vessey
MAK B-3-201
vesseyd@gvsu.edu
331-3158

MWF: 12-12:50
MAK D-1-227
Office hours:
M,W,F: 1-2;
and by appointment

Required Texts:

Charles Darwin, *The Origin of Species* (ed. Campbell, Broadview Press)
Friedrich Nietzsche, *On the Genealogy of Morals* (Hackett)
Plus additional photocopied materials.

Course Description:

The most important work of the 19th century—perhaps of the last 200 years—is Charles Darwin's 1859 *On the Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection*. It had an instant impact across many disciplines and one can't understand the second half of the 19th century without understanding Darwin's influence. We are going to read the classic with a special eye towards its philosophical implications and then look at three major, 19th century philosophers whose views could not have been intelligible pre-Darwin: Henry Sidgwick, Charles Sanders Peirce, and Friedrich Nietzsche.

Course Method:

Philosophy is best done in conversation. The greater variety of ideas we can draw on the better we will be able as a class to come to some reliable insights on philosophical questions. Therefore although there will be some lectures to set the stage for the discussion, the majority of the class time should be spent in discussion. This means that students must come to class ready to discuss—having read carefully the material, at least once, and being prepared to raise and address issues found in the text. Since discussions cannot be made up, attendance and participation are important parts of the grade. The daily attendance/participation grade is: F-not in class; D-in class unprepared; C-in class, prepared, not participating in discussion; B-in class, prepared, participating in discussion; A-in class, prepared, significantly contributing to the discussion. It is assumed all absences are excused absences; over six absences will result in the final grade divided in half (so the highest final grade would be a C). Computers are not allowed in the classroom as they tend to take attention away from the focus of the discussion.

In addition to the readings and the discussions, the main assignment of the course is a 20-page research paper on Darwin's philosophical influence on a particular philosopher. The student (1) will select a relevant philosopher and turn in a paper proposal by January 25th, (2) will turn in a 10-page summary of the philosopher's main views relevant to Darwin's influence on March 2nd, (3) will turn in a first polished draft to be work-shopped on April 6th, (4) will turn in a second polished draft to be work-shopped on April 13th, and (5) will turn in a final draft at the time of the final paper. Some possible nineteenth century philosophers to choose from would be, for example, Henri Bergson, Wilhelm Dilthey, Karl Marx, Georg Simmel, Hermann Lotze, WEB DuBois, Henry David Thoreau, T.H. Green, Charlotte Perkins Gilman, or William James. You may also do Sidgwick, Peirce, or Nietzsche as long as your paper goes significantly beyond what we cover in class.

Finally everyone will sign up for one day when we read Darwin and will write a two-page paper discussing what Darwin is trying to establish in the chapter and how Darwin goes about making his argument.

A minimal requirement for university level papers is that they are typed, double-spaced, 12 pt Times or Times/New Roman font, with 1 inch margins. They should also be proofread carefully for typos. A typo policy applies to all papers: the grade on the papers will be lowered one grade (for example, from an A- to a B+) for every four typos. Typos include grammatical errors, spelling errors, improper use of gendered pronouns, and failure to properly cite a quotation. Failure to cite is different from plagiarism. Plagiarism is a sign that the student has lost his or her sense for the point of going to college. At the very least the student will get a zero for the assignment and the violation will be reported to the Dean of Students Office. The expectation is that the student will drop the class.

If you have any disabilities that require special accommodation you should speak with Prof. Vessey as soon as possible at the beginning of the term.

Grading:

Attendance/Participation: 25%

Proposal: 5%

Darwin Text Analysis: 10%

10-page summary: 15%

Workshop Draft I: 10%

Workshop Draft II: 10%

Final Paper: 25%

1. Mon. Jan. 9 Introductions
2. Wed. Jan. 11 Darwin's Philosophical Impact
 Reading: Lewens, "The *Origin* and Philosophy" (handout)
3. Fri. Jan. 13 Overview of *On the Origin of Species*
 Reading: Editor's Introduction to *On the Origin of Species*, pp. 9-61
4. Mon. Jan. 16 The Debate over Design
 Readings: Selections from *Genesis* and Paley, pp. 562-572; Appendix A:
 Selections from *The Autobiography of Charles Darwin*, pp. 425-444.
5. Wed. Jan. 18 Research Workshop with Bob Schoofs
6. Fri. Jan. 20 Background to Darwin's work
 Readings: Lamarck, from *Zoological Philosophy*, pp. 573-579; Malthus,
 from *Essay on the Principle of Population*, pp. 595-604; Lyell, from
 Principles of Geology, pp. 605-609; Appendix B: from Darwin's *The*
 Voyage of the Beagle, pp. 445-464.
7. Mon. Jan. 23 Darwin's Introductions
 Readings: Darwin's *Origin* "An Historical Sketch..." and "Introduction,"

pp. 79-98

8. Wed. Jan. 25 PROPOSALS DUE

Watch: <http://darwin-chicago.uchicago.edu/Videos/Kitcher.mov>

9. Fri. Jan. 27 Domestic and Natural Variation

Readings: Darwin's *Origin* Chp. I: "Variation under Domestication" and Chp. II: "Variation Under Nature," pp. 122-143.

10. Mon. Jan. 30 Inhospitable Nature

Reading: Darwin's *Origin* Chp. III: "Struggle for Existence," pp. 132-143.

11. Wed. Feb. 1 Fundamentals of Natural Selection

Reading: Darwin's *Origin*, Chp. IV: "Natural Selection," pp. 144-177.

12. Fri. Feb. 3 The Nature of Inheritance

Reading: Darwin's *Origin*, Chp. V: "Laws of Variation," pp. 178-201.

13. Mon. Feb. 6 Theoretical Self-Examination

Reading: Darwin's *Origin*, Chp. VI: "Difficulties on Theory," pp. 202-224.

14. Wed. Feb. 8 Evolution and behavior

Reading: Darwin's *Origin*, Chp. VII: "Instinct" and Chp. VIII: "Hybridism," pp. 225-268.

15. Fri. Feb. 10 Geology as model for Biology

Reading: Darwin's *Origin*, Chp. IX: "On the Imperfection of the Geological Record" and Chp. X: "On the Genealogical Succession of Organic Beings", pp. 269-309.

16. Mon. Feb. 13 Confirming examples from biogeography

Reading: Darwin's *Origin*, Chp. XI & XII: "Geographical Distribution," pp. 310-349.

17. Wed. Feb. 15 Classification

Reading: Darwin's *Origin*, Chp. XIII: "Mutual Affinities of Organic Beings," pp. 333-349.

18. Fri. Feb. 17 Darwin's Conclusion
Reading: Darwin's *Origin*, Chp. XIV: "Recapitulation and Conclusion," pp. 379-398.
19. Mon. Feb. 20 Human Descent
Reading: Darwin, from *The Decent of Man*, pp. 495-561.
20. Wed. Feb. 22 The Evolution of Morals
Reading: Darwin, from *The Decent of Man*, Chp. III.
21. Fri. Feb. 24 Sidgwick on Darwin
Reading: Review of Cobb's *Darwinism in Morals*
22. Mon. Feb. 27 Sidgwick on Darwin
Reading: "The Theory Of Evolution In Its Application To Practice"
23. Wed. March 1 Sidgwick on Darwin
Reading: from "Lectures on Spencer's *Principles of Ethics*"
24. Fri. March 3 No Class/Ten-page exposition paper due
- March 4th-11th Spring Break
25. Mon. March 12 Peirce on Evolution
Reading: "The Architecture of Theories"
26. Wed. March 8 Peirce: Naturalizing belief
Reading: "The Fixation of Belief"
27. Fri. March 10 Peirce: Love as Evolutionary Force
Reading: "Evolutionary Love"
28. Mon. March 19 Peirce: Thought as Action
Reading: "How to Make our Ideas Clear"
29. Wed. March 21 Background to Nietzsche
Reading: Nietzsche's *GM*, Preface, pp. 1-8
30. Fri. March 23 Nietzsche: "Good and Bad" and "Good and Evil"

- Reading: Nietzsche's *GM*, First Essay, pp. 9-??
31. Mon. March 26 Nietzsche: Sickness and health
Reading: Nietzsche's *GM*, First Essay, pp. ??-34
32. Wed. March 28 Nietzsche: Guilt and debt
Reading: Nietzsche's *GM*, Second Essay, pp. 35-
33. Fri. March 30 Nietzsche: The origin of conscience
Reading: Nietzsche's *GM*, Second Essay, pp. ??-66
34. Mon. April 2 Nietzsche, The Ascetic Ideal
Reading: Nietzsche's *GM*, Third Essay, pp. 67-118
35. Wed. April 4 Final advice on writing a philosophy paper
36. Fri. April 6 Paper Workshop Draft I due
37. Mon. April 9 Paper Workshop
38. Wed. April 11 Paper Workshop
39. Fri. April 13 Paper Workshop Draft II due
40. Mon. April 16 Paper Workshop
41. Wed. April 18 Paper Workshop
42. Fri. April 20 Review and Course Evaluations
- FINAL EXAM Final Draft Due