

# PL301 Heidegger's Nietzsche

Seminar Leader: Jan Völker  
Course Times: Wednesday, 17:30-20:45  
Email: j.voelker@berlin.bard.edu  
Office Hours: By appointment

## Course Description

This course focuses on a telling encounter in modern German philosophy: Martin Heidegger's interpretation of the work of Friedrich Nietzsche. Nietzsche's radical reevaluation of ethics and of the nature of European cultural history effected a late nineteenth-century transformation of thinking about religion, education, art, politics, and about historical progress itself. Heidegger's work is principally known for its reintroduction of ontology into philosophy, and for its influence on the development of postwar Existentialism. Both philosophers have a fraught and compromising entanglement with politics: Nietzsche through the later use of his work in the National Socialist period (but also through the wider inspiration provided to fascism by some of his key ideas), and Heidegger through direct membership of and support for the Nazi movement, as well as the expression of anti-semitic views in his private writings. Our material is the series of seminars Heidegger led on Nietzsche during the 1930s, and the resulting voluminous book eventually published in 1961. We look at the way in which Heidegger "constructs" Nietzsche for his own purposes, as "the last metaphysician," or the figure in whose work metaphysics reaches a crisis, expressed by the "death of God" and the emergence of nihilism amid the triumph of technology. For Heidegger, the symptom of crisis represented by Nietzsche needs to be lived through and experienced in its full destructive reality, in order for it to be possible to stage an overcoming of the absence of meaning. We look at the way in which this interpretative stance relates to Heidegger's philosophy as a whole, and at its significance within twentieth-century thought and politics.

## Requirements

Attendance at every class is essential, as is full advance preparation of the course readings for each session of the seminar. There will be two essays, the first of 1800-2500 words or 5-7 pages, and the second of 8-10 pages, or 2800-3500 words, as well as in-class presentations, which form part of the participation grade.

## Academic Integrity

Bard College Berlin maintains the staunchest regard for academic integrity and expects good academic practice from students in their studies. Instances in which students fail to meet the expected standards of academic integrity will be dealt with under the Code of Student Conduct, Section III Academic Misconduct.

### Attendance

Attendance at ALL classes is expected. More than two absences (that is absences from two sessions of 90 minutes) in a semester will significantly affect the participation grade for the course.

Students should consult the Student Handbook for regulations governing periods of illness or leaves of absence.

### Assessment

Attendance at ALL classes is expected. More than two absences (that is absences from two sessions of 90 minutes) in a semester will significantly affect the participation grade for the course.

Students should consult the Student Handbook for regulations governing periods of illness or leaves of absence.

PLEASE NOTE: No electronic devices are allowed in class.

### Writing Assignments

Mid-Term Paper: 1800-2500 words, 5-7 pages. Final paper: 2800-3500 words, 8-10 pages.

Essay deadlines: Midterm paper: Thursday 18 October 23.59. Final paper: Monday 17 December 23.59

### Policy on Late Submission of Papers

Syllabi for core and elective classes should note or refer to the following policy from the Student Handbook on the submission of essays: *essays that are up to 24 hours late will be downgraded one full grade (from B+ to C+, for example). Instructors are not obliged to accept essays that are more than 24 hours late. Where an instructor agrees to accept a late essay, it must be submitted within four weeks of the deadline and cannot receive a grade of higher than C.*

*Thereafter, the student will receive a failing grade for the assignment.*

### **Grade Breakdown**

Mid-term essay: 20%

Final essay: 30%

Seminar grade: 50% (20%presentation, 30%participation)

All texts will be provided via email! We will work with the following edition:

Heidegger, *Nietzsche, Volume I: The Will to Power as Art, and Volume II: The Eternal Recurrence of the Same*, David Farrell Krell (trans.), San Francisco: Harper Collins.

Heidegger, *Nietzsche, Volume III: The Will to Power as Knowledge and as Metaphysics, and Volume IV: Nihilism*, David Farrell Krell (ed.), San Francisco: Harper Collins.

## Schedule

Wednesday, 5 September

- Heidegger, *Nietzsche, Volume I*: p. 1-77.

Wednesday, 12 September

- Heidegger, *Nietzsche, Volume I*: p. 77-142.

Wednesday, 19 September

- Heidegger, *Nietzsche, Volume I*: 143-224.

Wednesday, 26 September

- Heidegger, *Nietzsche, Volume II*: 1-82

Wednesday, 3 October

- Federal Holiday

Wednesday, 10 October

- Heidegger, *Nietzsche, Volume II* 82-133

Wednesday, 17 October

- Heidegger, *Nietzsche, Volume II* 133-209

Wednesday, 24 October

- Heidegger, *Nietzsche, Volume III* 1-64

Wednesday, 31 October

- Fall Break

Wednesday, 7 November

- Heidegger, *Nietzsche, Volume III* 64-131

Wednesday, 14 November

- Heidegger, *Nietzsche, Volume III* 131-159

Wednesday, 21 November

- Heidegger, *Nietzsche, Volume IV*: 4-76

Wednesday, 28 November

- Heidegger, *Nietzsche, Volume IV*: 76-136

Wednesday, 5 December

- Heidegger, *Nietzsche, Volume IV*: 136-197

Wednesday, 12 December

- General Discussion

Wednesday, 19 December

- Completion