SENIOR SEMINAR:

The Philosophy of Hegel and Nietzsche:
The Psychotherapy of Winnicott and Lacan

Winter 2012

Kalamazoo College

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Offices Hours:
• Monday: 3:00 – 4:00
• Tuesday: 10:00 -11:00
• Thursday: 10:00 -11:00
• By Appointment

COURSE GOALS:

In this seminar, we will examine the two great antithetical figures of 19th-century philosophy, Hegel and Nietzsche, comparing and contrasting their radically opposing views on agency, identity, philosophy, culture, and modernity. What is fascinating about the Hegel/Nietzsche contrast is that both endorse and re-appropriate Kant’s radical notion of freedom, which Kant develops in his famous three critiques between 1781 and 1790. Nevertheless, Hegel and Nietzsche offer different interpretations of how to understand Kant’s radical discovery of freedom, his “Copernican revolution” in modern philosophy. Hegel offers philosophy as a “phenomenology of spirit,” a historical-developmental account of how reason – the essence of human life – both arises from and challenges modern society and culture. Hegel’s phenomenology of spirit is a theory of modernity, and it contrasts sharply and dramatically with Nietzsche’s historical-genealogical account of how the will to power – the drive of human life – both arises from and challenges modern society and culture. Both Hegel and Nietzsche offer a critique of modernity, then, and both affirm the necessary possibility of becoming “free” agents in contemporary circumstances, but their respective views on how freedom appropriates itself appear radically and irreconcilably opposed.
We examine this philosophical contrast, however, in the psychoanalytic terms provided by Elliot Jurist’s *Beyond Hegel and Nietzsche: Philosophy, Culture, and Agency*, Alenka Zupancic’s *The Shortest Shadow: Nietzsche’s Philosophy of the Two*, and, finally, Kirshner, Lewis A. *Between Winnicott and Lacan: A Clinical Engagement*. It’s helpful to think of Hegel’s constructive, developmental historiography – his *Phenomenology* – and Nietzsche’s deconstructive, convalescent historiography – his *Genealogy* – as different psychoanalytic techniques – indeed, as the very psychodynamic techniques that their philosophical historiographies inspired: namely, Donald W. Winnicott’s psychotherapy and Jacques Lacan’s neo-structuralist psychoanalysis. By juxtaposing philosophical theory, on the one hand, and psychodynamic practice, on the other, we explore the “resonance” or “practical repercussions” of their philosophical ideas in actual contemporary psychodynamic techniques.

**EVALUATION:**

Students will be evaluated on the basis of class participation and the preparation of two essays for conference presentation.

**TEXTS:**


**READING SCHEDULE**

**TWO RESPONSES TO THE QUESTION, WHAT IS FREEDOM IN MODERN TIMES: HEGEL’S DEVELOPMENTAL PHENOMENOLOGY OF REASON AND NIETZSCHE’S DECONSTRUCTIVE GENEAOLOGY OF THE WILL IN A PSYCHOANALYTIC VEIN: **

**TUESDAY:**

**WEEK ONE**

1. Introductory Lecture: “Philosophical and Psychoanalytic Conceptions of Freedom.”

**TUESDAY:**

**WEEK TWO**

- Introduction, Beyond Hegel and Nietzsche: Philosophy, Culture, and Agency.
- Chapter 1, “The Culture of Philosophy.”
• Chapter 2, “The Philosophy of Culture.”
• Chapter 3, “Ancient Greek Culture.”

TUESDAY:  WEEK THREE
• Chapter 4, “Modern Culture.”
• Chapter 5, “On the Concept of Agency.”
• Chapter 6, “Recognition and Agency in Hegel.”
• Chapter 7, “Recognition in the Phenomenology of Spirit (I).”

TUESDAY:  WEEK FOUR
• Chapter 8, “Recognition in the Phenomenology of Spirit (II).”
• Chapter 9, “Hegelian Agency.”
• Chapter 10, “Nietzsche’s Ambivalence toward Agency.”
• Chapter 11, “The Will to Power and Agency in Nietzsche.”

NIETZSCHE AND LACAN: ALENKA ZUPANCIC’S THE SHORTEST SHADOW: NIETZSCHE’S PHILOSOPHY OF THE TWO:

TUESDAY:  WEEK FIVE
• Chapter 12, “Self and Other in Nietzsche.”
• “Nietzsche the Metapsychologist.”

TUESDAY:  WEEK SIX
• “Noon”
• “Addendum: On Love as Comedy

PHILOSOPHY IN A PSYCHODYNAMIC REGISTER: WINNICOTT AND LACAN AS RECONSTRUCTIVE AND DECONSTRUCTIVE PSYCHODYNAMIC TECHNIQUES:

TUESDAY:  WEEK SEVEN
• Introduction.
• “Thinking in the Space between Winnicott and Lacan.”
• “The Bifurcation of Contemporary Psychoanalysis: Lacan and Winnicott.”

TUESDAY:  WEEK EIGHT
• “Applying the Work of Winnicott and Lacan: The Problem of Psychosis.”
• “The Object between Mother and Child: From Winnicott to Lacan.”

TUESDAY:  WEEK NINE
• “The Space of Transition between Winnicott and Lacan.”
• “Winnicott with Lacan: Living Creatively in a Postmodern World.”
• “Human Nature: A Paradoxical Object.”

TUESDAY: Conference Preparation