

Ecce Antichristus!

"...anybody who has ever built a 'new heaven,' only mustered the power he needed through his own hell..."

German thinker Friedrich Nietzsche (1844-1900) established the foundation for much of the literature, culture, politics, art, and philosophy since 1900. Without him, feminism, environmentalism, existentialism, and postmodernism as we know them are unthinkable. In 2021 we will read 5 of his books, beginning with his satirical self-assessment, working through the most important cornerstones of his thought, to his most damning critiques of Western modernity, and ending with his philosophical novel about a messiah who offers an alternative to the nihilism of religion.

Dates and times are subject to change, especially as countries switch from standard time to daylight savings time. We will confirm at each meeting as well as via announcements the time of the next meeting. It will be easier once we set up the online meeting platform.

I'm planning for each session to be 90 minutes. My philosophical training was in the German tradition, which is heavily indebted to the Scholastic method. Those with a literature background might be familiar with New Criticism, which was a 20th-century American methodology of textual analysis. All this just means we read closely and discuss how ideas and logic develop throughout a text and across other texts. We'll read Nietzsche in order to learn how to read Nietzsche.

Ecce Homo: How One Becomes What One Is [*Ecce homo: Wie man wird, was man ist*] (1888) – Nietzsche's hyperbolic, autobiographical last book in which he offers insight into and criticism of his life's work

For our first book you should read whatever introductions are included in your edition as well as Nietzsche's Preface and the chapters "Why I Am So Wise," "Why I Am So Clever," "Why I Write Such Good Books," and "Why I Am a Destiny." In other words, you can skip the chapters on each of his published books, though we'll talk about those chapters later when we read the corresponding titles.

January - 118 pp

Session I:

Friday, Jan. 15, 7:00pm GMT/8:00pm CET/2pm EDT/1pm CDT/11am PDT

Saturday, Jan 16, 8am New Zealand

Session II:

Sunday, Jan. 17, 1am GMT/10am Tokyo/noon Sydney/2pm New Zealand

Saturday, Jan. 16, 8pm EDT/ 7pm CDT/5pm PDT

The Birth of Tragedy from the Spirit of Music [Die Geburt der Tragödie aus dem Geiste der Musik] (1872) – Nietzsche’s “impossible” analysis and interpretation of Greek culture and aesthetics

February - §1-15

Session I: **Friday, Feb. 12, 7:00pm GMT**

Session II: **Sunday, Feb. 14, 1am GMT**

On the Genealogy of Morality: A Polemic [Zur Genealogie der Moral: Eine Streitschrift] (1887) – Nietzsche’s most straightforward, essayistic work that seeks to diagnose the diseased mind of Western culture

March - Essay 1, 25 pp

Session I: **Friday, March 12, 7:00pm GMT**

Session II: **Sunday, March 14, 1am GMT**

April - Essay 2, 32 pp

Session I: **Friday, April 9, 7:00pm GMT**

Session II: **Sunday, April 11, 1am GMT**

May - Essay 3 , §1-14, 25 pp

Session I: **Friday, May 7, 7:00pm GMT**

Session II: **Sunday, May 9, 1am GMT**

June - Essay 3, §15-28, 29 pp

Session I: **Friday, June 4, 7:00pm GMT**

Session II: **Sunday, June 6, 1am GMT**

Beyond Good and Evil: Prelude to a Philosophy of the Future [*Jenseits von Gut und Böse: Vorspiel einer Philosophie der Zukunft*] (1886) – Nietzsche’s “easily misunderstood” critique of modernity in all its forms as well as an attempt to summarize his philosophy that ends with rhapsodic poetry

July - Part 1, 24 pp; Part 2, 22 pp

Session I: **Friday, July 9, 7:00pm GMT**

Session II: **Sunday, July 11, 1am GMT**

August - Part 3, 18 pp; Part 4, 16 pp; Part 5, 22 pp

Session I: **Friday, Aug. 6, 7:00pm GMT**

Session II: **Sunday, Aug. 8, 1am GMT**

September - Part 6, 20 pp; Part 7, 26 pp; Part 8, 26 pp

Session I: **Friday, Sept. 3, 7:00pm GMT**

Session II: **Sunday, Sept. 5, 1am GMT**

October - Part 9, 37 pp; “From High Mountains,” 3 pp

Session I: **Friday, Oct. 1, 7:00pm GMT**

Session II: **Sunday, Oct. 3, 1am GMT**

Thus Spoke Zarathustra: A Book for All and None [*Also sprach Zarathustra: Ein Buch für Alle und Keinen*] (1883-85) – Nietzsche’s “unreadable” and “profoundest” novel that attempts to translate his philosophy into the language of myth

November - Part 1, 59 pp, Part 2, 57 pp

Session I: **Friday, Nov. 5, 7:00pm GMT**

Session II: **Sunday, Nov. 7, 1am GMT**

December - Part 3, 72 pp, Part 4, 80 pp

Session I: **Friday, Dec. 3, 7:00pm GMT**

Session II: **Sunday, Dec. 5, 1am GMT**

A note on translation

Online discussions will take place in English, but you should feel free to read whichever translation in whichever language you prefer. Nietzsche's books have section numbers, so we should be able to easily enough find the passages we are discussing. I do recommend, however, *philosophical* translations—that is, translations that are done by philosophers who attempt to engage with the philosophical content of the texts. There are some translations that only work with the linguistic content without a clear understanding of the philosophy it expresses.

For *Ecce Homo*, *Birth of Tragedy*, and *Beyond Good and Evil* I will read the Walter Kaufmann translations, Modern Library edition, from the *Basic Writings of Nietzsche*. For the *Genealogy*, I will read the Carol Diethe translation, revised student edition by Keith Ansell-Pearson, by Cambridge UP. For *Zarathustra*, I will read a new translation by Graham Parkes from Oxford. I've read the Kaufmann and Hollingdale translations of *Zarathustra*, which are outstanding, but I want to try the 2005 translation by Parkes.

In general, for English, Kaufmann and Hollingdale are the classic philosophical translations, and the *Basic Writings* includes Kaufmann's translation of the *Genealogy*, which I've read multiple times, but I now prefer the Diethelme translation after teaching it for a few years to college freshmen. All of these translations/editions should be easy to find, if you prefer to read what I'm reading, but feel free to try others.

If you have any question about a translation/edition, in whichever language, ask me. I am happy to make suggestions and recommendations, as I know quite a bit about 20th-century philosophical translation.

Update: Today (Dec. 11) I discovered that I have a copy of Judith Norman's 2005 translation of *Ecce Homo* from Cambridge UP, so I will be reading it for the first time for our January meeting, but I will also read and refer to Kaufmann's translation from the *Basic Writings*. There is also another recent translation from 2009 by Duncan Large, published by Oxford UP, that might be of interest.

A note on philosophy online

Now that you're reading philosophy, and doing so philosophically, you can look at Wikipedia much more critically. In general, entries on Wikipedia are not written by philosophers, and typically there are many mistakes and misunderstandings when it comes to philosophy entries. I've even found errors in the Oxford English Dictionary on basic philosophical terms. Instead, there are 2 useful online resources that you should make use of if you have questions about how to understand some of Nietzsche's language: the [Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy](#) and the [Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy](#).