

## **M.St/M.Phil German Aesthetics and History of Ideas Course 2018/19**

*Michaelmas Term and Hilary Term: Thursday afternoon weeks 2,4,6*

Course convenors: Ben Morgan (Worcester)/Ritchie Robertson (Queens)

The course is taught in 6 seminar sessions of 90 minutes each. For each session of the seminar, one or two of the participants will select two passages from the relevant text, and give a brief introduction to explain their significance: their intrinsic interest, and their local significance within the work in question; the extent to which they demonstrate characteristic patterns of thought or of written style; and any problems that they raise for our understanding of their subject in the author's own time and in our own.

Prof Morgan will be giving a series of lectures covering similar ground to the seminar: Weeks 1-8 in Michaelmas Term — “German Cultural Theory from Schiller to Wittgenstein and Arendt”.

At the end of Hilary Term, participants must submit a 5,000-7,000 word paper. The topic of the papers will arise out of the issues and/or be an analysis of the thinkers discussed during the 8 seminars. At the end of Michaelmas term or start of Hilary term, students will meet briefly with Prof Robertson or Prof Morgan to discuss developing ideas. In January, a title and topic will be agreed via email with the seminar convenors. The essay itself is then a piece of independent research responding to the developing discussion in the seminar. It can be on thinkers covered in the course, or other German thinkers since Kant.

### **Michaelmas Term**

Session 1: Friedrich **Schiller**, *Über die ästhetische Erziehung des Menschen* (1793–1795). There is a good Reclam edition [=Reclam 18062], with useful background information and notes.

Translation: Schiller, *On the Aesthetic Education of Man*, tr. Keith Tribe, with an introduction by Alexander Schmidt (Penguin Classics, 2016).

Session 2: **Marx**, *Philosophische und ökonomische Schriften* (Stuttgart: Reclam, 2008) [=Reclam 18554], esp. pp.46-80 (excerpts from *Die deutsche Ideologie* on ideology) and pp. 109-114 (the 1859 preface setting out the base/superstructure model of culture) pp. 115-182 (the influential opening chapter of *Das Kapital* on the commodity).

Translations: *The German Ideology*, ed. C J Arthur, pp. 39-95 + the 11 theses: pp. 121-123 (this is a similar selection to the Reclam edition, but not all in the same order).

The 1859 Preface: a translation can be found in the Karl Marx, ‘The early Writings’ (Penguin 1975), pp. 424-428)

Chapter 1 of Vol. 1 of ‘Capital’ in the Penguin Marx edition, pp. 125-177.

Session 3: **Nietzsche**, *Zur Genealogie der Moral*, esp. III. Abhandlung (1887)

Translation: *On the Genealogy of Morals* (esp. Third Essay), trans./introduced by Douglas Smith (Oxford World Classics edition).

### **Hilary Term**

Session 4: Walter **Benjamin**/ Theodor W. **Adorno**.

Benjamin texts: ‘Der Sürrealismus’ (1929), ‘Franz Kafka’ (1934), ‘Der Erzähler’ (1936). All in *Gesammelte Schriften* vol. II

Walter Benjamin, ‘Das Kunstwerk im Zeitalter seiner technischen Reproduzierbarkeit’ (Dritte Fassung), in *Gesammelte Schriften* I, pp. 471-508 OR *Illuminationen*, pp. 136-69

Translations: *Illuminations*, ed. Hannah Arendt (1970) for ‘The Storyteller’ and ‘Franz

Kafka'. Michael Jennings, ed. *Walter Benjamin: Selected Writings, Volume 2: Part 1, 1927-1930* for 'Surrealism'. 'The Work of Art in the Age of its Technological Reproducibility' (1935-9), in *Selected Writings*, ed. by Michael W. Jennings, vol. 4 (Cambridge, MA, 2003)

Adorno texts: The mass culture chapter from *Dialektik der Aufklärung* (1947) and the essay on Kafka in *Prismen* (1955).

Translations: *Dialectic of Enlightenment* (if available the Stanford UP edition rather than the Verso one). *Prisms* trans Sam and Shierry Weber, MIT Press 1981.

Session 5: Ludwig **Wittgenstein**, *Philosophische Untersuchungen* §§ 1-133; *Lectures and conversations on aesthetics, psychology, and religious belief*

Translation: 4<sup>th</sup> revised ed by Hacker and Schulte (Wiley-Blackwell 2009).

Session 6: Hannah **Arendt**, "Action," in *The Human Condition* (Chicago UP, 1958), pp. 175-247. [The 'Prologue', pp. 1-6, helpfully situates Arendt's argument.]

### **Secondary reading:**

The course focuses on primary texts, and we'd rather you grapple directly with the texts and develop your own questions and observations. However, if you feel you need a greater context, here are places to start:

Frederick Beiser, *Schiller as Philosopher: A Re-examination* (OUP, 2005).

Jonathan Sperber, *Karl Marx: A Nineteenth-Century Life* (Norton, 2013).

Brian Leiter, *Nietzsche on Morality*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Routledge, 2015).

Jonathan Lear, *Freud* (Routledge, 2005).

Howard Eiland and Michael Jennings, *Walter Benjamin: A Critical Life* (Harvard UP, 2014).

Martin Jay, *Adorno* (Fontana, 1984).

Ray Monk, *How to Read Wittgenstein* (Granta, 2005).

Mark A. Wrathall, *Heidegger and Unconcealment: Truth, Language, and History* (CUP, 2011).

Dana Villa, ed., *The Cambridge Companion to Hannah Arendt* (CUP, 2000).

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