Political Science 4931: Nietzsche & Christianity

Marquette University, Fall 2011
9:30-10:45 T TH
Wm. Wehr Physics 418

Darrell Dobbs, Ph.D.
421 Wm. Wehr Physics
Office Hours: 10:50-12:15 T TH

Course Description:

Nietzsche famously declared that God is dead. He meant this as a reflection of the past, present, and (his hoped-for) future of Western civilization. But his is by no means the last word on the subject. In this class, we shall draw into focus the cultural architecture, that is, the great politics characteristic of Nietzschean atheism. We shall then consider the challenge to atheism and the support for Christian renewal that may be found in the studies of individual spirit and the evolution of human consciousness presented by G.K. Chesterton and Owen Barfield.

Requirements, Expectations and Grading:

You are required to attend every meeting of this class and to read the assigned texts carefully and on schedule. There will be daily writing exercises. You will be expected to present many of your daily exercises for discussion and constructive criticism in class. The quality of your exercises (as written and presented) will account for approximately 1/2 of your final grade. The remaining 1/2 of your grade will be determined in equal measures by your performance on the midterm and on an oral presentation to be made during the final two weeks of the semester.

In addition to your regular attendance, you should expect to spend at least 6 hours each and every week studying and preparing for this class. (If you carry a load of fifteen credit hours, and follow this rule of thumb in all your classes, you will still be investing no more time developing your own human capital than you will spend enlarging your employer's capital after you have graduated. My working assumption is that you are worth the investment. Would you agree?)

Date          Assigned Reading

Week 1        Introductions; Nietzsche, Beyond Good and Evil pp.1-3
Week 2        Nietzsche, pp.9-32
Week 3        Nietzsche, pp.35-56
Week 4        Nietzsche, pp.59-76
Week 5        Nietzsche, pp.79-94; pp. 97-118
Week 6        Nietzsche, pp.121-141
Week 7        Nietzsche, pp.145-170
Weeks 8-9     Nietzsche, pp.173-198; pp.201-237; pp.201-237; Examination
Weeks 10-12   Chesterton, Orthodoxy, chs.1-2; ch.3; ch.4; ch.5; ch.6; chs.7-9
Weeks 13-15   Barfield, Saving the Appearances, chs.1-5; chs.6-10; chs.11-14; chs.15-16; chs.17-20; chs.21-25