

Philosophy 298

Seminar on Freud and Philosophy

General Information

Instructor	Dr. Kenneth A. Lambert
Office	Parmly 406
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Home Page	http://home.wlu.edu/~lambertk/
Class Period and Location	T/R 9:45-11:15, Newcomb 121
Office Hours	M/W/F 10-11:30, or by appointment

Required Texts

Sigmund Freud, *Totem and Taboo* (The Standard Edition), W. W. Norton & Company; The Standard edition, 978-0393001433, \$13.39

Sigmund Freud, *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, W. W. Norton & Company; The Standard edition, 978-0393007695, \$11.53

Sigmund Freud, *Civilization and Its Discontents* (The Standard Edition), W. W. Norton & Company; The Standard edition, 978-0393301588, \$12.70

Sigmund Freud, *Moses and Monotheism*, Vintage; 1 edition, 978-0394700144, \$13.66

Michael Kahn, *Basic Freud*; Basic Books; 1 edition, 978-0465037162, 10.08

Herbert Marcuse, *Eros and Civilization : A Philosophical Inquiry into Freud*; Beacon Press, New Ed Edition, 978-0807015551, \$22.50

Juliet Mitchell, *Psychoanalysis And Feminism: A Radical Reassessment Of Freudian Psychoanalysis*; Basic Books; New ed of 2 Revised ed edition, 978-0465046089, \$19.15

Todd McGowan, *Enjoying What We Don't Have: The Political Project of Psychoanalysis*; University of Nebraska Press; 1 edition, 978-0803245112, 38.80

Total cost: \$141.81 (based on Amazon pricing)

In addition, several required essays are available on the course site at sakai.wlu.edu.

Course Description

Some consider Freud one of the great thinkers in the western tradition. Freud and psychoanalysis have had an enormous influence on the writing of history and literary criticism and on the movements known as deconstruction and postmodernism. This course will tease out the philosophical import of his theories of the unconscious, sexuality, aggression, and other concepts, and examine especially their application in his writings on religion and social science. The revisionist work of various neo-Freudians (Juliet Mitchell, Herbert Marcuse, Todd McGowan, and Walter Davis) will also be considered. Classroom activities will consist of lecture and discussion.

Course Objectives

1. Students will be able to recognize fallacies, premises, and conclusions in arguments.
2. Students will be able to distinguish and assess various theories of the psyche and the subject and use these to become aware of their own concrete situation.
3. Students will be able to converse and write effectively about major concepts such as the Oedipus complex, the pleasure principle, and the death drive.

Participation

Students are required to attend class on time, and attendance will be taken. If you believe that you will be unable to attend a class or if you miss a class, please notify me in order to determine if work needs to be done to make up for missing the class. Failure to do this may result in a failing grade for participation, and may also result in a failing grade overall.

The assigned reading will follow the class schedule (see below). Students are required to do all the assigned reading before class. A prepared student will not only read the material but will have reflected upon the claims and arguments made therein. It will be wise to start this reading early, because some material may require more than one reading.

Students are to respect their classmates and me by raising their hand when they wish to ask a question or when they wish to reply to a question asked or statement made by another. Students are expected to listen to their classmates and the professor carefully and respectfully. This entails not Web surfing, texting, e-mailing, or allowing cell phones to ring in class.

Students are encouraged to discuss the readings, assignment questions, and paper topics with me outside of class during office hours or by scheduling a meeting. All participation, whether in class or outside of class, counts towards the participation grade.

Written Work for the Course

Written work for the course consists of three parts:

1. You will write a **one-page essay each week**. Each essay will take the form of an answer to a question about the reading. This question will be provided to you one week before the essay is due. These assignments will be due at 12 noon on their due dates. For example, the first question will appear on Tuesday, January 8, and your answer will be due at noon on Monday, January 14. You will be notified via email when a new question becomes available. Therefore, you are responsible for checking your email. Essays will be turned in as Word files via Sakai and will be marked up and returned promptly to you via Sakai (a paperless process).
2. You will write **two six-page papers**. All students will schedule a meeting with me about these longer papers at least one week before each paper is due.
3. You will write a **comprehensive final examination**, to be given during the W&L final examination week. This three-hour examination will range over all of the material covered in the course. More details about the examination will be given closer to examination week.

The grading scheme and criteria for written work are described later in this syllabus. Late assignments or papers will be docked a full letter grade, unless you receive permission from me to turn the paper in by an extended due date. No late assignment or paper will be accepted after a three-day delinquent period, unless the professor agrees to an extenuating circumstance. *You must complete all writing assignments to pass the course (a necessary but not a sufficient condition).*

Academic Integrity

All work submitted for credit should be your own work. You must give full and accurate credit to sources that are not your own (books/journals, other students). If you use online sources in support of your papers, these sources must be articles in journals, eBooks, or refereed papers in the proceedings of conferences, and must be cited like print sources. Deliberate concealment of sources constitutes plagiarism and will result in a failing grade for the course and a report to the EC. Cite and credit everything, except your own class notes. All work must be pledged. Please familiarize yourself with W&L's policy on plagiarism at <https://libguides.wlu.edu/plagiarism>

Accommodations

Washington and Lee University makes reasonable academic accommodations for qualified students with disabilities. All undergraduate accommodations must be approved through the Title IX Coordinator and Director of Disability Resources, Elrod Commons 212, (540) 458-4055. Students requesting accommodations for this course should present an official accommodation letter within the first two weeks of the term and schedule a meeting outside of class time to discuss accommodations. It is the student's responsibility to present this paperwork in a timely fashion and to follow up about accommodation

arrangements. Accommodations for test taking must be arranged with the professor at least a week before the date of the test or exam, including finals.

Grading

Upon completion of *all* assigned work, your grade will be computed as follows:

Two six-page papers	15% each
Final examination	30%
Weekly assignments	30%
Participation	10%

Tentative Schedule of Topics and Readings

Day	Topic	Reading
Week 1		
January 8	Introduction	Kahn, <i>Basic Freud</i>
January 10	Basic concepts	Kahn, <i>Basic Freud</i>
Week 2		
January 15	The horror of incest	Freud, <i>Totem and Taboo</i> , pp. 3-23
January 17	Emotional ambivalence	Freud, <i>Totem and Taboo</i> , pp. 24-93
Week 3		
January 22	Animism	Freud, <i>Totem and Taboo</i> , pp. 94-124
January 24	Sacrifice and the origins of religion and morality	Freud, <i>Totem and Taboo</i> , pp. 125-200
Week 4		
January 29	The pleasure principle	Freud, <i>Beyond the Pleasure Principle</i> , pp. 3-39
January 31	The death drive	Freud, <i>Beyond the Pleasure Principle</i> , pp. 40-78
Week 5		
February 5	The making of a lady, part 1	Mitchell, <i>Psychoanalysis and Feminism</i> , pp. 5-94
February 7	The making of a lady, part 2	Mitchell, <i>Psychoanalysis and Feminism</i> , pp. 95-131
Week 6		
February 12	The origin of religion	Freud, <i>Moses and Monotheism</i> , pp. 3-71
February 14	The origin of religion	Freud, <i>Moses and Monotheism</i> , pp. 72-174
Week 7		
February 26	Reading Day First long paper due	
February 28	Enjoyment and loss	McGowan, <i>Enjoying what We Don't Have</i> , pp. 1-80

Week 8		
March 5	Enjoyment and loss	McGowan, <i>Enjoying what We Don't Have</i> , pp. 81-157
March 7	Enjoyment and loss	McGowan, <i>Enjoying what We Don't Have</i> , pp. 159-234
Week 9		
March 12	Life and death	Freud, <i>Civilization and Its Discontents</i> , pp. 23-76
March 14	Life and death	Freud, <i>Civilization and Its Discontents</i> , pp. 77-111
Week 10		
March 19	Life and death	Freud, <i>Civilization and Its Discontents</i> , pp. 113-149
March 21	A non-repressive civilization	Marcuse, <i>Eros and Civilization</i> , pp. 3-77
Week 11		
March 26	A non-repressive civilization	Marcuse, <i>Eros and Civilization</i> , pp. 78-139
March 28	A non-repressive civilization	Marcuse, <i>Eros and Civilization</i> , pp. 140-237
Week 12		
April 2	Drama Second long paper due	Davis, "The Drama of the Psychoanalytic Subject," on Sakai
April 4	Drama	Davis, "The Drama of the Psychoanalytic Subject," on Sakai

How to Read Philosophy

Philosophy texts, if they are saying anything significant, must be read more than once. Reading a piece of philosophy is not like surfing the Web or reading a magazine or a newspaper, where the primary purpose is to skim for information. Reading philosophy is much more like reading literature, where other things, such as aesthetic engagement, analysis, and self-discovery, are happening as well.

Your approach to reading a philosophy text should consist of at least two passes through the text. On the first pass, your reading should be receptive, but not passive. Try to suspend your own opinions and preconceptions. Let the author, or rather the terms and ideas of the text, speak to you. Make a note of new or unusual terms and the ways in which they are related. Try to isolate those terms or ideas, if any, to which the author returns again and again as the essential terms or ideas of the text.

The second pass should be a more active reading. Try to articulate how the essential terms or concepts fit together to form a coherent whole. Are there one or two central concepts around which the text is organized? Is there a single thread that ties together the main ideas of the text? Can you put that thread into your own words? You will rarely find an explicit argument (a set of premises and a conclusion) in terms of which these concepts are developed and presented. Try to tease an argument out of the central body of ideas. Are the premises of the argument true, and do the conclusions of the argument follow from its premises? Or, if you cannot find an argument, does the presentation of the ideas enhance your understanding of related ideas? Now confront your preconceptions with these central ideas. Are your preconceptions shifting, being overthrown, or remaining firmer than ever? What fundamental question(s) does the text raise for you?

How to Write Philosophical Criticism

Just as literary criticism goes well beyond mere plot summary, writing about philosophy does more than summarize or even restate the main ideas of a text. There are many criteria for judging a piece of philosophy: Are the arguments (if any) sound? Are the claims of fact consistent with those of science and common sense? Do claims that seem to go beyond common sense or the scientifically verifiable make sense and enhance your understanding of the world? Are statements consistent with each other, and do they give a coherent picture of the world? What is the text really driving at, and how do you respond (intellectually, aesthetically, morally)? How do things stand with your preconceptions about the text's central ideas?

Guidelines for Writing Short Papers

Short papers are due on the date and time given by me, although I will accept a paper earlier if you have finished it. The turnin for all papers will be via the course site on Sakai. Sakai automatically marks a paper as late, on time, or not turned in at all. I will return the graded and commented papers to you via Sakai.

Remember that you must complete and turn in all writing assignments to pass the course (this is a necessary, but not a sufficient, condition).

Criteria for grading short papers are as follows, working from the bottom up:

F – Any or all of the following: this paper is riddled with spelling, punctuation, and/or grammatical errors. The paper demonstrates little or no attempt to understand the material or no critical examination of it. The paper is turned in late.

B – This paper has very few spelling, punctuation, or grammatical errors. The paper demonstrates an acceptable understanding of the material and a reasonable attempt to critically examine it.

A – This paper has no spelling errors and practically no punctuation or grammatical errors. The paper demonstrates excellent understanding of the material and a well-developed critical examination of it.

When you cite an author from the required readings in a short paper, you can simply mention the page number from the text in square brackets. For example, “Blah blah blah ...” [Freud, p. 67]

Essential Works of Freud, with Publication Dates

- 1891 *On Aphasia*
- 1895 *Studies on Hysteria (co-authored with Josef Breuer)*
- 1899 *The Interpretation of Dreams*
- 1904 *The Psychopathology of Everyday Life*
- 1905 *Jokes and Their Relation to the Unconscious*
- 1905 *Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality*
- 1910 *Leonardo da Vinci, A Memory of His Childhood*
- 1913 *Totem and Taboo: Resemblances between the Psychic Lives of Savages and Neurotics*
- 1917 *Introductory Lectures on Psycho-Analysis*
- 1920 *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*
- 1923 *The Ego and the Id*
- 1926 *Inhibitions, Symptoms and Anxiety*
- 1927 *The Future of an Illusion*
- 1930 *Civilization and Its Discontents*
- 1933 *New Introductory Lectures on Psycho-Analysis*
- 1939 *Moses and Monotheism*