

Sex, Drugs and Rock 'n' Roll

Twentieth-Century German Philosophy and Modern Youth Cultures

GERM 280

UNC-Chapel Hill

Spring 2016

Mandatory Lectures

Mondays & Wednesdays 9:05 am – 9:55 am (Manning Hall 209)

Mandatory Film Screenings

6 Mondays or Wednesdays, 5 pm – 7:50pm (Location TBA)

Mandatory Recitations

601: Fridays, 9:05 am – 9:55 am (Dey Hall 403) AE

602: Fridays, 10:10 am – 11:00 am (Dey Hall 403) AE

603: Fridays, 11:15 am – 12:05 pm (Dey Hall 403) AS

604: Fridays, 12:15 pm – 1:05 pm (Dey Hall 403) AS

605: Fridays, 1:25 pm – 2:15 pm (Dey Hall 404) KR

606: Fridays, 2:30 pm – 3:20 pm (Dey Hall 404) KR

Course Description

This philosophical perspective fulfills *three* main goals:

1) In general, this course serves as an **introduction to philosophical thinking**. Instead of frontloading this course with the fundamentals of philosophy—key philosophical concepts like nature, free will, knowledge, ethics, beauty, etc.—and then explicating their relevance for everyday experience, and instead of marching through the history of modern philosophy chronologically, this course takes a different approach. The course insists that newcomers and more experienced students of philosophy alike can acquire an appreciation for the vocation of the philosopher by first thinking about their own lives and/or the lives of other young adults. Neither children nor full-fledged adults, teenagers find themselves in an intermediary time in their own lives and an intermediary space within society. It is the condition of in-betweenness that will play a central role in this course's lectures.

2) More specifically, this course is an **introductory intellectual history of German philosophy since 1900**. Unlike many introductory courses that begin with the French father of modern philosophy, René Descartes (1596-1650), this course instead focuses primarily on some, though not all of the most influential German philosophers to emerge in the twentieth century. Why necessarily German philosophy and why just the twentieth century? While older German philosophers like Immanuel Kant (1724-1804), G.W.F. Hegel (1770-1831) and Karl Marx (1818-1883) certainly made some of the most lasting impacts on world philosophical thought, more recent German philosophers of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries are especially attuned to the dilemmas of modern life. While we will address how these more modern thinkers engaged their eighteenth- and nineteenth-century predecessors, our prime directive will be to see how more modern German philosophy can help us examine critically the triumvirate of modern youth cultures: sex, drugs, and rock 'n' roll. We shall therefore forego proceeding chronologically and instead collect philosophical concepts around these three primary

concerns. Our discussions will therefore jump back and forth between two main strands in German thought: the philosophy of knowledge and the philosophy of being.

3) In our age of hyper-utilitarianism, this course demonstrates how **philosophy is useful beyond the classroom** in the most concrete of ways. Most immediately, the course will use cinematic stories about young adults to illuminate philosophical concepts. Additionally, it will ask how German philosophy helps us think beyond the limits of both cinematic narratives about young adults as well as beyond the realm of our own lived experiences in order to uncover the conceptual possibilities and limitations of in-betweenness that is endemic to being a teenager. Philosophy will be understood then as a tool to think through rebellion and conformity in ways that young people and youth cultures seldom have.

This course fulfills the following Gen Ed requirements: A&S Philosophical Perspective, Philosophical & Moral Reasoning & North Atlantic World General Education requirements.

Readings & Screenings

No prior knowledge of German is required to succeed in German 280. All readings and discussions will be in English. There will be on occasion German concepts that arise in discussion; you will always be supplied with English translations. Given the unique nature and content of this course, there is no commercially available textbook that covers all the material in this course. Each enrolled student must purchase a single coursepack from Student Stores. Additional mandatory and optional reading materials will be made available on the course Sakai site.

Six films will be screened and discussed extensively in this course. All of these films will be screened collectively on Monday evenings (please see the syllabus for exact screening dates and times; the location will be announced in class and posted on Sakai). Students are obligated to view films prior to attending the lectures scheduled to take place after the slated screening. Films are also on reserve in the MRC and available through Netflix and other streaming sources.

Instructor

Dr. Richard Langston, Zachary Smith Distinguished Term Associate Professor of German Literature
Dey Hall 430, Spring 2016 Office Hours: Mondays 1 pm – 2 pm, Wednesdays 4 pm – 5 pm & by appointment

Email: relangst@unc.edu

Course Website: sakai.unc.edu

Recitation Leaders

Adam Engel, Doctoral Candidate, Department of English & Comparative Literature

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Office Hours: Mondays 12 pm – 1 pm & Wednesdays 12 pm – 1 pm & by appointment

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Anneke Schwob, Doctoral Candidate, Department of English & Comparative Literature

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Office Hours: Thursdays, 12 pm – 2 pm and by appointment

Class Meetings

The course will consist of:

1. a pair of weekly lectures intended to explain the philosophical readings and place them into a philosophical, historical and cultural context. It is in your very best interest to attend every single lecture. In addition to being intellectually demanding and equally entertaining, the lectures will be your key for unlocking the weekly readings. Borrowing notes from a peer will not convey the complexity of the lectures. You will be responsible for the content of all the lectures on the exams. Lectures and corresponding Powerpoint presentations will not be made electronically available.
2. one recitation/discussion section per week. You must be registered for a recitation section to obtain credit for this course. Students will meet with a section leader to discuss the assigned material and ask any questions that are relevant to that week's work. Approximately one third of the exams will treat material dealt with in the section meetings.

Papers, Exams, Participation

Writing Requirements

As a class that fulfills general education requirements, this course requires significant student writing over the course of the semester. This requirement is met by the following:

1. Every Monday you will be required to submit your answers to no more than 3 questions posted on the Sakai site that pertain to the next week's assigned readings. These questions will be posted on the Sakai site no later than noon on Friday prior to the weekend before the new readings are discussed in class. Your responses must be typed and printed with your name, PID and Honor pledge that signifies your work is your own. You may discuss with peers what the questions mean, but you may *not* share your own answers with others. There will be a total of **14** sets of questions you will need to answer. Monday homework not **submitted by the end of class** will not be accepted late.
2. Every Thursday or Friday (depending on when your recitation section meets) you will be required to submit your answers to no more than 3 questions that pertain to that week's lectures. These questions will be posted no later than 1:30 pm on every Wednesday prior to that week's recitation sections. Questions must be typed and printed with your name, PID and Honor pledge that signifies your work is your own. You may discuss with peers what the questions mean, but you may *not* share your own answers with others. There will be a total of **14** sets of questions you will need to answer. Friday homework not **submitted by the end of your recitation section** will not be accepted late.
3. **2** film analyses of no more than 800 words, double-spaced. Dr. Langston will regularly use screened films to illustrate philosophical concepts. Your task will be to analyze 2 of the 6 films screened in class using other philosophical concepts discussed in class that Dr. Langston has not applied to the films of your choice. Your first film analysis is due no later than **5pm on February 26, 2016**. Your second film analysis is due no later than **5pm on Friday, April 1, 2016**. Be sure your analyses are typed and printed with your name, PID and Honor pledge that signifies your work is your own. See the Sakai site for further guidelines for your film analyses.
4. **1** 6-8-page, double-spaced paper on one of six assigned topics, due by **5pm on Friday, April 22, 2016**. Papers should rely primarily on readings and materials discussed in lectures and

recitation sections. While permissible, the use of secondary sources from Davis Library is not required (see suggested readings on the last page of this syllabus). Late papers will not be accepted. See Sakai site for more details on what qualifies a good paper.

Exams

The course requires two exams, each of which will consist of short essays and identifications:

1. **1** midterm exam, scheduled for **Wednesday, March 9, 2016 during the regular class hour**; &
2. **1** three-hour final exam, scheduled for **Thursday, May 5, 2016 at 8 am**. The location of the final will be announced in class and on the Sakai site.

Participation & Attendance

Being properly prepared for class and active participation in your recitation section is a must in this course. Please note below that basic participation requirements make up 30% of your final grade. For this reason, all absences in recitation sections will affect your final grade in German 280.

Grading Policy

Course grades will be calculated according to the following formula:

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| 28 Reading and Lecture Writing Assignments & In-Class Participation | 30% |
| 2 Film Analyses (5% each) | 10% |
| 1 Paper | 15% |
| 1 Midterm | 15% |
| 1 Final Exam | 30% |

Honor Code

The UNC Honor Code states: "It shall be the responsibility of every student at The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill to obey and support the enforcement of the honor code, which prohibits lying, cheating, or stealing when these actions involve academic processes or University, student or academic personnel acting in an official capacity." The honor code is strictly enforced in this course. You are required to sign the following pledge on all written work: **"On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid on this assignment."** To meet this standard in this seminar, please note the following: 1) Although the writing of the paper must be your own, you are permitted and encouraged to discuss the content of your papers with your classmates or anyone else, for that matter; 2) You must, however, give citations for ideas that are not your own, whether or not those ideas have been written down, published somewhere or posted on the Internet. Papers must be original work, and any suspected incidents of plagiarism will be reported to the UNC Honor Court. In case you are unsure what plagiarism means or entails, please consult the Honor Code at the following link: honor.unc.edu

Syllabus

Unit 1: What Makes German Philosophy German? (1 Week)

1.1 What do sex, drugs, and rock have to do with German philosophy?

| Date | Lecture & Discussion Topics | Homework |
|--------------------|--|---|
| Monday, Jan. 11 | Introductory Lecture: Philosophy & Life, Course Goals | |
| Wednesday, Jan. 13 | Jaspers on Philosophy & Everyday Life; Bowie on the Uniqueness of German Philosophy; & Gorner on German Philosophy's Roots | |
| Friday, Jan. 15 | Jaspers, Bowie & Gorner on German Philosophy | Read: Jaspers, Bowie, Gorner Answer: Sakai Lecture & Reading Questions |

Readings:

1. Karl Jaspers. "Philosophy in the World." 116-125.
2. Andrew Bowie. *Introduction to German Philosophy*. 1-12.
3. Paul Gorner. "The German Tradition." 1-11.

Unit 2: Sex (& Love) (4 Weeks)

2.1 On the Importance of Flirting: Georg Simmel and the Philosophy of Culture

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| Monday, Jan. 18 | | Martin Luther King, Jr. Day |
| Wednesday, Jan. 20 | Mysteries of Culture: Flirting & the Battle of the Sexes | Answer: Sakai Reading Questions View: Attend tonight's 5pm screening of "Fast Times at Ridgemont High" (1982) |
| Friday, Jan. 22 | Simmel on Flirting & Culture | Read: Simmel Answer: Sakai Lecture Questions |

Readings:

4. Georg Simmel. Excerpts from: *The Philosophy of Money*. 446-457.
5. Georg Simmel. "Flirtation." 133-152.

2.2 The Utopian Politics of Good Sex: Herbert Marcuse's Critical Theory

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|--------------------|---|--|
| Monday, Jan. 25 | The Practical Philosophy of Critical Theory | Answer: Sakai Reading Questions |
| Wednesday, Jan. 27 | Marcuse's Critique of Freud and Marx | |
| Friday, Jan. 29 | Marcuse on Eros & Culture | Read: Marcuse Answer: Sakai Lecture Questions |

Reading:

6. Herbert Marcuse. Excerpts from: *Eros and Civilization*. 13-19, 106-126, 197-221.

2.3 The Ethics of Love: Hannah Arendt's *Existenz* Philosophy

| Date | Lecture & Discussion Topics | Homework |
|-------------------|--|---|
| Monday, Feb. 1 | Modern German Existentialism: Jaspers, Heidegger, Arendt | Answer: Sakai Reading Questions View: Attend tonight's 5pm screening of "A Rebel without a Cause" (1955) |
| Wednesday, Feb. 3 | Hannah Arendt on Freedom & Love | |
| Friday, Feb. 5 | Arendt on Good Love & Bad Love | Read: Arendt Answer: Sakai Lecture Questions |

Reading:

7. Hannah Arendt. Excerpts from: *Love and Saint Augustine*. 9-35.

2.4 Public Displays of Affect-ion (PDA): Peter Sloterdijk's Dionysian Materialism

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|--------------------|---|---|
| Monday, Feb. 8 | Cynicism, the Exhaustion of Enlightenment & Critical Theory | Answer: Sakai Reading Questions |
| Wednesday, Feb. 10 | The New Gay Science: Sloterdijk's Kynicism & PDA | |
| Friday, Feb. 12 | Sloterdijk on Cynicism & Kynical Sex Acts | Read: Sloterdijk Answer: Sakai Lecture Questions |

Reading:

8. Peter Sloterdijk. Excerpts from: *Critique of Cynical Reason*. xxvi-xxxviii, 3-8, 101-110, 329-330, 340-343.

Unit 3: Drugs (4 Weeks)

3.1 Getting Drunk: Nietzsche's Vitalism

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| Monday, Feb. 15 | The Old Gay Science: Nietzsche & the Critique of Rational Society | Answer: Sakai Reading Questions View: Attend tonight's 5pm screening of "Dazed and Confused" (1993) |
| Wednesday, Feb. 17 | To Drink or Not to Drink: Dionysian versus Apollonian | |
| Friday, Feb. 19 | Nietzsche on Intoxication | Read: Nietzsche Answer: Sakai Lecture Questions |

Reading:

9. Friedrich Nietzsche. "The Dionysiac World View." 117-138.

3.2 Taking Hashish: Walter Benjamin's Profane Illumination

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| Monday, Feb. 22 | Historical Materialism & Jewish Mysticism | Answer: Sakai Reading Questions |
| Wednesday, Feb. 24 | Drug Quests: Benjamin's Profane Illumination | |
| Friday, Feb. 26 | Benjamin on Surrealism & Eating Hashish | Read: Benjamin No. 1 & No. 2 Answer: Sakai Lecture Questions Submit: 1 st Film Analysis by 5pm |

Readings:

10. Walter Benjamin. "Surrealism: The Last Snapshot of the European Intellegentsia." 207-224.

11. Walter Benjamin. "Hashish in Marsailles." 673-679.

3.3 Drugs & Boredom: Martin Heidegger's Existential Phenomenology

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| Monday, Feb. 29 | German Phenomenology & the Question of Being | Answer: Sakai Reading Questions View: Attend tonight's 5pm screening of "A Clockwork Orange" (1971) |
| Wednesday, Mar. 2 | Heidegger on the Attunement of Being | |
| Friday, Mar. 4 | Heidegger on Fear | Read: Heidegger Answer: Sakai Lecture Questions |

Reading:

12. Martin Heidegger. "What is Metaphysics?" 90-110.

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| Monday, Mar. 7 | Review for Exam | Review: Review Questions |
| Wednesday, Mar. 9 | Midterm Exam | |
| Friday, Mar. 11 | Final Paper Assignments Distributed in Recitation Section | |

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| Monday, Mar. 11 - Friday, Mar. 18 | Spring Break |
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3.4 Just Say No to Drugs: Jürgen Habermas's Communicative Reason

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| Monday, Mar. 21 | The Death & Rebirth of the Frankfurt School: The Linguistic Turn | Answer: Sakai Reading Questions |
| Wednesday, Mar. 23 | Habermas & the Language of Intersubjective Consensus | |
| Friday, Mar. 25 | Good Friday, No Classes | |

Readings:

13. Jürgen Habermas. Excerpts from: "What Is Universal Pragmatics?" 1-5, 21-34, 208-210, 214-216.

14. Jürgen Habermas. Excerpts from: "Historical Materialism and the Development of Normative Structures." 98-99, 116-120, 222, 224-225.

Unit 4: Rock 'n' Roll (and Other Cultural Matters) (4 Weeks)

4.1 Bad Rock 'n' Roll: Theodor Adorno's Critical Theory

| Date | Lecture & Discussion Topics | Homework |
|--------------------|--|--|
| Monday, Mar. 28 | The History of Bourgeois Culture & the Beautiful | Answer: Sakai Reading Questions View: Attend tonight's 5pm screening of "Last Days" (2005) |
| Wednesday, Mar. 30 | Jazz, the Beatles, & other Forms of Barbarism: The Frankfurt School on Pop Music | |
| Friday, Apr. 1 | Habermas on Communicative Rationality Adorno on Jazz | Read: Adorno Answer: Sakai Lecture Questions Submit: 2 nd Film Analysis by 5pm |

Reading:

15. Theodor W. Adorno. "Perennial Fashion—Jazz." 119-132.

4.2 You Are the Next American Idol: Ernst Bloch's Concrete Philosophy of Futurity

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|-------------------|--|--|
| Monday, Apr. 4 | Romanticism, Expressionism, Utopianism: Ernst Bloch & Marxism | Answer: Sakai Reading Questions |
| Wednesday, Apr. 6 | Ernst Bloch & the Dream of a Better Life | |
| Friday, Apr. 8 | Bloch on Newness, Hope & Singing | Read: Bloch No. 1 & No. 2 Answer: Sakai Lecture Questions |

Readings:

16. Ernst Bloch. Excerpts from: *The Principle of Hope*. 3-29.
17. Ernst Bloch. "Magic Rattle, Human Harp." 140-145.

4.3 To Lip Sync or not to Lip Sync: Hans-Georg Gadamer's Hermeneutics

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|--------------------|---|---|
| Monday, Apr. 11 | From Biblical Exegesis to Hermeneutics to Song Lyrics: The History of Interpretation | Answer: Sakai Reading Questions View: Attend tonight's 5pm screening of "Hairspray" (1988) |
| Wednesday, Apr. 13 | Gadamer on Language, Understanding & the Limits of Interpretation | |
| Friday, Apr. 15 | Gadamer on Understanding | Read: Gadamer Answer: Sakai Lecture Questions |

Reading:

18. Hans-Georg Gadamer. "Language and Understanding." 89-107.

4.4 I Want My MTV: Oskar Negt & Alexander Kluge & the Counterpublic Sphere

| Date | Lecture & Discussion Topics | Homework |
|--------------------|--|---|
| Monday, Apr. 18 | The History of the Public Sphere: Habermas on the Coffeehouse & Why Folksingers Suck | Answer: Sakai Reading Questions |
| Wednesday, Apr. 20 | Negt & Kluge & the Problem with iTunes | |
| Friday, Apr. 22 | Negt & Kluge on the Public Sphere | Read: Negt and Kluge Answer: Sakai Lecture Questions Submit: Your final paper by 5pm |

Reading:

19. Oskar Negt and Alexander Kluge. Excerpts from: *Public Sphere and Experience*. xliii-xlix, 1-18, 32-39.
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Unit 5: Why Grow Up?

5.1 Growing Up...Responsibility

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| Monday, Apr. 25 | Ethics before & after Auschwitz | |
| Wednesday, Apr. 27 | Jonas' Ethics for an Age of Disaster | Answer: Sakai Reading Questions |

Reading:

20. Hans Jonas. Excerpts from: *The Imperative of Responsibility*. 1-24, 233.

Thursday, May 5

Final Exam, 8 am - 11 am

Additional Optional Readings On Reserve

Unit I: What is Philosophy?

Andrew Bowie. *Introduction to German Philosophy: From Kant to Habermas*. Cambridge: Polity Press, 2003.

Simon Critchley. *Continental Philosophy: A Very Short Introduction*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001.

Karl Jaspers. *Way to Wisdom: An Introduction to Philosophy*. New Haven: Yale Nota Bene, 2003.

Unit II: Sex

Simmel: David Frisby. *Georg Simmel*. Revised Edition. London: Routledge, 2002.

Marcuse: Douglas Kellner. *Herbert Marcuse and the Crisis of Marxism*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984.

Arendt: Elizabeth Young-Bruehl. *For the Love of the World*. 2d Edition. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004.

Sloterdijk: Andreas Huyssen. "The Return of Diogenes as Postmodern Intellectual." *Critique of Cynical Reason*. Trans. Michael Eldred. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987. ix-xxv.

Unit III: Drugs

Nietzsche: Michael Tanner. *Nietzsche*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994.

Benjamin: Richard Wolin. *Walter Benjamin: An Aesthetic of Redemption*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994.

Heidegger: William Blattner. *Heidegger's Being and Time: A Reader's Guide*. London: Continuum, 2006.

Habermas: Mark Wrathall. *How to Read Heidegger*. New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 2006.

Unit IV: Rock and Roll

Adorno: Martin Jay. *Adorno*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1984.

Bloch: Vincent Geoghegan. *Ernst Bloch*. London: Routledge, 1996.

Gadamer: Jean Grondin. *The Philosophy of Gadamer*. Trans. Kathryn Plant. Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2003.

Negt and Kluge: Miriam Hansen, "Foreword." *Public Sphere and Experience: Toward an Analysis of the Bourgeois and Proletarian Public Sphere*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993. ix-xli. Also published in *Public Culture* 5.2 (1993): 179-212.

Unit V: Responsibility

Jonas: Richard Wolin. "Hans Jonas: The Philosopher of Life." *Heidegger's Children: Hannah Arendt, Karl Löwith, Hans Jonas, and Herbert Marcuse*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001. 101-133.