Philosophy 421: Topics in European and Continental Philosophy: FREUD

spring semester 2016, TTh 10:20–11:40, 523 South Kedzie Hall
Debra Nails, 501 South Kedzie Hall, nails@msu.edu
office hours: M 13:00–15:00, Th 11:45–12:45 & by appointment

Course description and goals:

Sigmund Freud’s influence on twentieth century culture has been so pervasive that it would be difficult to find an academic discipline not profoundly affected by it. Nor would it be a simple task to discover an academic discipline from which Freud did not draw both inspiration and material. Philosophy is no exception. Freud’s metapsychology, the theory as opposed to the practice of psychoanalysis, is permanently important to such enduring philosophical issues as the mind-body problem, freedom of the will, and the nature of science. The Frankfurt School and contemporary critical theory hold up Marx and Freud as its twin forefathers. Philosophers as diverse as Wittgenstein, Dewey, and Davidson elaborated his work. In recent decades, subdisciplines of philosophy such as philosophy of mind, action theory, cognitive science, and the philosophy of science have used, interpreted, and criticized Freud’s theories in unprecedented ways. By reading and discussing what Freud himself wrote, more than relying on secondary accounts, you should be able to reach an understanding of Freud’s attempt to construct a science of the mind. As in all philosophy courses, participation will help you think, speak, and write more clearly and concisely.

Required texts:

———. *The Interpretation of Dreams* is available on LON-CAPA <https://loncapa.msu.edu>

Evaluation:

33 ⅓% research project/paper (including drafts, peer reviews, and final in-class presentation)
33 ⅓% participation (read assignments in advance and be prepared to discuss* them)
33 ⅓% book chapters and articles associated with the research project, and shared with the class in two preliminary presentations

* For each class, have at least one question, one supportive comment, and one opposing comment.

### Schedule of readings and assignments:

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Tuesday</th>
<th>Thursday</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>19 secondary literature on Freud: the lay of the land in philosophy</td>
<td>21 Peter Gay, “Freud: A Brief Life” front matter in both <em>The Ego and the Id</em> and <em>Beyond the Pleasure Principle</em></td>
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<td>9 “Formulations on the Two Principles of Mental Functioning” (1911)</td>
<td>11 “A Note on the Unconscious in Psychoanalysis” (1912)</td>
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<td>16 “On Narcissism: An Introduction” (1914)</td>
<td>18 “Instincts and Their Vicissitudes” (1915)</td>
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<td>23 “Repression” (1915)</td>
<td>25 “A Metapsychological Supplement to the Theory of Dreams” (1917)</td>
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<td>1 Jackson Ciofu</td>
<td>3 APA-C meeting in Chicago</td>
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<td>March</td>
<td>8 spring break</td>
<td>10 spring break</td>
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<td>15 Todd Hedrick: Marcuse (reading on LON-CAPA)</td>
<td>17 Todd Hedrick: Adorno (reading on LON-CAPA)</td>
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<td>22 “The Unconscious” (1915) &amp; “Mourning and Melancholia” (1917)</td>
<td>24 <em>Beyond the Pleasure Principle</em> (1920), chapters 1–3</td>
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<td>29 <em>Beyond the Pleasure Principle</em> (1920), chapters 4–6</td>
<td>31 <em>The Ego and the Id</em> (1923), chapters 1–3</td>
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<td>April</td>
<td>5 <em>The Ego and the Id</em> (1923), chapters 4–5, the two appendices</td>
<td>7 “The Economic Problem of Masochism” (1924)</td>
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<td>12 “A Note Upon the Mystic Writing Pad” (1925)</td>
<td>14 “Negation” (1925)</td>
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<td>19 presentations and comments</td>
<td>21 presentations and comments</td>
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<td>26 presentations and comments</td>
<td>28 revisions and peer reviews</td>
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<td>May</td>
<td>5 research papers (peer reviews attached)</td>
<td>due 7:45–9:45 p.m. = FINAL EXAM</td>
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Policies:

1. *Classroom etiquette.* Turn off phones and noisy devices; give the class your undivided attention. Robust constructive criticism is essential to dialectic; but it should be aimed carefully at evidence, arguments, and methods—not at the person making the claims.

2. *I keep office hours,* warning you in advance if I anticipate some unusual commitment that will keep me away; but I *enjoy* office hours when students visit, so don’t hesitate to *drop in*—no appointment necessary. If the door is open, please come in (i.e., don’t wait around for someone else to leave). If posted hours are inconvenient, please make an appointment by phone or email. I normally answer email promptly.

3. *Return of written work:* I return your work no more than ten days from its submission (except if illness or travel interferes). You will receive an additional .5 on your assignment for each class period that I fail to return your work.

4. *Do your own work cooperatively.* Do not submit for credit in this course work completed for another course; and do not submit work that is not your own—ever. You are strongly encouraged to study, discuss, and dispute with others everything we do. The formation of study groups is a good idea, and you are not in competition.

5. *Why there are no make-ups:* It is your responsibility to find out whether *ad hoc* assignments have been made during classes you miss. If you are too ill to attend class, written work can be submitted by email attachment. If serious illness or an emergency prevents your turning something in by the time the class meets, you have 48 hours from the time of your recovery to submit the work. (I do *not* want to see documentation.)

7. *Academic Freedom and Integrity.* Article 2.3.3 of *Student Rights and Responsibilities* states that “the student shares with the faculty the responsibility for maintaining the integrity of scholarship, grades, and professional standards.” In addition, the Department of Philosophy adheres to the policies on academic honesty as specified in *General Student Regulations* 1.0, Protection of Scholarship and Grades, and in the All-University Policy on Integrity of Scholarship and Grades, which are included in *Spartan Life: Student Handbook and Resource Guide*. Students who commit an act of academic dishonesty may receive a 0.0 on the assignment or in the course.

8. *Accommodation for Students with Disabilities.* Students with disabilities should contact the Resource Center for Persons with Disabilities to establish reasonable accommodation.

Some Readings Appropriate for Oral Presentations

Other of Freud’s works:

*General Introduction to Psychoanalysis*
*The Future of an Illusion*
*Civilization and its Discontents*

**Famous case studies:** Anna O.; Little Hans; The Rat Man; Dora; Schreber
Secondary sources: