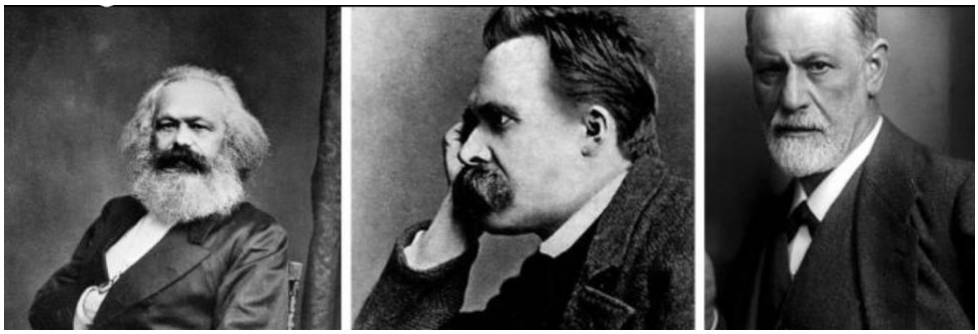
GMST 371
Marx, Nietzsche, and Freud in Cultural Context
Thomas Kemple
Tuesdays/Thursdays 2:00-3:20, 2026W Term 1



Karl Marx (1818-1883), Friedrich Nietzsche (1844-1900), and Sigmund Freud (1856-1939) have been called 'masters of suspicion' and 'founders of modern discourse' insofar as they inaugurated a detailed analysis and thorough critique of Western culture. Our course will conduct a careful reading of their most influential works – with a focus on Marx's *Capital*, Nietzsche's *On the Genealogy of Morality*, and Freud's *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* – in light of their socio-historical context and relevance to contemporary problems. Our task is not just to interpret these thinkers from various perspectives (literary, philosophical, political, economic, sociological, and psychological), but also to consider how they 'read us' along with the challenges we face today.

Course texts (these editions are *required*, electronic or hard copy)
https://the.bookstore.ubc.ca/CourseSearch/?course%5B%5D=UBCV,2026W1,GMST,GMST371,101

Freud, Sigmund (2011 [1920]). *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*. Gregory C. Richter trans. Todd Dufresne ed. Broadview Editions.

Marx, Karl (2024 [1872]. *Capital: Critique of Political Economy Volume I*. Paul Reitter trans. Paul North, Paul Reiter eds. Princeton University Press (selections on Canvas).

Nietzsche, Friedrich (2023 [1887]). *On the Genealogy of Morality: A Polemical Tract*. Ian Johnston trans. Gregory Maertz ed.. Broadview Editions.

Course requirements (details provided in class and on Canvas)

Three (3) short in-class commentaries (½ hour) September 29, October 27, and November 24 (5% each, lowest grade dropped, 10% total).

Three (3) essays focusing on *Capital* (hard copy due at beginning of class October 13; 30%); *On the Genealogy of Morality* (hard copy due at beginning of class November 10; 30%); *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* (hard copy in BuTo 603 or soft copy on Canvas due 2pm December 8; 30%). Essays must be 1200-1500 words (5-7 pages double-spaced) and quote from and comment on the texts. Essay topics, secondary sources, GenAI rules, and late penalties will be discussed in class. (An optional re-write or fourth essay is due at 2pm on Canvas or BuTo 603 on December 10).

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** In-class commentaries (1/2 hour) dates **underlined** **

Intro. (Sep. 10): Marx/Nietzsche/Freud –Masters of Suspicion, Founders of Modern Discourse

MARX

Week 1 (Sep. 15, 17): *The Communist Manifesto,* Section 1 (pages 14-21);
Capital I, 'Preface to 1867 Edition' (5-8); 'Afterword to 1872 Edition' (702-710)

Week 2 (Sep. 22, 24): *Capital I,* Chapter 1.1-2 (13-24), 1.4 (47-49)

Week 3 (**Sep. 29**, Oct 1): *Capital I,* Chapter 4.3 (140-149); Chapter 5 (153-173);
Chapter 8.1-2 (203-215); Chapter 10 (285-293)

Week 4 (Oct. 6, 8): *Capital I,* Chapter 13.1 (341-355), 13.10 (459-461); Chapter 17 (491-498);
Chapter 23.4 (586-593); Chapter 24.7 (689-692); Chapter 25 (690-701)

** **Essay #1** on *Capital* due in class, 2pm **October 13** **

NIETZSCHE

Week 5 (Oct. 13-15): Nietzsche selections (pages 199-209); *Genealogy,* 'Prologue' (45-53)

Week 6 (Oct. 20, 22): *Genealogy,* First Essay (55-86)

Week 7 (**Oct. 27**, 29): *Genealogy,* Second Essay (87-124)

Week 8 (Nov. 3, 5): *Genealogy,* Third Essay, Sections 1 (125) and 11-28 (145-190)

** **Essay #2** on *On the Genealogy of Morality* due in class, 2pm **November 10** **

FREUD

Week 9 (Nov. 10, 12): Freud selections (pages 102-135)

Week 10 (Nov. 17, 19): *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, Sections I-IV (51-73)

Week 11 (**Nov. 24**, 26): *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, Section V-VII (73-99)

Week 12 (Dec. 1, 3): Commentaries by Klein (175-185); Butler (358-367); Marcuse (250-260);
Laplanche (260-265); Deleuze & Guattari (265-275)

** **Essay # 3** on *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* due on Canvas or BuTo 603, 2pm **December 8** **

** Optional Rewrite or Essay #4 due on Canvas or BuTo 603, 2pm December 10 **