

Intellectual Foundations XXX
Ideological Experiments of the 20th Century
(3 credits)
Monday and Friday

Required Texts:

Books:

Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Second Discourse* (Hackett)
Alain Besançon, *A Century of Horrors* (Intercollegiate Studies Institute)
Martin Amis, *Koba The Dread: Laughter and the Twenty Million* (Vintage)

Handouts:

Aristotle, *Politics* 1.2
Genesis 11:1-9; Matthew 4:1-11; Luke 4:1-13
Fyodor Dostoevsky, "The Grand Inquisitor"
Karl Marx, *Capital*, chapter 1 (sections 1 and 4), Chapter 10 (sections 1-4); "Alienated Labor";
 The German Ideology (selections); "The Communist Manifesto"; "On the Jewish Question,"
 Part II.
Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn, "The History of Our Sewage Disposal System" and "The Bluecaps,"
 from *The Gulag Archipelago*
François Furet, "The Revolutionary Passion"
Gary Saul Morson, "Leninthink"
Susannah Heschel, *The Aryan Jesus*, Introduction and ch. 1
Frank Dikotter, "Mao Cult"
Lezek Kolakowski, "The Marxist Roots of Stalinism."
Varlam Shalamov, *Kolyma Tales* (selections)
Vasily Grossman, *Everything Flows*, ch. 14
Robert Cook, "Walpurgis Week in the Soviet Union," *The Scientific Monthly*, 1949, pgs.
 367-372.
Czesław Miłosz, *The Captive Mind*, ch. 1

Course Description: This course is an examination of the philosophical roots and practical consequences of ideological tyranny in the 20th century, particularly Nazism and Soviet Communism. What are the presuppositions of ideological experimentation? What does ideological tyranny do to the bodies and characters of individual human beings? What are its effects on thought, art, politics, religion, and the economy?

N.B.: This course partially fulfills THECB requirements for general education in Social and Behavioral Sciences and Humanities and Fine Arts, and develops skills in written and oral communication.

Course Outcomes and Objectives:

Outcome: Achieve a critical understanding of the philosophical roots and practical consequences of ideological tyranny in the 20th century

Objectives: Students will be able to:

- Understand how Communists and Nazis used thinkers like Rousseau and Nietzsche to justify their practical programs
- Identify the effects of ideological tyranny on individuals and societies
- Explain the continuing attraction of Marxism as compared to Nazism

This course satisfies the following Intellectual Foundations outcomes:

1. Display proficiency in the English language through interpretation of texts, persuasive writing, and effective speaking.
4. Identify the necessary conditions of flourishing human lives and communities.
5. Achieve a critical understanding of modern society and Western culture.

Accessibility Statement: Please review the University Accessibility Statement in the student catalog. Students having special needs should contact the Student Success Center.

Disability Support Services: The university will make reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities in compliance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act and the Americans with Disabilities Act. The purpose of accommodations is to provide equal access to educational opportunities for eligible students with academic and/or physical disabilities.

Course Requirements: The course will emphasize discussion and the ability to communicate clearly and effectively in speech as well as writing. You should carefully complete the readings prior to the class in which they are to be discussed.

Grades will be weighted as follows:

Reflections – 40%
Two 2000-word papers – 50%
In-class contributions – 10%

Papers: all papers must be typed and double-spaced, in times roman 12 pt. font or the equivalent.

Reflections: Once each week (in weeks 1, 2, 3, 4, 7, 8, 9, and 10), you should select a passage or a line of argument from the day's reading that grabs your interest and unpack it in roughly 300-500 words. (In the case of philosophical authors like Rousseau and Nietzsche, it is best to select a short passage and quote it at the beginning of your reflection; for other authors, you may wish to examine a longer stretch of text.) Some questions you might ponder: What is noteworthy, strange, or surprising about the passage you've chosen? How does it illuminate or connect with other parts of the text? What questions or issues worthy of discussion in class are prompted by the passage? These assignments will help you to read carefully and think deeply about the text.

Electronics: Please do not use laptops, iPads, cellphones, or any other electronic devices during class.

Policy on Plagiarism: Students are required to familiarize themselves with the definition of plagiarism included in the Student Handbook. Any student shown to be guilty of plagiarizing will automatically fail the course.

Schedule of Classes:

Week 1 (Reflection due)

1. Introduction to the Course; Aristotle, *Politics* 1.2; Genesis 11:1-9
2. Matthew 4:1-11; Luke 4:1-13; Fyodor Dostoevsky, "The Grand Inquisitor"

Week 2 (Reflection due)

1. Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Second Discourse*, Preface and Part 1
2. *Second Discourse*, Part 2

Week 3 (Reflection due)

1. Karl Marx, *Capital*, chapter 1 (sections 1 and 4), Chapter 10 (sections 1-4)
2. Marx, "Alienated Labor"; *The German Ideology* (selections)

Week 4 (Reflection due)

1. Marx, "The Communist Manifesto"
2. Marx, "On the Jewish Question," Part II

Week 5

1. Alain Besançon, *A Century of Horrors*, chs. 1-2
2. Alain Besançon, *A Century of Horrors*, ch. 3; Gary Saul Morson, "Leninthink"

Week 6

1. READING. **2000-word paper due.**
2. READING

Week 7 (Reflection due)

1. Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn, "The History of Our Sewage Disposal System"
2. Solzhenitsyn, "The Bluecaps"

Week 8 (Reflection due)

1. Susannah Heschel, *The Aryan Jesus*, Introduction and ch. 1; Frank Dikotter, "Mao Cult"
2. Martin Amis, *Koba The Dread*, pp. 4-50; Francois Furet, "The Revolutionary Passion" (chapter 1 from *Passing of an Illusion*).

Week 9 (Reflection due)

1. *Koba The Dread*, pp. 50-102. Lezek Kolakowski, "The Marxist Roots of Stalinism."
2. *Koba The Dread*, pp. 102-158, Varlam Shalamov, *Kolyma Tales*, "Through the Snow," "Berries," "Vaska Denisov, Kidnapper of Pigs," "Major Pugachov's Last Battle."

Week 10 (Reflection due)

1. *Koba The Dread*, pp. 158-204; Robert Cook, "Walpurgis Week in the Soviet Union," *The*

Scientific Monthly, 1949, pgs. 367-372.

2. *Koba The Dread*, pp. 204-241; Vasily Grossman, *Everything Flows*, ch. 14

Week 11

1. Czesław Miłosz, *The Captive Mind*, ch. 1

2. READING/EXAMS. **2000-word paper due.**