German 8200

The Late Works of Friedrich Nietzsche
Seminar in Literature and Literary Culture

Holub | 3 credit units | M 9:00-11:48 | Autumn Semester 2012

The writings Nietzsche composed after he completed Zarathustra comprise some of his most interesting and provocative works. The aphoristic Beyond Good and Evil (1886) sets the tone for this final period, dealing with a variety of themes from epistemology and ethics to social and political observations. The Genealogy of Morals (1887) purports to clarify comments made in Beyond Good and Evil, providing a detailed explanation of Nietzsche’s critique of moral conventions in contemporary Europe, as well as reflections on their history and origins, and implications. In his final year Nietzsche produced a variety of short texts: two of these (Nietzsche Contra Wagner and The Case of Wagner) focus on the composer Richard Wagner, who was a veritable obsession for Nietzsche since the 1860s, but whom Nietzsche openly opposes only in these late works; one deals with Nietzsche’s critique of Christianity (The Antichrist/Antichristian), which was an ongoing concern in the 1880s; one contains more general themes and thoughts (Twilight of the Idols); and one is an unusual autobiography (Ecce Homo). In addition Nietzsche filled several hundred pages of notebooks with thoughts, schemes, and commentary on his reading; he completed a fifth section of The Gay Science (first four sections published in 1882; fifth section in 1887), and two prefaces for earlier works (Birth of Tragedy and The Gay Science). We will be examining this body of work, or at least a portion of it, to determine his last views on a variety of important topics and endeavor to place him in the context of nineteenth-century thought.

The following assignments are anticipated: responsibility for leading one class discussion; one seminar paper presented during the last weeks of the semester.
Prereq: 6500, Grad standing, or permission of instructor. Repeatable to a maximum of 30 cr hrs. Admis Cond course.