

German 407/507 – ANGST –

Winter 2012

Tues/Thurs 2:00-3:20

203 CHA

Prof. Jeffrey S. Librett

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Hours: Tues. 3:30 – 4:00 and by appt.

204 Friendly Hall

Jan 10 Introduction

I. Anxiety in the Context of Religious Existentialism

Jan 12 Kierkegaard, Søren -- The Concept of Anxiety (1844)
Intro and Chapter One

Jan 17 Chapter Two

Jan 19 Chapter Three

Jan 24 Chapter Four

Jan 26 Chapter Five

First Paper Due: 4 page summary of Kierkegaard's approach to anxiety (5-6 page summary for graduate students)

II. Anxiety in the Context of the Thinking of Being

Jan 31 Heidegger, Martin -- "Was ist Metaphysik?" (1929)
"What is Metaphysics?"
Recommended: "Nachwort zu 'Was ist Metaphysik?'" (1943)
"Einleitung zu 'Was ist Metaphysik?'" (1949);
Ch. 5, "Life," from Herbert Schnädelbach, Philosophy in Germany, 1831-1933.

Feb 2 Sein und Zeit (1927), (Being and Time), § 1-4, §9, § 12
Recommended: Ch. 7, "Being," from Herbert Schnädelbach, Philosophy in Germany, 1831-1933.

Feb 7 Part One, Ch. 4, first page, then § 25-27; §29-30.

Feb 9 §38-42

Feb 14 § 45-53

Feb 16 §54-60; §68, a and b.

III. Anxiety in the Context of Psychoanalysis

Feb 21 Freud, Sigmund -- Hemmung, Symptom, Angst (1926)

(Inhibitions, Symptoms, Anxiety), I-IV

Second Paper Due, 4 pages, on Anxiety in Heidegger,
5-6 pages for graduate students

Feb 23

V-VII

Feb 28

VIII-X

March 1

XI, Appendices

Recommended: Melanie Klein, "Infantile Anxiety Situations

Reflected in a Work of Art and in the Creative Impulse" (1929)

IV. Anxiety in the Context of Post-World War II German Fiction

March 6

Bernhard, Thomas, Beton (1982)

(Concrete), S. 7-57; p. 3-39

Recommended: Heinz Dieter Kittsteiner, "Die Angst in der
Geschichte und die Re-Personalisierung des Feindes" (103-128).

March 8

S. 57-115; p. 40-83

March 13

S. 115-160; p. 83-117

March 15

S. 160-213; p. 117-156.

Last Class

MARCH 22 (1:00)

Final Paper Due: 6 pages on Bernhard in terms of Freud,
Heidegger, or Kierkegaard, or comparing/contrasting two of the
theoretical approaches (Kierkegaard with Heidegger, Kierkegaard
with Freud, Heidegger with Freud). Papers to be submitted in
hard copy at German Dept office.

Undergraduate Requirements/Grading:

Class participation:	20 %
4-page papers:	40 % (i.e. 20% each)
6-page final paper:	<u>40%</u>
	100%

Undergraduate Guidelines:

1. All papers to be written in German (for German-language course credit toward major).
2. Required readings to be done in German as much as possible, but you should feel free to read in English as much as necessary to keep up with the readings.
3. Recommended readings are optional.

4. If we are not able to provide sufficient German-language discussion time during the regular class hours (which depends on the students who would like to take the class), I will arrange, with the German majors who need this, a time for an additional discussion section, once every two weeks, for 45 minutes auf Deutsch.

Graduate Requirements/Grading:

Class participation:	20%
5-6 page papers:	40%
15-20 page final paper (or take-home essay exam)	<u>40%</u>
	100%

Graduate Guidelines:

1. Papers to be written in German or English
2. All required and recommended readings to be done, in German and/or English, depending on program and linguistic facility.

Course Materials:

All book-length readings should be available in the campus bookstore in German and English (with exception of Kierkegaard, whom I haven't ordered in German because he wrote in Danish). All other readings will be provided either as scanned and placed onto Blackboard site for the course, or as copied for the students.

Academic Dishonesty Policy:

All sources of ideas (not just of specific wordings) must be acknowledged in footnotes or endnotes. MLA guidelines and social science format (e.g. APA) are equally acceptable from undergraduates. Graduate students should use MLA format.

If sources are not acknowledged, the given assignment will receive a failing grade. If this happens on two assignments, the student will receive a failing grade for the terms.

Disability Policy:

If you have a documented disability, please let me know, and please bring me official documentation, and I will be happy to make appropriate arrangements.

Course Description:

We will be studying in this course three different modernist (post-Romantic) theoretical approaches to a mood, *anxiety*, that became particularly important for the philosophy and literature of this period, and we will be concluding with the reading of one post-World War II literary approach to this phenomenon. The specifically modernist and post-Romantic character of these approaches is legible in the fact that here a mood--a purely subjective matter--is rationally analyzed so as to be made into a mode of access to a kind of important knowledge, but a knowledge that is not that of a rationally determinable object. That is, we are between subjectivism and objectivism here, and between irrationalism and rationalism, i.e. between Romanticism and Enlightenment, and beyond each. This middle position is often characteristic of modernism in literature and philosophy.

The three theoretical approaches we will consider are widely divergent, although the first two (Kierkegaard and Heidegger) fall traditionally under the heading of "existentialism" and the second of these elaborates on the first. To approximate this divergence, one can say that the first approach (Kierkegaard's) is theological, or even ontotheological; the second (Heidegger's) is cosmological or ontocosmological, and the third (Freud's) is psychological or ontopsychological. By this I mean that the horizon against which each positions anxiety, or the context in which each situates it, is different in this way: Kierkegaard reads anxiety as offering access to a religious transcendence, access through faith to the Being of God (the "onto"-prefix refers to "ontology" as theory of Being); Heidegger reads it as offering access to a worldly transcendence, access to the Being of the World; and Freud reads it as offering access to a psychological transcendence, access to the Being of the Psyche qua Desire or libidinal energy, ultimately eros-thanatos, the principle of love-hate or life-death or identity-difference. (As we go along, we will have to see how these initial characterizations need to be modified or qualified.) In the case of Thomas Bernhard, an important Austrian novelist of the post-War period, anxiety is embodied in his narrative voice, rather than theorized, as an obsessive style that

breathlessly runs on through exacerbatedly elongated sentences and maddening/maddened repetitions, registering an impossibility of mastering a traumatic historical past (Nazism and the Holocaust) that is matched only by the narrator's helplessly passionate desire to achieve this mastery, which eludes him. We will conclude the course by considering this novel in light of the three theoretical paradigms of anxiety previously examined, and reconsidering them, in turn, in light of the novel.

The result will be an introduction to one of the guiding themes of modernism (one could also include W.H. Auden's book-length poem, The Age of Anxiety, and many other important modernist texts under this heading, and even many romantic texts--such as those by E.T.A. Hoffmann--and preromantic texts, as history is certainly not so simple as to proceed in a purely linear fashion, something that modernism in fact teaches). As this theme continually leads us to consider the finitude of human existence, and the situation of the human in time, questions of Being and time, essence and existence, or reality and appearance, will constantly be part of our discussion.

Note on comprehensibility: The texts we read here will be in part extremely difficult to follow. This goes especially for Kierkegaard and Heidegger, less so for Freud and Bernhard. One will have to accept, therefore, from the outset, that the reading will go slowly, and that one's comprehension will be partial. There's nothing wrong with this. On the other hand, one must have confidence both in oneself and in the authors concerned. They are trying in each case to tell you exactly what they mean to say. Just read slowly and with maximum intensity of attention, and take some reading notes, especially noting down those passages that seem most important and/or most clear and/or most unclear. Then we can go over some of these in class.