

# PHIL 22503 – Truth and Ideology

Autumn 2021

Tues & Thurs 2:00-3:20PM

Cobb Hall 409

**Instructor:** Dr. Lawrence Dallman

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**Office Hours:** By appointment, over Zoom.

## Course Description

There has been significant concern, in recent years, about the threat of “fake news” and “disinformation.” Most of this discussion has concerned deliberate lies told for political reasons. Those who spread fake news, however, rarely do so deliberately; many believe what they say, however obvious the falsehood of their claims may seem to outsiders. Beliefs of this sort are ideological in nature. Philosophers have studied the social phenomenon of ideology for hundreds of years. In this course, we will examine a number of historical and contemporary accounts of ideology. In doing so, we will try to come to terms with the reality of ideology: What is it? How does it relate to truth? Can it be avoided? If so, how?

## Course Materials

Only one book is required for this course. All other materials will be distributed in PDF format via the course Canvas site. The text below should be available at both the Seminary Coop Bookstore (5571 S. Woodlawn Ave.) and the University of Chicago Bookstore (970 E. 58<sup>th</sup> St.).

- Karl Marx & Friedrich Engels, *The Marx-Engels Reader*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, ed. Robert C. Tucker (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 1978).

## Course Expectations

This is a course in philosophy for majors and non-majors. Previous experience in philosophy—especially in the *Philosophical Perspectives* core sequence—will be helpful, but is not required. However, students will be expected to **engage philosophically with the assigned texts and with each other**. This means (1) taking the texts seriously as attempts to get things right about human beings and the world we live in; (2) offering arguments for or against the views defended in those texts, both in class discussion, and in written assignments; and (3) allowing that respectful disagreement, sometimes about sensitive matters like politics or religion, is an essential part of the process. Philosophical discussion only works when everyone involved feels able to contribute their special insights. It is necessary, therefore, that we maintain a civil classroom environment. This means that disparaging remarks, slurs, overt hostility, and verbal bullying will not be tolerated.

Each meeting will be split between instructor-led discussion of assigned materials, and open student discussion. Students will be expected to **complete assigned readings** prior to each meeting. Readings will usually not exceed 45 pages. The two exceptions to this will be discussed in class. Some of the readings will be difficult, requiring close attention. Others will be less difficult.

Given the uncertainty relating to the ongoing COVID19 pandemic, **recordings will be made of each meeting**. Students who are unable to come to class, especially due to illness or quarantine, will

be given access to the recorded lectures for the meetings they miss. However, this is an in-person course, and it is expected that students should attend in-person meetings whenever possible.

## Assignment Structure

Students will be expected to **complete three reading reflections** during the quarter. These will be short (3-4 pages, double-spaced) written reflections on assigned readings. You will choose which meetings you would like to submit reflections for, according to your interests and schedule constraints, though at least one of the three must be during the first half of the quarter (weeks 2 to 4), and at least one must be during the second half of the quarter (weeks 5 to 8).

In these reflections, you will focus on one or two important themes or arguments from your chosen meetings' assigned readings, especially as these relate to the broader aims of the course. You will provide a clear reconstruction of the argument of the text, and offer evaluative commentary, or relate themes and arguments to previous readings as appropriate. Since some (or many) of you will not have extensive experience with philosophical writing, we will discuss expectations for the reading reflections during the first week of class. You are welcome to email me with any concerns.

Reading reflections should be emailed to me ([dallman@uchicago.edu](mailto:dallman@uchicago.edu)) by 11:59PM the night prior to the course meeting in which the readings will be discussed.

At the end of the quarter, each student will be expected to **write a final paper**. This will be a longer (10-12 pages double-spaced) philosophical engagement with some of the readings assigned in class. I will distribute possible essay topics ahead of time. *You are welcome to propose your own essay topic, but must confirm it with me by email, or in office hours.* I will post a handout to Canvas outlining detailed expectations for the final paper. You are welcome to raise further concerns in class or by email.

## Grading Policy

If you are unable to complete your reading reflection in advance of the corresponding meeting, you can choose to write a reflection for the next meeting at the penalty of one third of a letter grade (e.g. a reflection that would otherwise receive an A will receive an A-, while a reflection that would otherwise receive an A- will receive a B+). Each additional delay will incur an additional penalty. Thus, if you sign up to write a reading reflection for meeting 2.2, then delay to meeting 3.1, then delay once more to meeting 3.2, the highest grade you will be eligible for is a B+.

In select circumstances, postponing your reading reflection will not be possible. For instance, if you choose to write a reflection for meeting 4.2, and have not chosen to write a reflection for any other meeting during the first half of the quarter, postponing will prevent you from satisfying the requirement that at least one reflection be completed during each half of the quarter. In such cases, you will be permitted to turn in a reflection on the texts for your originally chosen meeting, *within one week of the original due date*, but your maximum grade will be a B. This penalty is intended to offset the significant advantage you will enjoy having listened to the lecture and in-class discussion.

The final paper will be penalized one third of a letter grade for each day that it is late. Instances of plagiarism or other academic dishonesty will result in an F for the class, as well as in disciplinary action, in accordance with the [University of Chicago Student Manual](#). Here is the breakdown of your final grade: 20% participation; 30% reading reflections (i.e. 10% for each); and 50% final paper. Your participation grade will be based on attendance, discussion, and completion of the readings.

## Course Roadmap

<b>Tues, Sep 28<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>Meeting 1.1. Introduction to the Problem</b>	
<b>Thurs, Sep 30<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>Meeting 1.2. Enlightenment Background I: Bacon's Instauration</b> (26 pgs.) <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Francis Bacon, Excerpts from <i>Novum Organum</i> (18 pgs.)</li><li>Morris Cohen, Excerpts from <i>Reason and Nature</i> (8 pgs.)</li></ul>	
<b>Tues, Oct 5<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>Meeting 2.1. Enlightenment Background II: French Materialism</b> (22 pgs.) <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Helvétius, Excerpts from <i>A Treatise on Man</i> (22 pgs.)</li></ul>	
<b>Thurs, Oct 7<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>Meeting 2.2. Foundations I: Marx on Alienation</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Karl Marx, "Estranged Labour" (MER 70-81, 11 pgs.) (23 pgs.)</li><li>Karl Marx, "Private Property and Communism" (MER 81-93, 12 pgs.)</li></ul>	
<b>Tues, Oct 12<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>Meeting 3.1. Foundations II: Marx &amp; Engels on History</b> (34 pgs.) <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Karl Marx &amp; Friedrich Engels, "The German Ideology: Part I" (MER 147-75, 28 pgs.)</li><li>Karl Marx, "Society and Economy in History" (MER 136-42, 6 pgs.)</li></ul>	
<b>Thurs, Oct 14<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>Meeting 3.2. Foundations III: Marx &amp; Engels on Ideas</b> (27 pgs.) <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Karl Marx &amp; Friedrich Engels, "The German Ideology: Part I" (MER 176-200, 24 pgs.)</li><li>Karl Marx, "Preface to A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy" (MER 3-6, 3 pgs.)</li></ul>	
<b>Tues, Oct 19<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>Meeting 4.1. Engels's Compromise</b> (44 pgs.) <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Friedrich Engels, "Socialism: Utopian and Scientific" (MER 683-717, 34 pgs.)</li><li>Friedrich Engels, "On Morality" (MER 725-27, 2 pgs.)</li><li>Friedrich Engels, "Letters on Historical Materialism" (MER 760-68, 8 pgs.)</li></ul>	
<b>Thurs, Oct 21<sup>st</sup></b>	<b>Meeting 4.2. The Ethnological Conception of Ideology</b> (44 pgs.) <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Karl Kautsky, Excerpt from <i>Ethics and the Materialist Conception of History</i> (10 pgs.)</li><li>Paul Lafargue, Excerpt from <i>The Origin and Evolution of the Idea of the Soul</i> (27 pgs.)</li><li>Paul Lafargue, Excerpt from "The Socialist Ideal" (7 pgs.)</li></ul>	
<b>Tues, Oct 26<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>Meeting 5.1. The Partisan Conception of Ideology I: Lenin</b> (25 pgs.) <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>V. I. Lenin, Excerpts from <i>What Is to Be Done?</i> (10 pgs.)</li><li>V. I. Lenin, "On the Significance of Militant Materialism" (10 pgs.)</li><li>Vilfredo Pareto, Excerpts from <i>The Mind and Society</i> (5 pgs.)</li></ul>	

**Thurs, Oct 28<sup>th</sup> Meeting 5.2. The Partisan Conception of Ideology II: Lukács (66 pgs.)**  
▪ György Lukács, Excerpts from “Reification and the Consciousness of the Proletariat” (66 pgs.)

**Tues, Nov 2<sup>nd</sup> Meeting 6.1. The Cultural Conception of Ideology I: Adorno (48 pgs.)**  
▪ Theodor Adorno, Paraphrased Excerpt from “Beitrag zur Ideologienlehre” (1 pg.)  
▪ Max Horkheimer & Theodor Adorno, “The Culture Industry” (47 pgs.)

**Thurs, Nov 4<sup>th</sup> Meeting 6.2. The Cultural Conception of Ideology II: Althusser (39 pgs.)**  
▪ Louis Althusser, “Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses” (39 pgs.)

**Tues, Nov 9<sup>th</sup> Meeting 7.1. New Approaches I: Honneth (25 pgs.)**  
▪ Axel Honneth, “Recognition as Ideology” (25 pgs.)

**Thurs, Nov 11<sup>th</sup> Meeting 7.2. New Approaches II: Jaeggi (19 pgs.)**  
▪ Rahel Jaeggi, “Rethinking Ideology” (19 pgs.)

**Tues, Nov 16<sup>th</sup> Meeting 8.1. New Approaches III: Haslanger (30 pgs.)**  
▪ Sally Haslanger, “Ideology, Generics, and Common Ground” (30 pgs.)

**Thurs, Nov 18<sup>th</sup> Meeting 8.2. New Approaches IV: Railton & Leiter (36 pgs.)**  
▪ Peter Railton, “Morality, Ideology, and Reflection” (28 pgs.)  
▪ Brian Leiter, Excerpt from “Marx, Law, Ideology, Legal Positivism” (8 pgs.)

**Tues, Nov 23<sup>rd</sup>**

**Thurs, Nov 25<sup>th</sup> – Thanksgiving Break –**

**Fri, Nov 26<sup>th</sup> Final Paper Due by 11:59PM**

**Tues, Nov 30<sup>th</sup> Meeting 10.1. Back to Marx I: Appearance and Reality (17 pgs.)**  
▪ Selected Passages I (4 pgs.)  
▪ Karl Marx, “The Fetishism of Commodities and the Secret Thereof” (MER 319-29, 10 pgs.)  
▪ Friedrich Engels, Excerpt from Second Preface to Marx, *Capital*, Vol. 2 (3 pgs.)

**Thurs, Dec 2<sup>nd</sup> Meeting 10.2. Back to Marx II: The Domination of Ideas (18 pgs.)**  
▪ Selected Passages II (3 pgs.)  
▪ Ludwig Feuerbach, “The Essential Standpoint of Religion” (12 pgs.)  
▪ Karl Marx, Excerpt from “Critical Marginal Notes” (3 pgs.)