

The Philosophy of Friedrich Nietzsche

May 12th 2012, Building 85, Highfield Campus. 10am – 4pm

10.00 – 10.15 Coffee & welcome

10.15 – 11.15 'Nietzsche: the man and his work'

(Professor Christopher Janaway)

A look at Nietzsche's life: by turns brilliant classical scholar, acolyte of Wagner, glorious literary stylist, scourge of contemporary culture, enemy of Christian morality, lonely idealist, and sufferer from ill health and mental collapse.

11.15 – 11.35 Coffee

11.35 – 12.35 'Nietzsche on tragedy, art and music'

(Professor Aaron Ridley)

Art and music were vital in Nietzsche's early vision of a regenerated European culture to match that of the ancient Greeks. *In the Birth of Tragedy* (1872) he argued that tragic drama had enabled the Greeks to face the cruelties of human existence by transforming them through aesthetic experience. His views changed in the 1880s, but he still wrestled with the question whether artistic creation, and an artistic outlook on life, could make human life meaningful and bearable.

12.35 – 1.30 Lunch

1.30 – 2.30 'Nietzsche and politics'

(Professor David Owen)

Nietzsche's powerful writings have been adopted by many different political movements, including National Socialism, which perpetrated a shameful distortion of his views. Nietzsche was anti-nationalistic and pan-European in his outlook. He idealized the Greek *polis* which gave meaning to the life of its citizens through its all-embracing culture and competitive politics. But do his highly critical views of modern society leave room for a credible political vision for the future?

2.30 – 2.50 Coffee

2.50 – 3.50 'Nietzsche's critique of modern moral and religious values'

(Professor Christopher Janaway)

What did Nietzsche mean by his pronouncement 'God is dead', and what does he think the consequences are? In his mature thought of the 1880s Nietzsche became increasingly hostile to Christianity and the values that it has bequeathed to Western culture. The lack of conviction in the existence of God gives rise to a nihilism, a vacuum of values. But Christian values should be called into question: Nietzsche argues that they are born of a kind of psychological sickness and stifle human creativity and greatness. He calls for the creation of new values, but what would those be?

3.50 – Close Panel discussion

A chance to put your questions to the experts and hold some open debate.