Instructor: John Davenport  
Office phone: 2775; Collins Hall room 123  
Email: Davenport@fordham.edu  
Office hours: TF 4:20 - 7 pm; Weds. & Thurs. by appt.

Main Themes. This graduate seminar on the thought of Søren Kierkegaard will focus on major themes in his pseudonymous works, with attention to two later signed works as well. No prior knowledge of Kierkegaard is assumed, although students with some background in Kierkegaard are welcome. We will concentrate on understanding the distinctions and transitions between the “stages” of existence defined as aesthetic, ethical, and religious (and the subdivision of religious faith into types A & B); these transitions involve difficult questions in moral psychology and ethical theory. While focus will be on the primary texts, we will use selections from major secondary works to help us along the way (see eres page for this course – password: Davenport7159). Our discussions will draw some links between Kierkegaardian themes and ideas in recent analytic philosophy on – ethics and moral psychology, including care, will, moral motivation, and narrative unity;  
– metaethics, including free will, grounds of normativity;  
– philosophy of religion, including agapic love, alterity, open theism, eschatology;  
– epistemology, including intellectual virtues, ‘interested’ understanding, coherentism.

However, students are not necessarily expected to focus on these connections in their own written work. Approaches to Kierkegaard informed by recent continental thought will be equally welcome.

Texts: (Required)  
Other articles and book chapters, including portions of the *Concluding Unscientific Postscript* and *The Concept of Anxiety*. I will make the originals available in the Philosophy Dept. small seminar room and on ERES. Each student should make his or her own copies if possible.

Recommended texts:  
Michelle Kosch, *Freedom and Reason in Kant, Kierkegaard, and Schelling* (Oxford 2006);  
Alastair Hannay, *Kierkegaard* (Routledge, 1991)  
David Roberts, *Kierkegaard’s Analysis of Radical Evil* (Continuum 2006)

Grading System  
Class participation: 15%  
Attendance, contribution to discussions, discussion questions.  
Two short response papers 30%  
These 3-4 page papers will be responses to readings in the first half of the semester, chosen from a short list of options.  
Oral report on one reading: 15%  
Each student will open discussion of a reading of their choice with remarks about the argument and questions for the class. You should hand in the written version of this oral report.
Research paper (15 pages+): 40%  On a topic of the student's choice, directly related to our readings, but bringing in additional sources.

Depending on your level of preparation, the final course paper can focus on a single work by Kierkegaard along with relevant secondary literature, or compare/contrast themes from more than one work, or relate Kierkegaard to Hegel, Levinas, or other relevant figures. If you have more background in Kierkegaard, you may wish to develop a research paper defending a novel position in relation to the secondary literature to serve as a draft of a possible conference submission or journal article. How many additional sources you need beyond the assigned readings depends entirely on the topic chosen.

Schedule for Readings and Discussion Topics

1. Introduction to course themes; problems of pseudonymity and charges of “irrationalism”
2. The “Rotation of Crops” (pp.285-300) – eres
3. The “Seducer’s Diary” (pp.301-17; 410-445) – eres
4. Secondary Reading: David Pugmire, *Sound Sentiments* ch.5: “Sentiment & Sentimentality” -eres

**Jan.24: The Relation between the Aesthetic and the Ethical Spheres: Either/Or Vol. II**
3. Secondary background: Kosch ch.5 part I: “The Aesthetic View of Life...” (pp.141-54) -- eres

**Jan.31: The Ethical Stage: Either/Or Vol. II, Part II** on the ‘Choice’ to be an Authentic Chooser
2. The Narrative reading of Practical Identity in Kierkegaard and the stage transition:
   - Anthony Rudd, *Self, Value, and Narrative: A Kierkegaardian Approach*, ch.2 on SK and (time permitting) ch.7: “Selfhood and Narrative” (pp.175-200) – eres.

**Feb.7: Free Will and the Aesthetic - Ethical transition.**
1. *The Concept of Anxiety*, first part: free will and sin; links to Either/Or II
2. Secondary Reading: Arne Grøn, *The Concept of Anxiety in SK*, chs.3-4: anxiety and despair (eres)
3. Secondary background: Kosch ch.5 part II: “The Ethical View...” (pp.155-78) -- eres

**Feb.14: Public Everydayness as the Aesthetic Stage** (and Wantoness).  Happy Valentines!
1. “The Present Age,” in *Two Ages*: links to Either/Or II again.
2. Secondary Reading: Harry Frankfurt’s two essays on wantonness and “bullshit” (eres)

**Feb.21: Transition to the Religious Stage**
1. *Fear and Trembling*, beginning through Problema I.
3. Secondary background: Davenport, “Faith as Eschatological Trust in F&T” (eres)

**Feb.28: Religious Faith** continued
1. *Fear and Trembling* continued through Problema III;
(2) Comparison to the Story of Job in Repetition (time-permitting)
(3) Secondary Reading: Christian Discourses section on “Resurrection and Judgment” (eres)
(3) Secondary background: Merold Westphal, “Faith as Trust in Divine Promises” (manuscript)

March 7: The Postscript and subjectivity, knowledge, interestedness;
(1) Fragments to Postscript (discussion).
(2) Concluding Unscientific Postscript, Part Two, Section II, Ch.I: “Becoming Subjective,” pp.129-41; Ch.II: “Truth is Subjectivity;” and the Appendix: “A Glance at a Contemporary Effort in Danish Literature.”
(3) Secondary Reading: Marilyn Piety, Ways of Knowing, ch.6: “Subjective Knowledge” (eres)

March 11-15: Spring Break (enjoy!) (+ Daylight savings time)

March 21: The Postscript: religiousness B
(2) Secondary background: Merold Westphal, Becoming a Self, chs.7-8 on subjectivity (eres).

March 28: Easter break, no class.

April 4: All the categories from the perspective of Christian Faith
(1) The Sickness Unto Death Part I – the self-formula, spirit as free will, and forms of aestheticism;

April 11: The Sickness Unto Death continued
(1) The Sickness Unto Death Part II part A: despair, the demonic, and radical evil distinguished.
(2) Secondary Reading: David Roberts, Kierkegaard’s Analysis of Radical Evil, chs.4-5 on infinite resignation and defiance (eres).

April 18: Faith and Agapic Ethics
(1) Kierkegaard, Works of Love, First Series sections I-II (pp.1-90) and IIIb (135-53).
(2) Secondary Reading: M. Jamie Ferreira, Love’s Grateful Striving, chs.1-4, esp. chs 1 & 4 (eres).
(3) Agapic love and preferential loves: friendship, romantic love (discussion).
(4) Secondary background: Krishek, Kierkegaard on Faith and Love, ch.5 on agapic and romantic loves (eres).

April 25: Agape and other forms of love
(1) Works of Love, Second Series sections I, III, V, VIII, IX.
(2) Secondary Reading: John Lippitt, Kierkegaard and the Problem of Self-Love, selections on agapic self-love and forgiveness (author proofs).

May 2: overflow; any final student oral reports.

May 5: 200th Anniversary of Kierkegaard’s Birth
[Instructor in Copenhagen May 4 - 8; I hope to be back on campus by May 9 to meet with anyone]