Course description:
The “Quest of the Historical Jesus,” a series of attempts to write a biography of Jesus independent of church doctrine, was born in the Enlightenment and fuelled by the enthusiastic embrace of the “scientific” study of history in the nineteenth century. In the history of the study of religion, the life of Jesus was one of the first topics to be addressed with post-enlightenment methods of historiography. “Modern” historiography and the quest of the historical Jesus developed alongside one another, and their evolution can be traced in tandem. The readings take a parallel course. One set of readings gives an overview of the philosophical problems raised by historical narratives; the other set explicitly addresses the problem of writing a history of the “historical Jesus.”

Note on readings:
A large number of the readings are articles or book sections that will be available in electronic format. The virtual disposition of each item will be indicated in the Guide to Readings linked to the home page of the course website (see address above). Some will be available there as PDFs to download from the course website.
Other materials are posted on Electronic Reserves (e-reserves). They can be found under the course reserves heading on the library website (www.library.ucsb.edu > library services > course reserves > electronic reservations). The password is “unsung”. The readings can be read online, saved for on-screen display as a PDF, or printed.
You can access the site outside of UCSB webspace by setting up a proxy server on your home browser. See http://www.library.ucsb.edu/help/proxy/index.html

Required books: Students are required to purchase on their own

Schedule of readings:
**APRIL 7: WEEK 2. GERMAN IDEALISM, MODERN HISTORY, AND THE LIFE OF JESUS**

**April 14: Week 3. Early Critiques of Modernity**
Friedrich Nietzsche: *The Use and Abuse of History* (1873; tr. Adrian Collins; New York: Liberal Arts, 1957).


**April 21: Week 4. The Post-Mortem of the Enlightenment Individual**


**April 28: Week 5. Historiography as Fusion of Horizons**


**May 5: Week 6. Historiography as Re-Mythologizing**


**May 12: Week 7. The Demise of the Grand Narrative**


**May 19: Week 8. The Poetics of Historical Texts**


**MAY 26: WEEK 9. POWER CLAIMS OF HISTORICAL TEXTS**

**JUNE 2: WEEK 10. JESUS: LAST WORDS**

**Course requirements:**
1. Reading reports. I will expect you to come to class with at least a page (single spaced) of reflection on the weeks’ readings. Each week at class, we will determine among ourselves who and how many people will concentrate on which works or parts of works for the following class. I expect the reflections to provide equal parts of description of the work, and analysis or critique. Completing these will facilitate informed participation in class discussion. This report will be due at the beginning of the class at which the work is discussed.
2. Brief final paper. Engage one or more of the course readings in an analytic reflection of its ramifications for a topic of your choice from your own area of research. Given that the weekly assignments already represent a significant amount of writing, I expect a work of 6-8 pp. double-spaced, by 5 pm on Friday, 12 June.
3. Discussion moderation. Each student will perform as the discussion moderator for a portion of one class session. Students will choose the work(s) for which they wish to moderate discussion. This requires preparation of a discussion starter, i.e., a brief comment presenting an issue to begin discussion, as well as guiding the conversation and intervening with further questions or comments to sustain it.

**Incomplete policy for this class:**
The class has been designed so that the bulk of the work is completed in the course of the quarter. It is not in your best interests to take incompletes unless there is a sudden and unexpected catastrophe that upsets rational planning to fulfill the class requirements. Formal incompletes must be completed by the end of the next quarter of the academic year (Fall 2009), and they will be graded during the grading period of that quarter (December 2009). Any other sort of late work must be completed by the end of June 2009. If the work has not been finished by that time, one of two things will happen: 1. the student will receive a grade based on the work that has been completed; 2. the student will retroactively drop the class.