

**SOCIAL STUDIES JUNIOR  
FOCUS FIELD AND PLAN OF STUDY  
FALL, 2008**

**NAME:**

**EMAIL ADDRESS:**

**ACADEMIC ADVISOR:**

**ADVISOR'S SIGNATURE:**

**NAME OF FOCUS FIELD: Continental Philosophy and Freedom**

**BOARD OF INSTRUCTION SIGNATURE:**

**EXPLAIN WHY THIS FOCUS FIELD IS INTERESTING TO YOU (LIMIT: 150 WORDS)**

I am interested in questions concerning the possibilities of genuine freedom in modern society. This notion of authentic freedom intrigues me because I wonder how it is possible to resolve freedom and necessity in a world where scientific and causal explanations abound. I want to explore the differing solutions and perspectives offered by both rationalist Enlightenment philosophers (Kant, Spinoza) and later, more socialized accounts (Nietzsche, Lukacs, early Marx.) While I find the socialized views of freedom offered by Marx and his followers fascinating and useful in their criticism, I find Nietzsche's individualized account most persuasive. I hope to eventually appropriate the conceptual tools and criticisms used by the more strictly social theorists to develop and explore Nietzsche's thought in a thesis, particularly his embrace of perspective in creating one's freedom.

**PLAN OF STUDY.** List 4-6 letter-graded courses, drawn from at least two disciplines and including at least one historical course. Put a star (\*) next to the historical course or courses. Do not list introductory language courses, methods courses, or junior tutorials.

For each course you list, provide the title, course number, term, and year that you have taken it (or plan to take it). Explain in 1-2 sentences how the course contributes to your focus field, and append the catalog description if you are not sure that the Board of Instruction will understand why the course should be part of your focus field.

If a course is *not* in anthropology, economics, government, history, continental philosophy, sociology, foreign cultures, historical studies,

ethical reasoning, moral reasoning, social analysis, societies of the world, or America in the World, attach a syllabus. Courses outside of these departments will be accepted only if more than 50 % of the topics covered fall into one of those disciplines, or if the instructor has a Ph.D. in one of those fields.

#### **I. COURSE OR COURSES YOU HAVE TAKEN PREVIOUSLY**

**\*History 1470, Modern European Intellectual History, Nietzsche to Postmodernism. Fall 2006.** This course served as my first introduction to Nietzsche and critical theory. In reading the Genealogy of Morals it inspired me to pursue Nietzsche's ideas of the will to power as an expression of freedom.

**Philosophy 8, Introduction to Early Modern Philosophy. Spring 2007.** This course introduced me to more traditional readings of the problem of establishing freedom in a causal world through Kant. Exploring the "forms of pure intuition" was a seminal point in my understanding of human consciousness and experience.

**Philosophy 120, The Rationalists. Fall 2007.** Leibniz and Spinoza formulate the tension between freedom and necessity in fascinating ways. I read their work as pushing pure reason to its conceptual limits in this project.

#### **II. COURSE OR COURSES YOU ARE TAKING THIS SEMESTER**

**Government 1052, History and Freedom in German Idealism, Fall 2008.** This course is providing me with an excellent background in the German tradition that precedes Nietzsche. It is also useful in seeing how Kant's followers interpreted and appropriated his concept of freedom.

#### **III. COURSE OR COURSES YOU ARE PLANNING TO TAKE IN THE FUTURE (Please indicate the term and year)**

**\*History 1322, Heidegger and Arendt. Spring 2009.** My brief exposure to Heidegger in History 1470 leads me to believe that his emphasis on the question of being is integral to analyses of freedom.

**Philosophy 129, Kant's Critique of Pure Reason. Spring 2009.**

The first Critique is so foundational in understanding continental philosophy after it. A sustained reading will surely benefit my ability to analyze and interpret later work.

**IV. ARE YOU PLANNING TO DECLARE A SECONDARY FIELD?  
IF SO, WHICH ONE, AND WHICH COURSES DO YOU EXPECT  
TO COUNT? (Please note that we do NOT expect you to declare a  
secondary field; we just want to know for advising purposes if you are).  
No.**