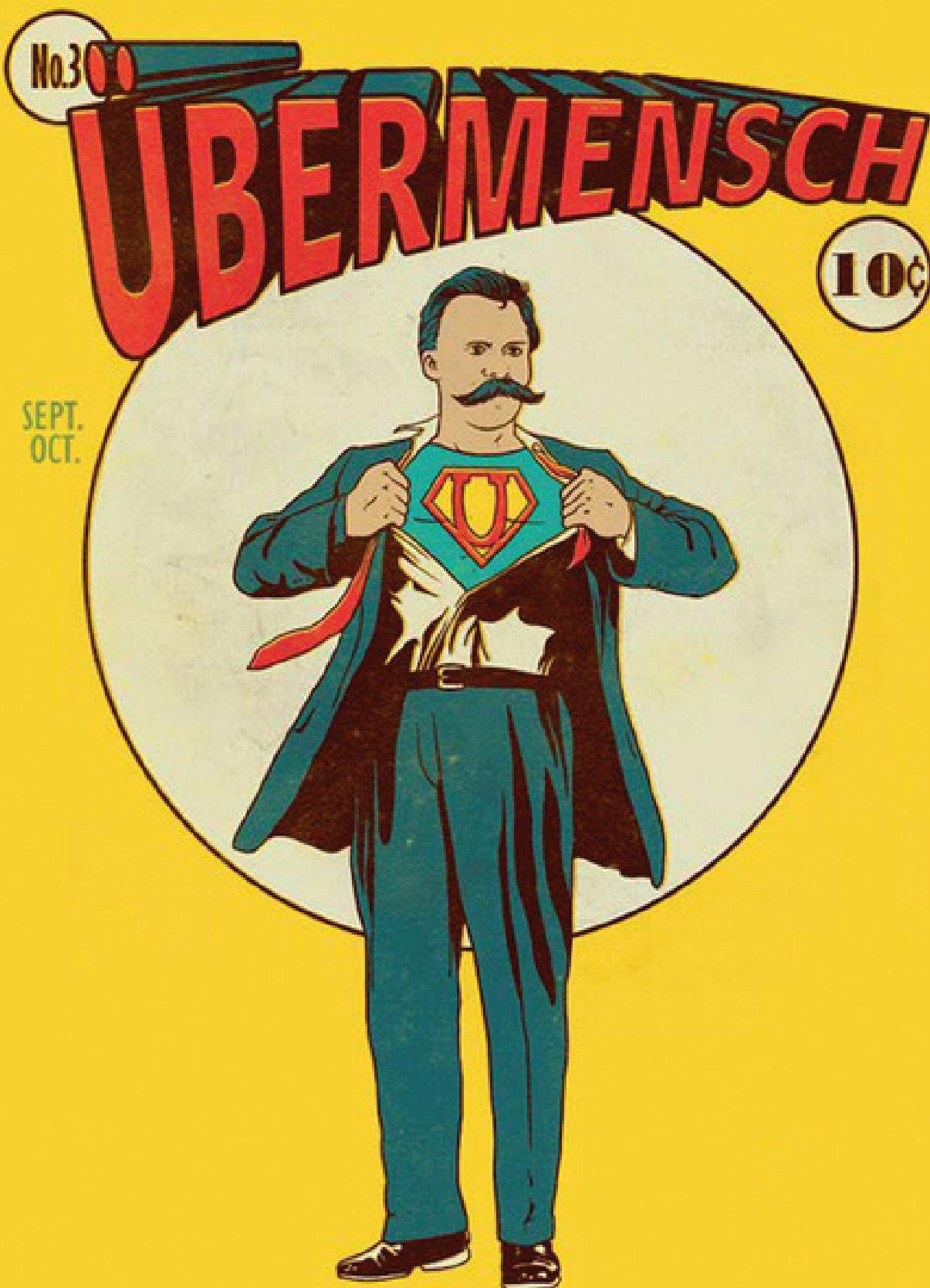


**Tuesday,  
April 11, 2017  
Schultz Hall,  
East Alcove  
4:30 pm**



# **NIETZSCHE'S 'USES AND ABUSES': CONSIDERING A HISTORY FOR LIFE THEN AND NOW**

## **DR. PETER KURYLA**

In 1874, Friedrich Nietzsche, then a young philology professor, published "On the Uses and Abuses of History for Life." One of four "unfashionable meditations," the essay described what he thought was a sickening lack of originality in German culture. His diagnosis: an excess of history. The piece hit the German academic community with a dull thud. Compared with the first of the "Meditations"—a blistering take-down of the theologian David Friedrich Strauss—"Uses and Abuses" took far more time to develop an audience. Nietzsche never liked the essay, considering it probably his weakest piece of writing. In a neatly ironic turn, however, of the four meditations, today "Uses and Abuses" is easily the most influential and widely referenced. With "Uses and Abuses" Nietzsche mounted a typical attack on conventions in German academic thinking, but at the same time offered a compelling and even useful typology of historical consciousness. One can question whether Nietzsche's critique was fair in its time; one can also question whether it holds up today. Reading the essay

now compels us to move back and forth in time, considering how or if the concerns Nietzsche addressed are relevant to our present. How might Nietzsche's prescriptions and proscriptions offer a history for life amidst the demands of the modern academy?



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