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PHL 309E.01: The Art of Living

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The Art of Living

Monday/Wednesday/Friday, 10:00-10:50 a.m.

In ancient Greece and Rome philosophy wasn't simply an academic discipline; it was conceived of as the art of living. People chose to become philosophers and devoted themselves to rigorous self-examination and to a rational molding of the self. This course will examine this conception of philosophy as a way of life, focusing in particular on Stoicism. We will also explore the philosophical life led by Socrates and consider how he conceived of virtue/human excellence and what it is to care for the self. Course materials will be drawn from a mixture of traditional philosophical works (by Plato, Aristotle, Seneca, Epictetus, Marcus Aurelius, Milton, Kierkegaard, Thoreau), together with some philosophically challenging works of literature, film, and music. Some of the questions we will consider include: What is happiness? What is a good life? How should I live? Should I fear death? What role should reason play in my life? What role should the emotions play? What is friendship? What is love? What is marriage? You will be given the opportunity to think hard about these questions, both about how different philosophers have tried to answer them, and about what your own answers to them might be. Part of how you will do this will be by trying to live your life on occasion as a Stoic philosopher. You will perform weekly experiments in living, make posts on the class Moodle page, and keep a philosophy journal, all with the aim of increasing both your understanding of the course materials and your understanding of yourself. Our ultimate goal will be to improve the ethical quality of our lives.

This course satisfies the general education requirement for Group VIII: Ethics and Human Values. Upon completion of this course, you should be able to:

- (1) Correctly apply the basic concepts and forms of reasoning that we investigate to ethical issues that arise in some of the examples we consider;
- (2) Analyze and critically evaluate the basic concepts and forms of reasoning that we investigate.

Course Requirements (Regular Section—R01)

(1) Participation	5%
(2) Philosophy Journal	25%
(3) Portfolio	15%
(4) Midterm Exam	25%
(5) Final Exam	30%

Course Requirements (Honors Section—R80)

(1) Participation	5%
(2) Philosophy Journal	20%
(3) Portfolio	15%
(4) Experiment in Living	5%
(5) Midterm Exam	25%
(6) Final Exam	30%

Readings

Books

These five books are required and can be purchased at the UM bookstore. It may also be worth checking the prices at www.amazon.com or www.bookfinder.com.

- (1) Epictetus, *How to Be Free: An Ancient Guide to the Stoic Life* (Princeton, 2018; ISBN 978-0691177717)
- (2) Ward Farnsworth, *The Practicing Stoic: A Philosophical User's Manual* (Godine, 2018; ISBN 978-1567926118)
- (3) Henrik Ibsen, *A Doll's House* (Dover, 1992 [1879]; ISBN 978-0486270623)
- (4) Plato, *Laches and Charmides* (Hackett, 1992 [429-347 B.C.E.]; ISBN 978-0872201347)
- (5) Plato, *The Trial and Death of Socrates* (Hackett, 2000 [429-347 B.C.E.]; ISBN 978-0872205543)

The bookstore sells new and used physical copies of books, occasionally allows you to rent books (returnable at the end of the semester), and sometimes has digital copies of books. For this course, the bookstore has digital copies of all five required books. I personally prefer physical books that I can hold in my hand, write in, etc. Of the five books we will be reading, I would strongly recommend you purchase physical copies of *How to be Free* and *The Practicing Stoic*. They are books you especially may want to keep after the course.

Here is the link to the UM Bookstore:

<https://montanabookstore.bncollege.com/shop/montana-bookstore/page/find-textbooks>. Under TERM, select SPRING 21 MAIN CAMP; under DEPARTMENT, select PHL; under COURSE, select 309E; under section, select R01 (for the honors section, select R80).

Additional Required and Recommended Readings

I will make available additional required and recommended readings on the class Moodle page.

Movie Screenings

We will watch four movies in this course:

- (1) *Groundhog Day* (Ramis, 1993; 101 min). Directed by Harold Ramis, with Bill Murray, Andie MacDowell, and Chris Elliott. **Tuesday, January 26.**
- (2) *Vertigo* (1958; 128 min). Directed by Alfred Hitchcock, with James Stewart, Kim Novak, and Barbara Bel Geddes. **Thursday, February 11.**
- (3) *About a Boy* (2002; 101 minutes). Directed by Chris Weitz and Paul Weitz, with Hugh Grant, Nicholas Hoult, and Toni Collette. **Thursday, April 8.**
- (4) *The Philadelphia Story* (1940; 112 min). Directed by George Cukor, with Cary Grant, Katharine Hepburn, and James Stewart. **Tuesday, April 20.**

Screenings will be via Zoom, beginning at **7:00 p.m.**

Zoom (Remote Class Meetings/Movie Screenings)

Due to the risks of COVID-19, class meetings and movie screenings for this course will take place remotely using Zoom.

Here is the link we will use for our class meetings:

<https://umontana.zoom.us/j/94048416784>

Here is the link we will use for the movie screenings:

<https://umontana.zoom.us/j/95118283821>

Here is a link where you can download Zoom for free:

<https://zoom.us/download>

Here is a link with tutorial videos that help you learn how to use Zoom:

<https://support.zoom.us/hc/en-us/articles/206618765-Zoom-Video-Tutorials>

Moodle

This course has a Moodle page (<https://moodle.umt.edu>). For more information on how to access Moodle, login and then select Moodle 101 for Students (<https://moodle.umt.edu/enrol/index.php?id=13709>).

Email

Any email that I send to the class will be sent to your university email address via Moodle. It is your responsibility to check your email on a regular basis.

Office Hours (Remote)

Due to the risks of COVID-19, my office hours this semester will be offered remotely using Zoom. My normal office hours are Tuesdays 10:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m., Thursdays 10:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m., and Fridays 11:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m. If these times are not convenient, I am happy to make an appointment with you for another time.

Note: I hold office hours on Zoom, but will not be live on Zoom on my scheduled days unless someone has reserved a time slot ahead of time to meet with me.

To sign up for a time slot, please use this link: <https://paul-3.youcanbook.me/>

The day of our meeting, please use this link: <https://umontana.zoom.us/j/99875262121>

Accommodation for Disabilities

Whenever possible, and in accordance with civil rights laws, the University of Montana will attempt to provide reasonable modifications to courses for students with disabilities who request and require them. Please feel free to set up a time with me to discuss any modifications to this course you may require. For more information, contact Disability Services for Students, located in the Lommasson Center, room 154 (<http://www.umt.edu/dss>).

Attendance, Participation, Class Etiquette

Attendance and Participation: Your attendance and participation are crucial for the success of this class and will play a significant role in determining whether or not our time together proves to be intellectually fulfilling. As many of you probably know, it is a university requirement that you attend all class meetings for courses in which you are enrolled (See “Class Attendance/Absence Policy,” <http://catalog.umt.edu/academics/policies-procedures>). In my experience, students also get the most out of those classes that they regularly attend.

Digital Stoa: The Stoics get their name from the enclosed/roofed porch or portico (“the stoa”) where they used to gather in ancient Athens to discuss philosophy. We will have a digital stoa in this course where

each week you should plan to make at least one post and respond to at least one post. Sometimes I will pose questions for the class to respond to. Your posts can also include your own questions and/or observations about the readings, and may occasionally include your observations about what it has been like trying to live like a Stoic. In general posts should be at least 100 words in length. Here are three guidelines for making posts:

- (1) Be respectful: Even though we may sometimes disagree about particular topics, our primary goal is to create together a learning environment where all feel welcome to participate and respected as fellow inquirers. We need to be good communicators and good listeners.
- (2) Stay on topic: don't turn your posts into random musings or political rants. Stay focused on course material. Provide evidence for your claims. Report experiences you've had that directly concern topics we are investigating in the course.
- (3) Be clear, organized, grammatical: Make sure you organize your thoughts and explain how they concern course material. And do so in clear, readable English prose.

Etiquette: As a courtesy to me and to your fellow students, during class please do not (1) talk to a classmate while I or others are speaking; (2) consult other reading materials (such as newspapers, crossword puzzles, etc.), surf the web, or play computer games; (3) use your cell phone.

Philosophy Journal/Portfolio

You will keep a philosophy journal or diary in this course in which you respond to questions I give you, both about the assignments and about yourself. Some of your entries will be a record of your weekly attempts to practice Stoicism. We will use Epictetus' *Handbook* [*Encheiridion*] as a practical guide, and also do several week-long experiments. Each week I will post short videos on Moodle that discuss individual sections of the *Handbook*. I will grade your journal twice during the semester. At the end of the semester you will turn in a portfolio.

Experiment in Living (Honors Section)

If you are enrolled in the honors section of this course (R80), then you will choose something about yourself that you would like to be different and design an experiment in living in which you attempt to change (or begin to change) this part of yourself.

Extra Credit

You can get extra credit by either doing one of the recommended assignments (there are readings, videos, songs—see the **Schedule of Readings and Assignments** below) or one of the additional readings on how to live (see the list posted on Moodle) and writing a substantive entry in your philosophy journal about this. Each extra entry you do (if done satisfactorily) can add 1% to your final grade. Maximum extra credit you can earn is 5% of your final grade.

Grading Scale

Here's the grading scale I will use in this course:

A	93.50 and above
A-	90.00-93.49
B+	86.50-89.99
B	83.50-86.49
B-	80.00-83.49
C+	76.50-79.99

C	73.50-76.49
C-	70.00-73.49
D+	66.50-69.99
D	63.50-66.49
D-	60.00-63.49
F	59.99 and below

Individual assignments/exams will normally be assigned a raw score; I will then curve the raw scores of the class as a whole to determine individual letter grades. For example, suppose you take the midterm (worth 25% of your final grade) and receive a 38/70. This is a 54.2% result, but this does NOT mean that you failed the exam. What your grade is for the midterm will depend on how well you did in relation to the rest of the class. If a 38 was the high score, you'd receive an A. If a 38 fell in the average range, you'd likely receive a B-. And so on.

The Art of Reading

Reading, like writing, is an art that can only be acquired through extensive and intensive practice. In general, you should plan to read each assignment for this course two times before you come to class:

- (1) Do the reading once to get a sense of the overall shape of the discussion and what the chief issues and questions seem to be;
- (2) Do the reading a second time, going more slowly and with an eye to how the different parts hang together. As Thoreau put it, "To read well, that is, to read true books in a true spirit, is a noble exercise, and one that will task the reader more than any exercise which the customs of the day esteem. It requires a training such as the athletes underwent, the steady intention almost of the whole life to this object. Books must be read as deliberately and reservedly as they were written" ("Reading," *Walden*).

Plagiarism/Academic Dishonesty

I will not tolerate cheating or plagiarism or other forms of academic dishonesty in this course. In addition to being a violation of the University of Montana Student Conduct Code (<http://www.umt.edu/student-affairs/community-standards/default.php>), cheating harms your fellow students by giving you an unfair advantage, and harms you since you thereby fail to take yourself seriously. In general, the first instance of cheating or other forms of academic dishonesty will result in a failing grade ("F") for the course and will also be subject to University sanction.

Schedule of Readings and Assignments

(Subject to change with advance notice)

Epictetus, *How to Be Free*=*HBF*

Plato, *The Trial and Death of Socrates*=*TDS*

Week 1

Practicing Stoicism:

(1) Epictetus, *Handbook* [*Encheiridion*], §§1-53, *HBF* (2-95)

(2) Epictetus, *Handbook*, §§1-2, *HBF* (2-9)

Recommended:

(1) Long, Introduction, *HBF* (ix-xlvi); “About the *Encheiridion*,” *HBF* (xlix-liii)

(2) Pigliucci, “How to Be a Stoic,” *New York Times* (February 2, 2015) (**Moodle**)

(3) Sellars, “What is Stoicism?,” *Stoicism Today* (November 21, 2020) (**Moodle**)

(4) Watch: “Stoicism as a Philosophy for an Ordinary Life,” TEDx talk by Massimo Pigliucci
(<https://youtu.be/Yhn1Fe8cT0Q>)

M 1/11 **Introduction**

W 1/13 **Lives of Quiet Desperation**
Thoreau, *Walden* (25-33) (**Moodle**)

F 1/15 **Solving the Problems of Life**
Thoreau, *Walden* (33-36; 87-90; 185-186) (**Moodle**)

Week 2

Practicing Stoicism: Epictetus, *Handbook*, §§3-7, *HBF* (9-15)

M 1/18 **No Class (Martin Luther King Jr. Day)**

W 1/20 **Knowledge of and Care of the Self**
Plato, *Alcibiades*, 103a-106a; 128a-135e (**Moodle**)

F 1/22 **Happiness**
(1) Annas, “Making Sense of My Life as a Whole” (**Moodle**)
(2) Aristotle, “Happiness,” *Nicomachean Ethics*, 1095a15-1101b9 (**Moodle**)
Recommended:
Listen: Taylor Swift, “Happiness” (mp3 on **Moodle**)

Week 3

Practicing Stoicism: Epictetus, *Handbook*, §§8-13, *HBF* (17-21)

- M 1/25 **The Philosophical Life**
(1) Hadot, “Forms of Life and Forms of Discourse in Ancient Philosophy” (**Moodle**)
(2) Hadot, “Spiritual Exercises” (**Moodle**)
- T 1/26 **Movie Screening: *Groundhog Day***
Movie starts at 7:00 p.m. (on Zoom)
- W 1/27 **What Makes a Good Life? (Discuss *Groundhog Day*)**
- F 1/29 **Reacting to Events vs. Reacting to Our Judgments about Events**
Farnsworth, Chapter One, *The Practicing Stoic* (3-22)
Recommended:
Farnsworth, Preface; Introduction, *The Practicing Stoic* (ix-xxv; xxvii-xxxii)

Week 4

Practicing Stoicism: Epictetus, *Handbook*, §§14-19, *HBF* (23-29)

- M 2/1 **Externals: What is Not Up to Us**
Farnsworth, Chapter Two, *The Practicing Stoic* (23-39)
- W 2/3 **Perspective: Misjudgments about Time and Space**
Farnsworth, Chapter Three, *The Practicing Stoic* (40-53)
- F 2/5 **What is Death?**
Kierkegaard, “What it Means to Die” (**Moodle**)
Recommended:
(1) Muench, “Thinking Death into Every Moment: the Existence-Problem of Dying in Kierkegaard’s *Postscript*” (**Moodle**)
(2) Listen: Van Morrison, “T.B. Sheets” (mp3 on **Moodle**)

Week 5

Practicing Stoicism: Epictetus, *Handbook*, §§20-24, *HBF* (29-39)

- M 2/8 **Stoic Conceptions of Death**
Farnsworth, Chapter Four, *The Practicing Stoic* (54-75)
- W 2/10 **Desire**
(1) Plato, “Socrates on Desire,” *Symposium*, 199c-201c (**Moodle**)
(2) Farnsworth, Chapter Five, *The Practicing Stoic* (76-96)
- H 2/11 **Movie Screening: *Vertigo***
Movie starts at 7:00 p.m. (on Zoom)
- F 2/12 **Fantasy and the Denial of Reality (Discuss *Vertigo*)**
(1) Wood, “*Vertigo*” (**Moodle**)
(2) Klevan, “*Vertigo*: Accounting for Melodrama” (**Moodle**)

Week 6

Practicing Stoicism: Epictetus, *Handbook*, §§25-28, *HBF* (39-43)

M 2/15 **No Class (Presidents' Day)**

W 2/17 **Two Things We Want: Wealth and Pleasure**
Farnsworth, Chapter Six, *The Practicing Stoic* (97-118)

F 2/19 **Desire for Praise, Dread of Criticism**
Farnsworth, Chapter Seven, *The Practicing Stoic* (119-140)
Philosophy Journal Due

Week 7

Practicing Stoicism: Epictetus, *Handbook*, §29, *HBF* (45-51)

M 2/22 **Misjudgments about Value**
Farnsworth, Chapter Eight, *The Practicing Stoic* (141-160)
Honors Section: Experiment in Living Instructions Handed Out

W 2/24 **Emotion**
Farnsworth, Chapter Nine, *The Practicing Stoic* (161-188)
Recommended:
(1) Seneca, *On Anger* excerpt (**Moodle**)
(2) Watch: "Stoicism and Anger Management," Mr. Smart (narrated by Donald Roberston) (https://youtu.be/FXgztaA_hq8)
(3) Seneca, "Two Letters of Consolation" (**Moodle**)
(4) Didion, *The Year of Magical Thinking* excerpt (**Moodle**)
(5) Adichie, "Notes on Grief" (**Moodle**)

F 2/26 **When Fear Governs How We Live**
Hemingway, "The Short Happy Life of Francis Macomber" (**Moodle**)

Week 8

Practicing Stoicism: Epictetus, *Handbook*, §§30-31, *HBF* (51-57)

M 3/1 **Is there a Cost to Overcoming Our Fears?**
(1) Hemingway, "Short Happy Life" (cont.)
(2) Hemingway, *Men at War* excerpt (**Moodle**)
(3) Jackson, "Point of View, Distancing, and Hemingway's 'Short Happy Life'" (**Moodle**)
Honors Section: Experiment in Living Proposal Due

W 3/3 **Two Challenges: Hardship and Setbacks**
Farnsworth, Chapter Ten, *The Practicing Stoic* (189-207)
Midterm Exam Handed Out

F 3/5 **Virtue**
Farnsworth, Chapter Eleven, *The Practicing Stoic* (208-221)

Week 9

Practicing Stoicism: Epictetus, *Handbook*, §32, *HBF* (57-61)

- M 3/8 **How to Practice Stoicism**
Farnsworth, Chapter Twelve, *The Practicing Stoic* (222-243)
Midterm Exam Due
- W 3/10 **Stoicism and Its Critics**
Farnsworth, Chapter Thirteen, *The Practicing Stoic* (244-260)
- F 3/12 **Who is Socrates?**
Plato, "Alcibiades' Speech," *Symposium*, 215a-222c (**Moodle**)

Week 10

Practicing Stoicism: Epictetus, *Handbook*, §33, *HBF* (61-69)

- M 3/15 **Care of the Soul**
(1) Plato, *Laches* [LAYkees], 178a-189d
(2) Muench, "Reading Plato's Socratic Dialogues" (**Moodle**)
- W 3/17 **What is Courage?**
Plato, *Laches*, 189d-194b
- F 3/19 **What is Courage? (cont.)**
Plato, *Laches*, 194b-201c

Week 11

Practicing Stoicism: Epictetus, *Handbook*, §§34-40, *HBF* (69-75)

- M 3/22 **What is Temperance?**
Plato, *Charmides* [KARmidees], 153a-161b
- W 3/24 **What is Self-Knowledge?**
Plato, *Charmides*, 161b-169d
- F 3/26 **The Science of Good and Evil**
Plato, *Charmides*, 169d-176d

Week 12

Practicing Stoicism: Epictetus, *Handbook*, §§41-45, *HBF* (75-81)

- M 3/29 **Socratic Ignorance and Wisdom**
(1) Plato, "Socrates Anticipates His Trial," *Gorgias*, 521c-522e (**Moodle**)
(2) Plato, *Euthyphro*, 2a-5c, *TDS* (1-5)
(3) Plato, *Apology*, 17a-24b, *TDS* (20-27)
Honors Section: Experiment in Living Final Report Instructions Handed Out
- W 3/31 **Legal Charges Against Socrates; Fear of Death**
Plato, *Apology*, 24b-35d, *TDS* (27-37)
- F 4/2 **No Class (Student Break)**

Week 13

Practicing Stoicism: Epictetus, *Handbook*, §§46-48, *HBF* (81-87)

M 4/5

The Death of Socrates

- (1) Plato, *Apology*, 35e-42a, *TDS* (38-42)
- (2) Plato, "Socrates' Death Scene," *Phaedo*, 114d-118a, *TDS* (55-58)
- (3) Rilke, "Archaic Torso of Apollo" (**Moodle**)

Honors Section: Experiment in Living Final Report Due

W 4/7

What is Friendship?

Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, Book 8, 1155a-1163a34 (**Moodle**)

H 4/8

Movie Screening: *About a Boy*

Movie starts at 7:00 p.m. (on Zoom)

F 4/9

Are People Islands? (Discuss *About a Boy*)

- (1) Donne, "No Man is an Island" (**Moodle**)
- (2) Listen: Simon and Garfunkel, "I am a Rock" (mp3 on **Moodle**)

Philosophy Journal Due

Week 14

Practicing Stoicism

Epictetus, *Handbook*, §§49-51, *HBF* (87-93)

M 4/12

**Why Do Friendships End? What is it to Be a Friend to Oneself?
How Many Friends Should We Have?**

Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, Book 9, 1163a35-1172a15 (**Moodle**)

Recommended:

- (1) Rhaina Cohen, "What If Friendship, Not Marriage, Was at the Center of Life?," *The Atlantic* (October 20, 2020) (**Moodle**)
- (2) Valerie Chiang, "The Pandemic Has Erased Entire Categories of Friendship," *The Atlantic* (January 27, 2021) (**Moodle**)

W 4/14

What is Marriage?

- (1) Milton, *The Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce* excerpt (**Moodle**)
- (2) Ibsen, *A Doll's House*, Act I (1-28)

F 4/16

Fantasy and Real Life

Ibsen, *A Doll's House*, Act II (29-50)

Week 15

Practicing Stoicism: Epictetus, *Handbook*, §§52-53, *HBF* (93-95)

M 4/19

What are a Woman's Duties to Herself?

(1) Ibsen, *A Doll's House*, Act III (51-72)

(2) Ibsen, "Alternative, 'Conciliatory' Ending to *A Doll's House*" (**Moodle**)

Philosophy Portfolio Instructions Handed Out

T 4/20

Movie Screening: *The Philadelphia Story*

Movie starts at 7:00 p.m. (on Zoom)

W 4/21

What is Remarriage? (Discuss *The Philadelphia Story*)

(1) Cavell, "Introduction: Words for a Conversation" (**Moodle**)

(2) Cavell, "*The Philadelphia Story*" (**Moodle**)

(3) Cavell, "The Importance of Importance" (**Moodle**)

F 4/23

Conclusion

Braun, "On Being a Natural Stoic" (**Moodle**)

Final Exam Handed Out

Week 16

M 4/26

Philosophy Portfolio Due

T 4/27

Final Exam Due