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PHL 391.01: Special Topics - The Art of Living

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The Art of Living

Tuesday/Thursday, 2:10-3:30, LA 146

In ancient Greece and Rome philosophy wasn't simply an academic discipline; people chose to become philosophers and to engage in an art of living devoted to rigorous self-examination and the rational molding of the self. This course will examine this conception of philosophy as a way of life and explore some of the questions that often most concern us and that have seemed to many to have a particularly philosophical character to them: 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 gives life meaning? Course materials will be drawn from a mixture of traditional philosophical works (including works by Plato, Aristotle, Epicurus, Seneca, and Thoreau) together with some philosophically challenging works of literature, film, and music. Students will be expected not only to examine these materials closely but also to reflect upon their own convictions about these matters and to try to adhere to the Delphic injunction to know thyself. “To be a philosopher,” wrote that great New England genius Henry David Thoreau, “is not merely to have subtle thoughts...but so to love wisdom as to live according to its dictates....It is to solve some of the problems of life, not only theoretically, but practically.” In this course we will seek to put Thoreau's words to the test.

Course Requirements

- | | |
|-----------------------------|-----|
| 1. Attendance/Participation | 10% |
| 2. Outlines/Reaction Papers | 10% |
| 3. Philosophy Journal | 20% |
| 4. Take-home Exam | 15% |
| 5. Dialogue | 15% |
| 6. Final Exam | 30% |

Readings

The following five books are required reading and can be purchased at the UM bookstore; they are also on two hour reserve in Mansfield Library.

1. Aristophanes, *Clouds*, trans. Jeffrey Henderson (ISBN 0941051242)
2. Ibsen, *A Doll's House* (ISBN 0486270629)
3. Plato, *The Trial and Death of Socrates*, trans. G. M. A. Grube (ISBN 0872205541)
4. Seneca, *Medea*, trans. Frederick Ahl (ISBN 080149432X)
5. Thoreau, *Walden* (ISBN 0486284956)

In addition to the five books listed above, there is a Course Packet of additional required readings that you can purchase through Campus Quick Copy.

6. Course Packet

To obtain your Course Packet, follow these steps:

1. From a Campus Quick Copy computer, go to the course Moodle site (for information on accessing Moodle, see below). There you will find a PDF document labeled "Course Packet." Double click on this file (it may open within your browser or within Adobe Acrobat).
2. Under the "File" category, select "Print." When the printer window opens, do not immediately click "Print." First, click the "Properties" button; then click the "Finishing" tab. Check the "2-sided Printing" box and select the second icon (which shows the paper being flipped on the shorter edge). Then click "Okay." This will ensure that pages are printed double-sided and in a form appropriate for portrait binding (the longer edge).
3. Now click "Print."
4. Finally, ask Campus Quick Copy to bind your Course Packet along the longer edge (portrait binding).

The Course Packet contains the following additional required readings:

1. Pierre Hadot, "Philosophy as a Way of Life #1"
2. Epictetus and Marcus Aurelius, "Selections from Two Stoics"
3. Pierre Hadot, "Philosophy as a Way of Life #2"
4. Plato, "Alcibiades' Speech" (*Symposium*, 215a-222c)
5. Aristotle, "What is Happiness?" (*Nicomachean Ethics*, Bk. 1, selections)
6. Julia Annas, "Making Sense of My Life as a Whole"
7. Plato, "Two Types of Life" (*Gorgias*, 500a-d; 490e-497a)
8. Richard Watson, Excerpts from *The Philosopher's Diet*
9. Plato, "The Dangers of Sophistry" (*Protagoras*, 310b-315b)
10. Plato, "What Talking with Socrates is Like" (*Laches*, 187d-188a)
11. Plato, "Socrates and Refutation" (*Gorgias*, 457c-458a)
12. Plato, "Discovering One's Ignorance" (*Sophist*, 229b-231b)
13. Plato, "Socrates and the Slave Boy" (*Meno*, 80a-86c)
14. Plato, "Socrates Anticipates His Trial" (*Gorgias*, 521c-522e)
15. Rilke, "Archaic Torso of Apollo"
16. Van Morrison, "T.B. Sheets"
17. Kierkegaard, "What it Means to Die"
18. Epicurus, "Letter to Menoeceus"
19. Epicurus and Lucretius, "On Fear of Death"
20. Martha Nussbaum, Excerpt from "Mortal Immortals"
21. Hemingway, "The Short, Happy Life of Francis Macomber"
22. Seneca, "On Self-Control"
23. Seneca, *On Anger* #1
24. V. F. Perkins, "In a Lonely Place"
25. Marcus Aurelius, "Ten Counsels Against Anger"
26. Seneca, *On Anger* #2
27. Simon & Garfunkel, "I am a Rock"
28. Seneca, "On Philosophy and Friendship"
29. Aristotle, "On Friendship and Love" (*Nicomachean Ethics*, Bks. 8-9)
30. Milton, Excerpt from *The Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce*

31. Ibsen, "Alternative Ending to *A Doll's House*"
32. Stanley Cavell, "The Importance of Importance"
33. Stanley Cavell, "*The Philadelphia Story*"
34. Hemingway, "A Clean, Well-Lighted Place" (original version)
35. Hemingway, "A Clean, Well-Lighted Place" (posthumous version)
36. Raymond Carver, "Cathedral"
37. John Donne, "No Man is an Island"
38. Kierkegaard, "B. to A. on a Young Man"

Films

Screenings will be held at 5:10-7:40 p.m. in LA 146. These films are also on four-hour reserve in Mansfield Library.

1. *Groundhog Day* (Ramis, 1993); Tuesday, February 5 (101 min).
2. *In a Lonely Place* (Ray, 1950); Tuesday, March 19 (94 min).
3. *The Philadelphia Story* (Cukor, 1940); Tuesday, April 23 (112 min).
4. *About a Boy* (Weitz, 2002); Tuesday, May 7 (101 min).

Songs

For the following songs, lyrics can be found in your Course Packet. I will make available an mp3 file of each song via Moodle.

1. "T.B. Sheets" (Van Morrison)
2. "I am a Rock" (Simon & Garfunkel)

Moodle

This course has a Moodle page (<http://umonline.umt.edu>). For more information on how to access Moodle, go to <http://umonline.umt.edu/Moodle%20Tip%20Sheets/tipsheetandvideosstudents.aspx>.

Email

Any email that I send to the class will be sent to your university email address via Moodle. If you use another email address (such as Gmail or Yahoo), please forward your university email to this other account. For directions on how to do this see http://umt.custhelp.com/app/answers/detail/a_id/820.

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://life.umt.edu/dss/>).

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 challenging and 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 (<http://www.umd.edu/catalog/acad/acadpolicy/default.html#attendance>). In my experience, students also get the most out of those classes that they regularly attend. In this course I will take attendance. Everyone may miss three classes, no questions asked (and no justifications/explanations required). After that, each absence will reduce your attendance/participation grade by 10% (that is, 1% of your final grade). If you have to miss a class, it is your responsibility to hand in ahead of time any work that is due and to obtain any new assignments that are handed out.

Participation has many facets and might be compared to citizenship. Those who are good classroom citizens are those who do three things: (i) come to class prepared, having read and thought about the assignment; (ii) take an active role in class discussions, sharing their critical insights and raising questions that help to generate further discussion and reflection; (iii) take an active role in learning the names of and respectfully listening to their fellow classmates, and in helping to foster a learning environment where all feel welcome to participate and respected as fellow inquirers regardless of the extent to which we may or may not happen to agree about a given topic under investigation.

Outlines and Reaction Papers

Reading, like writing, is an art that can only be acquired through extensive and intensive practice. 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. [...] [T]his only is reading, in a high sense, not that which lulls us as a luxury and suffers the nobler faculties to sleep the while, but what we have to stand on tip-toe to read and devote our most alert and wakeful hours to” (“Reading,” *Walden*).

In general, you should plan to read each assignment for this course two times before you come to class: (i) read it through once to get a sense of the overall shape of the discussion and what the chief issues and questions seem to be; (ii) read it a second time, reading more slowly and with an eye to how the different parts hang together. To help facilitate the aims of this second reading, you will be required occasionally to hand in at the beginning of class either a 2-3 page outline of that day’s principal reading assignment, or a 1 page reaction paper to a question I’ve given you about the day’s assignment. I will divide the class into four groups (Alpha, Beta, Gamma, Delta) and then, on a rotating basis, each time we meet one of the four groups will be required to hand in either outlines or reactions. I will give you details about outlining and the reaction papers in separate handouts.

Philosophy Journal/Portfolio

You will be required to keep a philosophy journal or diary in which you respond to questions I give you, both about the assignments and about yourself, and where you record the results of several mini-experiments you will perform. You will be required to hand in your journal twice during the semester and to turn in at the end of the term a typed portfolio of your best entries. I will provide more details about philosophy journals in a separate handout.

Take-Home Exam

You will be required to complete a take-home exam on the material from the first part of the course.

Dialogue

You will be required to write a philosophical dialogue that addresses material from the second part of the course.

Final Exam

You will be required to complete an in-class final exam during exam week. This exam will have two sections: (1) a section focusing on material from the third part of the course; (2) a comprehensive section covering the course as a whole.

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://life.umt.edu/vpsa/student_conduct.php), cheating and plagiarizing also harm your fellow students by giving you an unfair advantage, and harm you since you thereby fail to take yourself seriously. While I think it is pretty self-evident what cheating is, people are not always clear about what plagiarism is. To start, plagiarism can be defined as a form of intellectual stealing and cheating. The Latin root means “to kidnap” and vividly captures what is at stake: when you plagiarize you steal someone else’s intellectual child and pretend that you are its true parent. Specific examples of plagiarism include: (i) incorporating material from somewhere else (a book, an article, a website, an encyclopedia entry) without properly documenting this (and thereby giving the true author credit for her or his work); (ii) handing in work that you did not do (e.g., by purchasing a paper on the Internet or downloading text that you simply insert into your own paper or borrowing a paper that another student wrote). In general, the first instance of cheating or plagiarism or other forms of academic dishonesty will result in a failing grade (“F”) for the course. Any instance of cheating or plagiarism or other forms of academic dishonesty is also subject to University sanction. If you have any questions about whether or not something might constitute plagiarism, please feel free to contact me; see also <http://www.library.ualberta.ca/guides/plagiarism>.

Schedule of Readings and Written Assignments

(Subject to change with advance notice)

Note: Page references to works by Plato and Aristotle are to the page numbers and letters found in the margins (called, respectively, Stephanus pages and Bekker pages after early editors of Plato's and Aristotle's writings).

CP = Course Packet

TDS = *The Trial and Death of Socrates*

A = Alpha Group **O** = Outline Due
B = Beta Group **R** = Reaction Paper Due
G = Gamma Group
D = Delta Group

I. Happiness, Philosophy, and the Life of Socrates

Week 1

T 1/29

Introduction: The Philosophical Life

- (1) Hadot, "Philosophy as a Way of Life #1" (CP #1)
- (2) Epictetus and Marcus Aurelius, "Selections from Two Stoics" (CP #2)

Th 1/31

Philosophy as a Way of Life; The Example of Socrates

- (1) Hadot, "Philosophy as a Way of Life #2" (CP #3)
- (2) Plato, "Alcibiades' Speech" (*Symposium*, 215a-222c, CP #4)

Week 2

T 2/5

What is Happiness?

- (1) Aristotle, "What is Happiness?" (*Nicomachean Ethics*, selections, CP #5)
- (2) Annas, "Making Sense of My Life as a Whole" (CP #6)

ABGD-O (Aristotle reading)

T 2/5

Film: *Groundhog Day*

5:10-7:40 p.m., LA 146

Th 2/7

What Makes a Good Life? (Discuss *Groundhog Day*)

Plato, "Two Types of Life" (*Gorgias*, 500a-d; 490e-497a, CP #7)

Week 3
T 2/12

What are the Costs of Life?

Thoreau, "Economy" (*Walden*, pp. 1-52)

ABGD-R

Th 2/14

What is it to Live Deliberately?

(1) Thoreau, "Where I Lived and What I Lived For"; "Reading"; "Conclusion"
(*Walden*, pp. 53-72; 206-216)

(2) Watson, Excerpts from *The Philosopher's Diet* (CP #8)

A-O (*Walden*, pp. 53-72)

Week 4
T 2/19

How are Philosophers Commonly Conceived?

(1) Aristophanes, *Clouds*

(2) Plato, "The Dangers of Sophistry" (*Protagoras*, 310b-315b, CP #9)

B-R

Th 2/21

What is the Value of Refutation?

(1) Plato, "What Talking with Socrates is Like" (*Laches*, 187d-188a, CP #10)

(2) Plato, "Socrates and Refutation" (*Gorgias*, 457c-458a, CP #11)

(3) Plato, "Discovering One's Ignorance" (*Sophist*, 229b-231b, CP #12)

(4) Plato, "Socrates and the Slave Boy" (*Meno*, 80a-86c, CP #13)

G-O (Plato, *Meno* reading)

Week 5
T 2/26

Socrates (and Philosophy) on Trial

(1) Plato, "Socrates Anticipates His Trial" (*Gorgias*, 521c-522e, CP #14)

(2) Plato, *Euthyphro* (2a-5c, in *TDS*)

(3) Plato, *Apology* (17a-28b, in *TDS*)

D-R

Th 2/28

The Death of Socrates

(1) Plato, *Apology* (28b-42a, in *TDS*)

(2) Plato, "Socrates' Death Scene" (*Phaedo*, 114d-118a, in *TDS*)

(3) Rilke, "Archaic Torso of Apollo" (CP #15)

Take-home Exam Handed Out

B-O (Plato, *Apology* reading)

II. Sources of Unhappiness: (1) Fear of Death; (2) Anger

Fear of Death

Week 6

T 3/5

What Does it Mean to Die?

- (1) Van Morrison, "T.B. Sheets" (lyrics, CP #16; mp3 file, Moodle)
- (2) Kierkegaard, "What it Means to Die" (CP #17)

Take-home Exam Due

Th 3/7

Should We Fear Death?

- (1) Epicurus, "Letter to Menoeceus" (CP #18)
- (2) Epicurus and Lucretius, "On Fear of Death" (CP #19)
- (3) Nussbaum, Excerpt from "Mortal Immortals" (CP #20)
- (4) Re-read Socrates on the fear of death (*Apology* 28b-31a; 38e-41d)

A-R

Week 7

T 3/12

What is it Like for Fear to Govern How We Live?

Hemingway, "The Short, Happy Life of Francis Macomber" (CP #21)

D-O

Th 3/14

Can We Overcome the Fear of Death Without Losing Our Humanity?

Hemingway, "Short, Happy Life" (cont.)

Philosophy Journal #1 Due

G-R

Anger

Week 8

T 3/19

What is Anger?

- (1) Seneca, "On Self-Control" (CP #22)
- (2) Seneca, *On Anger* #1 (CP #23)
- (3) Re-read Socrates on anger (*Apology* 23c-d; 34c-36b; 41c-d)

A-O (Seneca, *On Anger* reading)

T 3/19

Film: *In a Lonely Place*

5:10-7:40 p.m., LA 146

Th 3/21

Are Anger and Love Compatible? (Discuss *In a Lonely Place*)

- (1) Perkins, "*In a Lonely Place*" (CP #24)
- (2) Marcus Aurelius, "Ten Counsels Against Anger" (CP #25)

Week 9
T 3/26

Can Anger Be Controlled?

- (1) Seneca, *On Anger* #2 (CP #26; also quickly re-read CP #23)
- (2) Seneca, *Medea*, Acts I and II (pp. 35-64)

B-R

Th 3/28

What Are the Dangers of Anger?

Seneca, *Medea*, Acts III, IV, and V (pp. 65-97)

Dialogue Assignment Handed Out

G-O

Week 10

No Class (Spring Break)

III. Beyond the Individual: Friendship, Love, and the Meaning of Life

Week 11
T 4/9

Do We Need Friends and Lovers?

- (1) Simon and Garfunkel, "I am a Rock" (lyrics, CP #27; mp3 file, Moodle)
- (2) Seneca, "On Philosophy and Friendship" (CP #28)

Th 4/11

What Kinds of Friends Should We Have?

Aristotle, "On Friendship and Love" (CP #29, 1155a-1162a34)

D-R

Week 12
T 4/16

How Do Friendships End? What is it to Be a Friend to Oneself?

How Many Friends Should We Have?

Aristotle, "On Friendship and Love" (CP# 29, 1162a35-1172a15)

B-O

Th 4/18

What is Marriage? What Are the Costs of Inequality in a Marriage?

- (1) Ibsen, *A Doll's House*, Acts I and II (pp. 1-50)
- (2) Milton, Excerpt from *The Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce* (CP #30)

A-R

Week 13

T 4/23

What Are a Woman's Duties to Herself?

- (1) Ibsen, *A Doll's House*, Act III (pp. 51-72);
- (2) Ibsen, "Alternative Ending to *A Doll's House*" (CP #31)

Dialogue Assignment Due

T 4/23

Film: *The Philadelphia Story*

5:10-7:40 p.m., LA 146

Th 4/25

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

- (1) Cavell, "The Importance of Importance" (CP #32)
- (2) Cavell, "*The Philadelphia Story*" (CP #33)

Week 14

T 4/30

What if Life Has No Meaning?

- (1) Hemingway, "A Clean, Well-Lighted Place" (original version, CP #34)
- (2) Hemingway, "A Clean, Well-Lighted Place" (posthumous version, CP #35)

D-O

Th 5/2

What Might Give Life Meaning?

Carver, "Cathedral" (CP #36)

Philosophy Journal #2 Due

G-R

Week 15

T 5/7

Review/Catch Up

T 5/7

Film: *About a Boy*

5:10-7:40 p.m., LA 146

Th 5/9

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

- (1) Donne, "No Man is an Island" (CP #37)
- (2) Kierkegaard, "B. to A. on a Young Man" (CP #38)

Week 16

T 5/14

Philosophy Journal Portfolio Due (in my mailbox—LA 101—by 4 p.m.)

W 5/15

Final Exam (1:10-3:10 p.m., LA 146)