

Spring 2-1-2018

CLAS 365E.01: The Roots of Western Ethics

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CHOOSING THE GOOD LIFE : A CLASSICAL INTRODUCTION

aka "The Roots of Western Ethics"

CLAS 365E (01) (CRN 38924)

Class meetings: MWF 2 PM, Place TBA

Instructor: Hayden W. Ausland (Classics/FLL; office: LA 424;

hayden.usland@umontana.edu)

Primary office hours: MW 3 PM and by arrangement

The nature of this course. We shall be reading, discussing, and writing about a selection of classical works bearing on the moral formation of character as the basis for a good life. I shall devote some class time to introducing factual material; other times will feature discussions for which members of the class will bear some responsibility. In either case, the real teachers for this class will be our primary texts, and we thus have the obligation to get to know them and discuss them with one another in a responsible manner. I may often take the lead, but the "first" students in the class will characteristically spur conversation with questions and in this way encourage all other students to participate. Evaluation will be according to criteria set forth in detail overleaf.

Anticipated schedule of readings for consideration and written-work deadlines

Week 1	Introduction; Aesop, <i>The Complete Fables</i> (Penguin ed.)	
Week 2	Hesiod, <i>Theogony & Works and Days</i>	
Week 3	Theognis, <i>Elegies</i>	[paper #1 due]
Week 4	Sophocles, <i>Philoctetes</i> * & Euripides, <i>Orestes</i> *	
Week 5	Selections from Democritus*, Hippocrates*, & Isocrates*	[paper #2 due]
Week 6	Xenophon, <i>Conversations of Socrates</i>	
Week 7	(Xenophon, C. of S. continued)	[mid-term exam]
Week 8	Plato, <i>Ion & Hippias Minor</i>	
Week 9	Plato, <i>Laches & Protagoras</i>	[paper #3 due]
Week 10	[Spring Break]	
Week 11	Aristotle, <i>Nicomachean Ethics</i>	
Week 12	Aristotle, <i>Nicomachean Ethics</i> (continued)	
Week 13	Cicero, <i>De Officiis</i> (translated as <i>On Obligations, On Duties</i> , al.)	[paper #4 due]
Week 14	Seneca, selections from <i>Letters and Essays</i>	
Week 15	Seneca, selections (continued)	[paper #5 due]
Exam week		[final exam]

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The college bookstore has been asked to make the following available:

Aesop, *The Complete Fables* (Viking-Penguin)
Hesiod, *Theogony & Works & Days*; Theognis, *Elegies* (Viking-Penguin)
Xenophon, *Conversations of Socrates* (Viking-Penguin)
Plato, *Ion, Hippias Minor, Laches, Protagoras* (Yale)
Aristotle, *The Nicomachen Ethics* (Bobbs-Merrill)
Cicero, *On Obligations: De Officiis* (Oxford World Classics)
M. Hadas, *The Stoic Philosophy of Seneca* (Norton)

-but various other editions will probably do as well.

Texts for the readings marked with an asterisk (*) will be supplied by the instructor.

Course standards and requirements

Performance will be evaluated and graded based on a number of factors to which it would be unduly rigid to assign "percentage" values, but which can be arranged and explained as follows:

A. Evidence of preparation of the work for class, including careful study of the assigned readings, & attendance at and perhaps some participation in the class-meetings.

B. Individual written work, including:

1. Five short written assignments;
2. A one-hour midterm (in class Fri., March 9th) and a regular final exam.

Explanation of (B):

(1) The five written assignments (due Wednesdays at 5 PM in weeks 3, 5, 9, 13 and 15) will concern the readings then under consideration; they *are not to exceed two (double-spaced pages in length)*, and should aim more toward explaining than summarizing or speculating. Topics will be announced the week previous to the weeks they are due. At least one may undergo revision. *Mechanical as well as substantive elements will be considered in grading.*

(2) Examinations will have three parts: (i) a brief section on the identification of persons or themes; (ii) a quoted passage or two for close discussion; (iii) a more general problem posed for essay treatment.

NB: Students should acquaint themselves with the principles and rules governing enrollment, performance, and evaluation in university course work set out in the *University Catalogue, Schedule of Classes, and Student Conduct Code*. Note that grading is the traditional option only and that grades of incomplete are not recorded in this course.

Obligatory explanation of "General Education credit":

(Ethics and Human Values) This course familiarizes students with the Western tradition of ethical thought. It rigorously presents the basic concepts and forms of reasoning that define and distinguish this tradition. Its focus is on both the Greek and the Roman origins

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of this tradition, and it examines these by tracing several concepts (e.g. justice and the good life) as conceptualized within these classical phases in our tradition.