

History 418  
Dr. Ada Palmer  
Texas A&M University

## PROVISIONAL SYLLABUS

### **European Intellectual History from Ancient Greece to the Early Middle Ages**

Office: 214 Glasscock (HIST) Building  
Virtual Office Hours: adapalmer@tamu.edu

#### **Course Description**

Western thought from the foundation of formal philosophy in Pre-Socratic Greece through the Sixth Century. The course focuses on the five major schools of ancient thought (Platonists, Aristotelians, Epicureans, Stoics and Skeptics) and the unique character of the ancient philosophical lifestyle, which combined elements of religion, mysticism and magic as well as philosophy. The final weeks stress the influence of the ancient Greek schools on the formation of early Christianity. Readings in Plato, Aristotle, Sextus Empiricus, Seneca, Lucretius, Marcus Aurelius, Cicero, St. Augustine and Boethius.

#### **Prerequisites**

Junior or senior classification

#### **Reading List**

Note: We will read selections from many of these books, as specified on the course schedule. All readings are on reserve in the Evans Library.

1. Plato, *Republic*, tr. A. Bloom (Basic, 1991) 0465069347
2. Aristotle, *Introductory Readings*, ed. Irwin and Fine (Hackett, 1996) 0872203395
3. Seneca, *Moral and Political Essays* (Cambridge, 1995) 0521348188
4. Lucretius, *On the Nature of the Universe*, tr. Lathan (Penguin, 1994) 0140446109
5. Cicero, *Tusculan Disputations* (Loeb, 1945) 0674991567
6. Sextus Empiricus, *Outlines of Skepticism*, ed. Annas et al. (Cambridge) 0521778093
7. Marcus Aurelius, *Meditations*, tr. Staniforth (Penguin) 0140441409
8. Augustine, *Confessions*, tr. Chadwick (Oxford) 01902833723
9. Boethius, *Consolation of Philosophy*, tr. Watts (Penguin) 0140447806
10. Pierre Hadot, *What is Ancient Philosophy?* (Harvard) 067413735

#### **Requirements** (see the course schedule for specific dates)

1. Two papers, 5 pages each (1,500 words), on a subject of your choice related to the readings. Papers should be analytical (i.e., question-oriented), not mere summary.

Students are encouraged to see the instructor during office hours to discuss their topics. (40%--or 20% each).

2. Midterm examination, consisting of several identifications and two essay questions, covering the first half of the course (20%).

3. Final examination, consisting of several identifications and two essay questions, covering the second half of the course (30%).

4. Discussion (10%).

### **Grading Scale**

|              |   |
|--------------|---|
| 90-100       | A |
| 80-89        | B |
| 70-79        | C |
| 60-69        | D |
| 59 and below | F |

### **Attendance**

Attendance is mandatory. Students will be penalized after more than three absences, except in the case of university-excused absences. For each unexcused absence after that, your final grade will be dropped by ten percentage points. Assignments that are submitted late will receive a grade of zero except in the case of university-excused absences or by prior arrangement with the instructor.

Please see <http://student-rules.tamu.edu/rule7.htm> for current policy on university-excused absences. For illness- or injury-related absences of fewer than three days, a note from a health care professional confirming date and time of visit will be required in order to count the absence as university-excused; for absences of three days or more, the note must also contain the medical professional's confirmation that absence from class was necessary (see Rule 7.1.6.1).

### **ADA:**

Disabilities: The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you believe you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please contact the Office of Support Services for Students with Disabilities in Room B-118 Cain Hall (845-1637).

### **Plagiarism:**

Academic Integrity: “An Aggie does not lie, cheat, or steal, or tolerate those who do.”  
You are expected to be aware of the Aggie Honor Code and the Honor Council Rules and Procedures, stated at <http://www.tamu.edu/aggiehonor>.

## Course Schedule

Note: The reading for each week should be done *prior* to Tuesday's class.

### WEEK 1

Sept 1 Introduction: The Character of Ancient Philosophy  
3 The Ancient World; Philosophy and Pagan Culture  
Reading: Hadot, chaps. 1-4.

### WEEK 2

Sept 8 The Presocratics and the Beginning of Philosophy  
10 Socrates, Founder of the Philosophic Life  
Reading: Hadot, chapter 5; Plato, *The Apology* 1-5.

### WEEK 3

Sept 15 Plato I: Human Nature and the Nature of the State  
17 Plato II: Epistemology, the Soul as Divine Daemon  
Reading: Hadot, chapter 5; Plato, *Republic* 1-5.

### WEEK 4

Sept 22 Plato III: Metaphysics and Cosmology  
24 Plato IV: Ethics and the Philosophical Life  
Reading: Plato, *Republic* 6-10

### WEEK 5

Sept 29 Aristotle I: Ethics  
Oct 1 Aristotle II: Epistemology and the Nature of the Soul  
Reading: *Nicomachean Ethics* I, II, III, i-ii; Hadot, ch. 6.  
FIRST PAPER DUE.

### WEEK 6

Oct 6 Aristotle II: Physics, Psychology, Moral Philosophy  
8 Aristotle III: Politics; Man as a Rational, Social Animal  
Reading: Aristotle, *De anima* and *Physics* II, i-iii

### WEEK 7

Oct 13 Stoicism, Divine Monism  
15 MIDTERM  
Reading: Seneca, *Letters*, 1-27, 34-51, 58-65; Hadot, ch. 7

### WEEK 8

Oct 20 Epicureanism I: Science and Cosmology  
22 Epicureanism II: Ethics Without Gods

Reading: Lucretius, *DRN* I-III, IV 1-213, Hadot ch. 8

WEEK 9

Oct 27  
29

Cynics and Skeptics

Cicero and Roman Philosophy

Reading: Sextus Empiricus, *Outlines of Skepticism*;  
Cicero, *Tusculan Disputations*

WEEK 10

Nov 3  
5

Marcus Aurelius and the Philosopher's Askesis

The Roman Imperial Tradition

Reading: Marcus Aurelius, *Meditations*, 1-VI, IX

WEEK 11

Nov 10  
12

Early Christian Philosophy

Plotinus and Neo-Platonism

Reading: *On Beauty* (xerox); Hadot, ch. 9.

WEEK 12

Nov 17  
19

Plotinus: Metaphysical Hierarchy and Spiritual Dynamics

Augustine I: Life and Works

Reading: Hadot, chapters 10-12.

WEEK 13

Nov 24  
26

Augustine II: Souls and Cosmos

THANKSGIVING HOLIDAY

Reading: Augustine, *Confessions*, I-III, V

WEEK 14

Dec 1  
3

Augustine III: Social and Political Thought

Augustine IV: Later Theological Controversies

Reading: Augustine, *Confessions*, VI-IX

REDEFINED DAY

Dec 8 Tu

Boethius and Medieval Christianity, Review

Reading: Boethius, *Consolation of Philosophy*.

SECOND PAPER DUE

See the Course Schedule for the date and time for the FINAL EXAM.