INTRODUCTION

This syllabus contains the academic calendar for the Program in Structured Liberal Education, the weekly reading assignments, lectures, discussions, films, etc. It should be used as a guide in preparing for the work of the Program. By studying it earlier rather than later, you can pace your work to ensure proper preparation for seminar participation. You should prepare the assigned texts before the first plenary session of each week.

The syllabus also contains Study Questions which deserve your attention. These questions are intended to stimulate your thinking about the topics and texts for each week. They do not require specific answers and are at times purposefully broad. They will not appear on the final examination, nor will they necessarily be used during discussion. They are meant, rather, to illustrate the kinds of questions you should be asking yourself about the topics and texts. You should think about them not only because they are valuable and relevant in and of themselves, but also because they are a means to learn how to generate questions. A question that is asked, and the way in which it is asked, is as important as the answer that is provided.

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One should not study contemporaries and competitors, but the great men of antiquity whose works have for centuries received equal homage and consideration. Indeed, a man of really superior endowments will feel the necessity of this, and it is just this need for intercourse with great predecessors which is the sign of a higher talent. Let us study Moliere, let us study Shakespeare, but above all things, the old Greeks, and always the Greeks.

--Goethe
(Gespräche mit Goethe in den letzten Jahren seines Lebens)

"Each one of us must organize the chaos in himself by thinking himself back to his true needs. He will want all his honesty, all the sturdiness and sincerity in his character to help him revolt against secondhand thought, secondhand learning, secondhand action. And he will begin then to understand that culture can be something more than a decoration of life'...And thus the Greek idea...will be discovered in him, the idea of a culture as a new and finer nature, without distinction of inner and outer, without convention or disguise, as a unity of thought and will, life and appearance."

--Friedrich Nietzsche
(The Use and Abuse of History)
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REQUIRED TEXTS

Aeschylus One Oresteia 
Introduction to Aristotle

The Politics gu

Sappho, an Introduction

Ten Plays

Harxf History of Ancient Greece

He .od Theogony Bob's-M.

Home The Odyssey An ho

The New English Bible Oxford Study Edition Oxf Mn

The Collected Dialogues of Plato

Pa Art & Experience in Classical Greece Camb

Sophocles One Oed pu gy Ch

Wh. The Elements of Style cmi

Thu The Peloponnesian War gu

Just and Unjust Wars Ha pe Row
In addition to participation in scheduled SLE class meetings, the formal requirements of the program this quarter include four short papers and a final examination. The papers should be 3-5 pages in length. Your tutor will expect a rough draft of each paper. For more advice on writing papers, consult your tutor or section leader(s).

Papers are due at 5 p.m. on each date listed below. LATENESS WILL BE PENALIZED. Make four copies of each paper. Two should be put in Jon Reider's box outside his office, and two in your tutor's box in the main lounge. In each case, the instructors will keep one copy and return one to you with comments. Always keep the original or one copy for yourself in case of loss. For convenience and to save money, we urge you to buy a copy card at the library, which will give you a discount on all their copy machines, and you won't need a supply of change. Remember to allow enough time for copying.

#1 Due Monday, October 8 at 5:00 p.m. (Week 3)

The Melian Dialogue and the debate over Mytilene raise the issue of the conflict between necessity (realism, self-interest, etc.) and morality in the conduct of war. Choose either the Melian Dialogue or the debate over Mytilene and discuss to what extent and in what ways the concepts of morality and justice apply to it. If one outweighs the other, why? You are by no means bound by Walzer's argument, and you should feel free to criticize it if you want. Be sure to specify the moral position from which your analysis of the positions taken by the Athenians and their opponents begins. How does your position differ from Walzer's?

#2 Due Monday, October 22 at 5:00 p.m. (Week 5)

Choose one problem that either the Odyssey or the Theogony, on the one hand, and the Hebrew Bible on the other, treat. You may select for example, the relationship between human beings and divinity, relations between men and women, the use of violence, the concept of the hero, the legitimacy of political power, or another topic of your own choosing. What is the difference in the perspective between the Greek and Hebrew texts? How do the myths in the texts transmit meaning with reference to the problem selected? What does your analysis tell you about the societies that produced them?

Paper #3 Due Monday, November 12 at 5:00 p.m. (Week 8)

Greek drama was not merely entertainment. In presenting ancient mythical stories, the dramatists frequently commented, directly or indirectly, on both socio-political and intellectual conflicts in 5th century Athens. Among other issues, they discussed the structure of the family and the roles of the sexes, rational vs. emotional mental faculties, and the nature of political leadership. Discuss one of these, or any appropriate conflict. Write on at least two plays, demonstrating how the plays present, and resolve, a conflict you have chosen to discuss. Do not choose the same topic with which you dealt in Paper #2.
Plato's criticisms of poetry and drama in the Republic usually strike the modern reader as outrageous infringements on the freedom of thought and art, yet in our own society we seriously debate the effects of popular music, television, pornography, and fairy tales on the moral health of the young and society at large. What are Plato's objections to poetry and art and how do these arguments derive from the more general principles of his philosophy? What are the essential differences in Aristotle's philosophy that allow him to take a more favorable attitude toward poetry and drama in the Poetics? Why, when all is said and done, is Plato right?
SLE STYLE SHEET

1. Papers should be typed, double-spaced, with 1 1/2 inch margins on all sides to allow for readers' comments.

2. Papers should be stapled together, not paper-clipped. Do not use plastic folders.

3. Papers should have a title page which includes the following information: (1) title. (2) In the lower right-hand corner, list in order: your name, your tutor's name, your discussion leader(s), the date, the number of the paper assignment.

4. Correct spelling, punctuation, and typing are essential and will be taken into account in grading. On questions of grammar, punctuation, and usage, Nancy Packer's Writing, Writing (widely used in Freshman English) and Strunk and White's Elements of Style are recommended.

5. We want you to spend your time thinking and writing, not worrying about footnote format. Therefore, when dealing with sources, you may use this simple shortcut: if you are using a primary source such as Plato or Homer, put the work and the standard line number (not the page number) immediately after the quotation, in parentheses. For example: As Plato says, "Then a just man too will not differ at all from a just city..." (Republic IV, 435b). If you are citing a secondary source, give the author and the page number. For example, "Not all Classical Art is Athenian..." (Pollitt, p. 64).

6. If you do not use sources other than assigned readings, you do not need a bibliography. However, if you do use additional sources, you should list them at the end of your paper in proper form, including the date and place of publication. You should not need to use any additional sources this quarter. We are more interested at this stage in your own thinking, not your ability to do library research or summarize the work of other scholars. Of course, you are free to consult any materials you choose.

7. If you learn to use the text editing features of LOTS or SMILE (computer centers), you may have the computer print out the copies of your paper. Some students have found that this saves time and energy in the long run. However, the computer is often crowded and occasionally breaks down just when you need to use it. These are not acceptable excuses for late papers. Of course, you may use your own computer if you have one, but please use only standard typefaces. We are interested in content, not graphics.
WEEK 1 (Sept. 26-28)

Theme: The Problem of Justice

Wed Sept. 26 3:15  Plenary: The Problem of Justice (Mark Mancall)

Thu Sept. 27 3:15  Discussion Sections

Film: Rashomon

Fri Sept. 28 3:15  Plenary: A Judge Looks at Justice  Judge Sidney Feinberg

Reading

Walzer, Just and Unjust Wars  Parts 1, 5

Thucydides, The Peloponnesian War, Melian Dialogue, pp. 400-408

The Debate over Mytilene, pp. 194-223 (ca. 420-404 B.C.)

Hatzfeld, History of Ancient Greece  Ch. 20-21

Study Questions

Walzer

1. Why does Walzer think it is difficult to apply concepts of justice and morality to warfare? Why, on the other hand, in his opinion, is it possible to do so, even if it is difficult? How do the debates over Melos and Mytilene demonstrate both points?

2. Despite their disagreements, "the Athenians shared a moral vocabulary." (p. 11). What does this mean? Why does Walzer think this is so? He also thinks we share a moral vocabulary with the Greeks. Do you agree?

3. Why is the "realist" position that Walzer describes so appealing? Why would it appeal to many people today as well? What are the psychological and philosophical assumptions underlying it?

4. Can one make absolute moral rules? If they must be relative, what criteria should be taken into account? Are all moral judgments conditioned by historical circumstances?

5. Walzer argues (p. 19) that moral values can hold even if people violate them. Do you agree? Couldn't you also reason that large-scale indifference to moral values or laws makes them irrelevant (e.g., marijuana laws)?
Thucydides

1. How consistent is the moral tone of the Athenian position in the Melian Dialogue and the speeches over the fate of Mytilene? Are the speeches of Cleon and Diodotus as different in their underlying values as Walzer implies?

2. Is the morality Thucydides describes compatible with a democratic form of government; i.e., can a state practice imperialism abroad and democracy at home, as Athens did? How comparable is the contemporary American situation?

3. Do you think the reversal of the first decision to destroy Mytilene was a just one? How might you have argued this issue? Was the final result a merciful one? On what basis would you make your conclusion?
Theme: The Material Life of Ancient Greece

Oct. 2 3:15 Plenary: Material Life and History (Mark Mancall)
7:00 Plenary: The Ancient Greek Economy (Prof. Mark Munn, Dept. of Classics)

Oct. 3 3:15 Discussion Sections
7:00 Plenary: Social and Political Institutions of Greece (Munn)

Thu Oct. 4 3:15 Discussion Sections

Reading
Hesiod, Works and Days (copied selections) (750-700 B.C. - Boeotia)
Xenophon, Oeconomicus (cop. sel.) (ca. 380 B.C.)
Pseudo-Aristotle, Oeconomica (cop. sel.) (ca. 350 B.C.)
Mosse, The Ancient World at Work (cop. sel.)
Hatzfeld, History of Ancient Greece Ch. 1-6, 16
Homer, Odyssey Books 1-8 (750-700 B.C. - Ionia)

(Reading note: We recommend that you read the assignments in the order given. The first three works on this week's reading list [Hesiod, Xenophon, and Pseudo-Aristotle] are meant to be read as primary sources of Greek views of economic and social life. Mosse links together the primary sources you are reading with other historical information. Hatzfeld is meant as a general historical background for the whole quarter. The first part of the Odyssey can also be studied from this viewpoint, but we are assigning it primarily so you can read it in stages over the next three weeks.)

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Study Questions

1. What factors, other than the passage of time, might account for the different attitudes toward farming of Hesiod and Xenophon?

2. What is Hesiod's attitude toward work? Is it a vocation or career? Does it help build character? Does it have any moral value? Why is prosperity good?
3. For Xenophon, why is "household management" an art? How is it similar to and different from other arts? What is the relationship between it and being a gentleman?

4. Why is farming a more estimable occupation than being a merchant or a craftsman? How do you reconcile this with the civic responsibilities of the model citizen of this period?

5. What is Xenophon's (speaking through Ischomachus) attitude toward marriage? Compare this to Hesiod. What are the ideal womanly qualities?

6. How do Xenophon and Pseudo-Aristotle approach the subject of economics? In what ways is their attitude similar to and different from modern capitalism? Is material well-being the most important value in their thought?

7. What is the relationship between the material conditions of life and the ideas on economics and family life you have read?

8. It has been said that although the Greeks had an economy, they had no concept of an economy. Do you think this is so? Why do you think they had no such concept?
WEEK 3 (Oct. 8-12)

Theme: Myth and History I

Oct. 8 5:00 FIRST PAPER DUE

Tue Oct. 9 3:15 Plenary: Myth and History (Mark Mancall)
7:00 Plenary: Hesiod (Gregson Davis)

Oct. 10 3:15 Discussion Sections
7:00 Film: Black Orpheus

Oct. 11 3:15 Discussion Sections

Reading

Hebrew Bible: Genesis 1-22 (2000-1500 B.C.)

Hesiod, Theogony

Thucydides, The Peloponnesian War Introduction, pp. 35-49

Homer, Odyssey, Books 8-16

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Study Questions

1. What is a myth? Do myths differ from “logical” thought? Is myth pre- or non-scientific? Why are myths associated with religion? Are myths necessarily false?

2. How do myths work? What is their logic? What kinds of problems do they solve? How do they instruct behavior? What does it mean to believe in a myth? What makes a mythical explanation satisfactory?

3. The Greek gods are anthropomorphic and/or associated with natural phenomena. Moreover, they are part of a polytheistic system. What is the importance of these differences from the Hebrew single abstract deity?

4. How do the two mythical systems treat history and their own past? Why is history a part of the Hebrew system but not of the Greek? What makes it possible for Thucydides to make a radical distinction between myth and history? What is the matter with this distinction?

5. Compare the two creation stories. What are the essential differences? Are there any striking similarities?

6. What are some modern myths that continue to work in our own society?
Genesis

8. What is the significance of the succession from Adam to Noah to Abraham? What is God's relationship with them?

9. What is the function of the serpent in the story of Adam and Eve? Are there other figures or situations that belong in the same logical category as the serpent?

10. What is the significance of all the "begats" in Genesis? Do they contribute to the story? Are they necessary for it? Do they have any non-narrative significance? Why is there so much emphasis on descent and lineage?

11. In Greek and other Near Eastern religions, the snake is a positive symbol usually associated with worship of a powerful female deity. With this background what would be the purpose of the writers of the Genesis myth in changing the symbolism from positive to negative? How is this associated with the view of woman as all evil?

Hesiod

12. What is the significance of Zeus' victory in the Theogony? What kind of ruler is he? What does the world of gods tell us about the world of men?

What is the significance of the male-female polarities in Hesiod's cosmology? What different roles do the female gods play?

14. What is the logic of Hesiod's cosmology? Is his thought "rational" in some sense? How does he think?

Compare Hesiod and Thucydides. How do myth and history differ as explanatory devices?
WEEK 4 (Oct. 15-19)

Theme: Myth and History II

Oct. 16  3:15  Plenary: Homer and the Odyssey (Prof. Mark Edwards, Dept. of Classics)
          7:00  Plenary: The Hebrew Bible (Mark Mancall)

Wed Oct. 19 3:15  Discussion Sections
          7:00  Plenary: Justice in the Hebrew Bible (Prof. Ted Good, Dept. of Religious Studies)

Oct. 18  3:15  Discussion Sections

Reading

Homer, Odyssey, Books 17-24

Hebrew Bible, Exodus 1-24, 31-34 (ca. 1300 B.C.)
   I Samuel 8-31; II Samuel 1-20; I Kings 1 (1050-1010 B.C.)
   Ecclesiastes (4th-3rd Century B.C.)
   Song of Songs (4th Century B.C.?)
   Amos (ca 750 B.C.)

Hatzfeld, Ch. 7-8

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Study Questions:

1. What is education in the Odyssey? How do Telemachus and Odysseus learn? How is the story of the Exodus similar? different?

2. Compare Moses and Odysseus as heroic leaders. To what extent is their leadership dependent on divine favor? Does this make them less responsible for their own actions? Can you be a hero if Athena or God is always coaching you?

3. Why is Odysseus' "cunning" celebrated over his strength or his wisdom?

4. How is an epic poem different from other kinds of poetry? Why would this kind of poetry develop earlier than other forms of literature?

5. What is the significance of each of the unusual adventures--Lotus Eaters, Scylla and Charybdis, Sirens, Circe, etc.--Odysseus has? What does each of these show about the development of his character?

6. What is the nature of justice in the Odyssey? Why is revenge so important? What does this say about social values? From where do these values derive? Compare this to the ethics of revenge in the Bible.
7. What kind of society is depicted in the *Odyssey*? What are this culture's ideas about wealth, social class, family, the individual, government?

8. The *Odyssey* portrays a wide variety of female characters: Penelope, Helen, Nausicaa, Calypso, Circe, the Sirens, etc. How do they demonstrate positive and negative feminine qualities?

9. "The *Odyssey* depicts a struggle between nature and culture." What do you think this means?

**Hebrew Bible**

What is the relationship between formal outward observance of the laws and rituals given by God and inner spiritual belief?

How are Moses, Saul, and David different? What are the responsibilities of a king for the Israelites? Is there a division between political and religious roles? What is Samuel's role? Does he have an analogue in the Greek myths?

12. How is the tone of Ecclesiastes different? Can its basic message and advice be reconciled with the rest of the Bible you have read?

13. How does the Song of Songs portray the Hebrew idea of love? Does it have any religious content? What is specifically Hebraic about it, rather than universal?

14. What is Amos' position in Hebrew society? What kind of moral position does he have? What function in the belief system of the Hebrews do prophets like Amos (also Isaiah, Jeremiah, et al.) play?
WEEK 5 (Oct. 22-26)

Theme: Reactions to Myth and the Origins of Critical Thought

Oct. 22 5:00 SECOND PAPER DUE

Tue Oct. 23 3:15 Plenary: Critical Thought and the Pre-Socratics (John Goheen)
7:00 Lecture: Euthyphro (George Cattermole)

Oct. 24 3:15 Discussion Sections
6:45 Introduction to Medea
7:00 Film: Medea (Directed by Pasolini)

Oct. 25 3:15 Discussion Sections
7:00 Film: A Dream of Passion

Reading:

Pre-Socratics, (hand-outs)
Plato, Euthyphro (390 B.C.)
Euripides, Medea (431 B.C.)
Pollitt, Art and Experience in Classical Greece Ch. 1-3
Hatzfeld, Ch. 9-12, 19

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Study Questions:

Plato

1. In a world dominated by myth, what does it mean to be rational or reasonable? What does it mean to be free or responsible in such a world?

2. What historical factors might explain the emergence of a critical attitude toward myth? How might this change human self-consciousness and the attitude toward nature?

3. Does morality require a religious justification?

4. How is the “dialectic” used as a method for knowing in Plato? How is it different from earlier modes of knowledge?
5. Does Plato finally arrive at a definition for piety in the *Euthyphro*? If not, why not?

Euripides

6. How can Medea be thought of as a “reaction to myth?” How do Jason and Medea represent different cultures? Is Jason justified? Is Medea? For whom do we feel sympathy at the end?

7. What is the structure of Euripides' version of the Medea story? What are the key episodes? What is the story about? How does Pasolini (the director of the film) change the original version? What is the new focus? Was this present in Euripides' version? Is it still the same myth, or a different one? What is Pasolini trying to say about myth?

Pollitt

8. How can a work of art be said to impose an “order” on chaos? According to Pollitt, what are the values embodied in Archaic sculpture, and how are these evident? Why should an event such as the Persian wars alter the style of artistic production? How does a change in artistic style indicate a more general historical shift?

9. What was the oriental influence on classical sculpture and design? How did the Greeks react to this influence? What is “mannerism”? What social conditions might motivate such a return to an earlier style?

10. The archaic period sees a rise of Gorgons and other monstrous female figures in the art. Similarly, after the Persian wars, artistic subjects of Greeks fighting the Amazons or Centaurs proliferate. How do these subjects represent an imposing of order on chaos? Whose order is being imposed?
WEEK 6 (Oct. 29-Nov. 2)

Theme: Democracy and Citizenship

Oct. 30  3:15  Plenary: Democracy and the Polis  Jon Reider
          7:00  Lecture: Changing Motifs in Greek Art (Prof Jody Maxmin, Dept. of Art) in Art Building 2

Oct. 31  3:15  Discussion Sections
          7:00  Plenary: Greek Drama: Aeschylus and Sophocles (Leigh Sealy)

Nov.  1  3:15  Discussion Sections
          7:00  Film: Antigone

Reading

Aeschylus, Oresteia (458 B.C.)

Sophocles, Antigone (441 B.C.)

Thucydides, The Peloponnesian War "Pericles' Funeral Oration", pp. 143-51
(delivered in 431 B.C.)

Plato, Apology, Crito (390 B.C.)

Hatzfeld, Ch. 13-18

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Study Questions

Oresteia

1. How does Aeschylus' description of wisdom in lines 175-183 of Agamemnon
differ from the kind of wisdom Plato is arguing for in the Euthyphro?

2. How does the Chorus function in the Oresteia? in Antigone?

3. What is Zeus' justice in the Oresteia? Is justice an abstract law or a
god? How would Aeschylus criticize Homer's conception of justice as
revenge? How different is this "justice" at the end of the trilogy from
the beginning?

4. How does the possibility for justice change in The Libation Bearers? How
does our view of Clytemnestra's crime change? Does Orestes have any
choice? Why does he feel guilty for obeying Apollo? Isn't obeying the
gods' commands just?
5. Why is the third play a trial? What kind of trial is it? Is the “just” solution in the Oresteia preferable to that in the Odyssey? What has changed? Why is the trial fought on sexual and generational grounds? What do you think of Athena's reason for voting the way she does? Are the Erinyes treated fairly? Is justice really being served?

6. How has the portrayal of the gods changed? Why are the gods involved in the solution? Why is Athena's solution better than Apollo's? How does it reflect the relationship of human society to nature?

7. How has the concept of the hero changed since Homer? Why is Orestes so unimportant in the last play? Why is it set in Athens?

Antigone

8. On what grounds does Antigone disobey Creon's order? Is the play simply a struggle between the individual and the state, or between other forces as well?

9. What is Creon's dilemma? Is he wrong to issue his order? To condemn Antigone? Is Creon rather than Antigone the tragic hero?

What seems to be Sophocles' view of the state? and justice?

Plato

11. Compare the pictures of Athens' democratic values in Pericles' oration and in the Apology. How do they both compare to modern American democracy?

12. Are the Apology and the Crito consistent with each other? How can you reconcile Socrates' resistance in the former with his submission in the latter?

What do you think of Socrates' defense? Is it an effective one? Could you make a stronger case? What is the effect of his irony?

14. Is Socrates a hero? In what sense of the term?

15. What is Socrates' conception of “the Laws” in the Crito, and why does he feel his loyalty to them to be essential?

16. Could you construct a better argument than Crito to dissuade Socrates from drinking the hemlock?
WEEK 7 (Nov. 5-9)

Theme: Love and the Limits of Passion

Tue Nov. 6  3:15  Plenary: Plato's view of Love (John Goheen)

Plenary: Euripides (Leigh Sealy)

Wed Nov. 7  3:15  Discussion Sections

7:00  Plenary: Sappho (Prof. John Winkler, Dept. of Classics)

Thu Nov. 8  3:15  Discussion Sections

Films: The Drinking Party and The Death of Socrates

Reading

Euripides, The Bacchants (408 B.C.), Hippolytus (428 B.C.)

Sappho, Poems # 37-43 and translator's footnote, pp. 95-106 (ca 580 B.C., Lesbos)

Plato, Symposium (368 B.C.)

Pollitt, Art and Experience in Classical Greece, Ch. 4

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Study Questions

Euripides

1. Why are Pentheus and Hippolytus destroyed? Do they deserve their punishments? To what extent are they pawns in the gods' hands? Is this more true than in Homer?

2. Are the gods still just in some sense? Is this a relevant question any more? How much of human action is reasonable, subject to choice? If people can't be fully rational, how can they be good? Who is responsible for justice, mortals or gods?

3. What kind of gods are Apollo and Dionysus? What kind of religion is Dionysian? Are there modern equivalents? Is Euripides attacking the traditional anthropomorphic belief in the Homeric gods?

4. Does Euripides present a message or moral? Does he differ significantly from Aeschylus or Sophocles in his dramatic style?
Sappho

5. Sappho is the only female writer we have read this quarter. Does her perspective differ fundamentally from that of male writers?

Symposium

6. What is the relationship between each speaker's ideas and his social role? Why are Socrates' ideas appropriate to a philosopher?

7. What is the significance of the sequence of speeches? How do they build on each other? How does Socrates use the ideas presented earlier? What does he criticize in Agathon's discussion of love?

8. Why does Socrates alone attribute his ideas to someone else? Why to Diotima? Why not a conventional god like Zeus?

9. How does Socrates connect beauty and love? Is this a natural connection? How does Socrates know these things? Is it through recollection?

10. Why does this dialogue occur at a symposium or banquet? What is the purpose of the occasion, and how does the conversation fit with it? Is it important that some of the guests are Socrates' lovers?

11. How does Diotima reach the astonishing conclusion that love is desire for the everlasting possession of the good? Does this make any sense?

   What does Diotima mean in her account of the ascent from the love of an individual to beauty itself? How can one be in love with an idea?

13. What are the implications of Diotima's doctrine for education? What is the role of irrational factors in education?

14. What is the meaning of the Alcibiades-Socrates episode at the end? Is there any relation between Socrates' behavior and Diotima's conception of love? How does the final scene relate to the elevated speeches preceding it? In what sense is the Symposium a drama?

Why is Socrates' ultimate mentor a woman? (Notice too that she is a hetaira, that class of independent, unmarried, and often powerful women in Greece.) How does the relationship between Diotima and Socrates reflect on the all-male membership of the banquet?
WEEK 8 (Nov. 12-16)

Theme: Justice and the Good

Nov. 12  5:00  THIRD PAPER DUE

Nov. 13  3:15  Plenary: Plato's Theory of Knowledge and Education (John Goheen)

7:00  Plenary: Women in Greek Society (Prof. Susan Stephens Dept. of Classics)

Wed Nov. 14  3:15  Discussion Sections

7:00  Lecture: Plato: Utopian Thinking and Social Criticism (Jon Reider)

Nov. 15  3:15  Discussion Sections

7:00  Film: Iphigenia

Reading

Plato, Republic, Bks. I-V. (375-365 B.C., set in Athens, ca. 411 B.C.)

Pollitt, Ch. 5

Hatzfeld, Ch. 24

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Study Questions

Republic, Book I.

1. What is Socrates' criticism of Cephalus and Polymarchus? Is he convincing? How is Thrasymachus' argument more sophisticated? How does Socrates argue that the "stronger" can err in judgment? What role does the analogy of the ruler and the skilled craftsman play? What does this say about the "stronger"?

2. Why does Plato hint that Socrates is descending into the Underworld at the very beginning? Is the Republic a journey? To where?

3. What is the dramatic structure of Book I? Why are these characters speaking in this order? Is Socrates convincing? Does he "win"?
Republic, Book II

4. How is Book II the real beginning of the defense of justice by Socrates? What is essential to justice? How do basic human needs justify this view? How do Glaucon and Adimantus develop the earlier arguments of Thrasymachus?

5. Why does society need a new kind of person, a just person? Why is justice not natural, but has to be taught and learned?

6. Is the ideal society of the Republic only the second best society? Why does Socrates take so much trouble to describe only the second best?

Republic, Book III

7. What is wrong with traditional education? Why does it cause injustice? Is there a difference between education and training?

8. Why does Socrates criticize Homer? Is he right that the gods sometimes provide bad examples and should not be used as models in education? Doesn't Odysseus, for example, lie for good reasons?

9. Why does Socrates condemn laughter, art, and poetry? Does this conflict with his appreciation for beauty expressed in the Symposium? Why is imitation bad? Why is some music good while all poetry is bad?

10. Is the "Noble Lie" (414c) justified? How can a philosopher, of all people, justify lying? What is its true purpose?

Republic, Book IV

What are the three basic virtues? How are they allotted to each class? If wisdom is confined to one class, how can it characterize a whole society?

What is distinctively new about Plato's concept of justice?

How is justice connected to "doing one's own business" (433b)? Doesn't this contradict Plato's ideal of communism?

Republic, Book V

Why does Plato want women to be educated? How does this differ from traditional Greek practice? Why don't biological differences matter so much to Plato?

What is Plato's criticism of the traditional family? How would society survive if the family were destroyed?

16. What is the difference between opinion and knowledge?
WEEK 9 (Nov. 19-23)

Theme: Greek Aesthetic Theory and the Birth of Literary Criticism

Nov. 19 7:00 Film: Oedipus Rex

Nov. 20 3:15 Plenary: Tragedy and Aesthetic Theory (Gregson Davis and John Winkler)
7:00 Discussion Sections

Nov. 21 NO CLASSES

Nov. 22 Thanksgiving Break

Reading

Plato, Republic Book X (read 595 to 608c only)

Aristotle, Poetics (ca. 335 B.C.)

Sophocles, Oedipus Rex (427 B.C.)

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Study Questions

Plato and Aristotle

1. Does a modern audience respond to Greek "tragedy" the way a classical Athenian audience would? What parts retain their impact even if one does not believe in the gods?

2. How do Aristotle and Plato differ in their use of the word "imitation", specifically in "art imitates nature"? Why would Aristotle reject Plato's idea that art is twice removed from reality? Are Plato's and Aristotle's evaluations of art related to their conceptions of the place of emotions in human behavior? How is the effect of poetry in purging the emotions related to the understanding of poetry?

3. In Aristotle's view, what distinguishes a work of art from ethical or scientific thought? Why does Aristotle say that poetry is more philosophical than history? What does Aristotle mean by his notion that drama expresses a "probable universal"?

4. To what does Aristotle attribute the origin of poetry? How is drama related to learning? Does Aristotle consider that art is primarily concerned with the teaching of truths? How would Plato feel about this? Why does Aristotle use his general distinctions between matter and form, body and soul as a basis for his conception of art?
5. How does Aristotle distinguish between epic, tragedy, and comedy? Why does he consider tragedy superior to both comedy and epic? Is his ethical doctrine of the mean involved in the description of the noble character in tragedy? in comedy? What is the function of reversal and recognition in tragedy? What forms of plot in tragedy should be avoided? Why? How is the purging of the emotions accomplished?

6. To what extent are Aristotle's views of tragedy applicable to the plays studied earlier in this course? Are Aristotle's comments on the discoveries in the Odyssey and Oedipus Rex convincing to you?

Oedipus Rex

7. When the hero is led to disaster by some hereditary flaw, does this violate a sense of justice and equity in the world? Or, does tragedy present some higher order of justice in portraying the necessary or probable consequences of earlier errors?

8. Could Oedipus have heeded Jocasta's warning not to pursue "knowledge" in the climactic moments of Oedipus Rex? To what extent is Oedipus' "hubris" responsible for his fate? Does "knowledge" bring wisdom for Oedipus, or simply madness?

9. Trace the themes of light and darkness, vision and blindness in the play. What is the symbolic role of Teresias?

Did Oedipus have any real choices, or was everything so determined in advance that he is simply a pawn of the fates? If this is so, is he really noble?

What is Oedipus' crime? Can you be guilty of a crime if you did not know it was one? Which is he punished for, patricide or incest?

12. Given that Oedipus is an exemplary king, isn't he punished too harshly?
WEEK 10 (Nov. 26-30)

Theme: Plato and Aristotle

Nov. 27 3:15 Plenary: Aristotle's Ethics (John Goheen)

7:00 Plenary: Plato's Critique of Democracy (Jon Reider)

Nov. 28 3:15 Discussion Sections

7:00 Lecture: Greek Medicine (Prof. Carlos Camargo, Dept. of Medicine)

Thu Nov. 29 3:15 Discussion Sections

7:00 Dramatic Reading: Lysistrata

Reading

Aristotle, Ethics (ca. 330 B.C.) Books I Ch. 1-8, II, III Ch. 1-5, V Ch. 7, VII 1-3, VIII Ch. 1-4, X Ch. 7

Plato, Republic, Books VI-IX, X (608 to end)

Hatzfeld, Ch. 26-27

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Study Questions

Ethics

1. What does Aristotle mean by happiness? How does it differ from pleasure? What does he mean when he says, "Happiness, then, is something final and self-sufficient, and is the end of action"?

2. People differ on their views of what constitutes the good life. How does Aristotle resolve these differences?

3. What does Aristotle think is wrong with Plato's doctrine of the good?

4. Why does Aristotle think that there is no one common element answering to one Idea?

6. What does Aristotle mean by the irrational part of the soul?
7. What is Plato's purpose in the first part of Book VI? Who are the Sophists? If they were philosophers, why does Plato relate them to the "multitude"? What was their role in Greek political life in the 5th century? Review Socrates' defense against the charge of corrupting the young in the Apology. How does this relate to his view of the Sophists?

8. How does Plato distinguish between opinion and knowledge? How does the "divided line" clarify this in terms of the objects of knowledge? What is dialectic for? What is the purpose of the cave allegory? In what sense could this be taken as the center of the Republic? Is it a myth?

9. How do good states differ from bad ones? What causes good ones to degenerate? Why cannot bad ones improve just as easily?

10. How does Socrates' description of democracy differ from the standard one? Why is tyranny even worse? How does his view of democracy reflect recent Athenian history?

11. What does tyranny depend on?

12. What aspects of human beings are irrational? Is the irrational evil? Can it be eradicated? If it is so durable, how can Socrates be serious about thinking about an ideal state?

13. Why does the Republic end with a myth when Plato is so critical of many traditional myths? What is different about this one? How can myth express "truth"?

14. What is the structure of the Republic as a complete work? Why is it framed by the argument of Book I and the myth of Book X? Why is Book VI in the middle? Is the rest symmetrical? How? What purpose does it serve?

15. Is the Republic really a description of an ideal government, or is it something else?
WEEK 11 (Dec. 3-9)

Theme: Aristotle: Politics, Science, and Metaphysics

Dec. 3  5:00  FOURTH PAPER DUE
Dec. 4  3:15  Plenary: Aristotle's Politics (George Cattermole
           7:00  Plenary: Aristotle's Metaphysical Ideas (John Goheen)
Wed Dec. 5  3:15  Discussion Sections
           7:00  Plenary: Aristotle's Scientific Ideas (Prof. Wilbur Knorr, Depts. of Classics and Philosophy)
Dec. 6  3:15  Discussion Sections
Sun Dec. 9  12 - 3 p.m.  FINAL EXAMINATION Room 420-040 (Psych Basement)

Reading
Aristotle, Politics (ca. 330 B.C.) Book I, Ch. 1-3, 13, Book II, Ch. 1-5
          Book III, Ch. 1-13, Book IV, Ch. 1-13
Physics Book II, Ch. 3,7
Metaphysics Book I, Ch. 1-2, 9, Book XII, Ch. 6-7

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Study Questions

Politics

1. How does Aristotle study politics? Is he a political scientist? What is his method? Why does he start with household management? How does he justify slavery?

2. Why is unity of a state not a desirable aim? Why does he reject Plato's communism of wives and children of property? Is he correct in saying that Plato denies happiness even to the guardians? How is his concept of happiness different from Plato's? How would Plato respond to these criticisms?


4. What is "constitutional government"? Is this an ideal government? If not, why does Aristotle espouse it?

5. How important are economic conditions for good government? How did Plato treat these? Is it fair to call Aristotle an economic determinist?
6. What are the three parts of government, and how do they function in different forms of states? How does tyranny differ from aristocratic government?

7. What functions does the middle class serve? Is it different from our idea of a middle class?

8. What does it mean to say that "politics is a practical science rather than a theoretical one"?

9. How does Aristotle's description of the best possible state compare with a modern bourgeois democracy? Why is moderate wealth a virtue, but too much is bad? Would Aristotle approve of modern capitalism more than Plato?

Physics

10. What are the "four causes"? In what sense are they "causes"? Why are they important in Aristotle's system of thought? How are they, when taken together, a criticism of both materialism (Democritus) and idealism (Plato)?

Metaphysics

11. What is the relationship of experience to knowledge? How is it different from Wisdom? Why is Wisdom the highest form of knowledge?: In what sense is it divine? How does it compare to the Hebrew idea of Wisdom (Ecclesiastes)?

12. What is Aristotle's criticism of Plato's Forms (Ideas)?

13. How does Aristotle prove the existence of the unmoved mover? Is this a logical deduction? How would you challenge it?

14. How does the unmoved mover resemble a God? How is it radically different from the Homeric Zeus or the Hebrew concept of God? Is this compatible with Judaism? With Christianity?