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 your work for 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. The question itself and how one asks it are equally as important as the answer offered.

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 person 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)
SLE FACULTY

George Cattermole
Lecturer in SLE, Ph.D. in Philosophy. Research interests in Marxism and alienation, political philosophy and the philosophy of education. 726-9590 (home)

John Goheen
Professor Emeritus of Philosophy, Director of SLE II. Research interests in the pre-Socratic philosophers, Plato, Aquinas, Alfred Whitehead. 322-5215 (home)

Suzanne Greenberg
Lecturer in SLE, Coordinator of SLE, Ph.D. in History of Education. Research interests in modern Jewish history and history of Victorian England. 725-0102 (office); 326-5548 (home)

Mark Mancall
Professor of History, Director of SLE. Interests in Jewish history, Chinese history, Marxism and socialism. 723-5630 (office); 327-1275 (home)

Jonathan Reider
Associate Director of Undergraduate Admissions. Intellectual interests in the French Revolution, the history of political and social thought, antisemitism, the history of Stanford, and baseball. 723-2091 (office); 326-3465 (home)

Mollie Schwartz Rosenhan
Lecturer in SLE, Ph.D. in History. Research interests in Judaism and feminism, utopias, and gender issues in the Holocaust. 326-1313 (home)

Leigh Sealy
Lecturer in SLE, Ph.D. in Drama. Research interests in dramatic literature and criticism, theater history, and play analysis. Strong interest in directing and acting. 931-1708 (home)

Amy Sims
Lecturer in SLE, Ph.D. in Modern European History. Research interests in the Third Reich, modern German cultural and political history, and historiography. 327-4364 (home).
REQUIRED TEXTS

Aeschylus, Aeschylus One: Oresteia (University of Chicago Press)

Aristophanes, Lysistrata, The Acharians, and The Clouds (Penguin Classics)

Aristotle, Introduction to Aristotle (McGraw)


Barnard, Sappho: A New Translation (University of California Press)

Euripides, Euripides One: Four Tragedies (University of Chicago Press)

Hamilton, Mythology (New American Library)

Homer, The Odyssey (Random)

New Oxford Annotated Bible (Oxford University Press)

Hamilton, Collected Dialogues of Plato (Princeton University Press)

Pollitt, Art and Experience in Classical Greece (Cambridge University Press) [recommended]

Sophocles, Sophocles One (Three Tragedies) (University of Chicago Press)

Strunk & White, The Elements of Style (Study Aids)

Thucydides, The Peloponnesian War (Viking/Penguin)
COURSE REQUIREMENTS

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 will vary from 3-5 pages in length according to the particular assignment. **You are required to submit at least one rough draft of each paper not later than the Thursday before the due date of the final 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 a copy of each paper for your section leader(s) and one copy for your tutor. The copy for your section leader(s) should be put in Suzanne Greenberg's box outside her office, and the copy for your tutor in his or her box in the main lounge. Always keep the original or one copy for yourself in case of loss. For convenience and to save money, we suggest you 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 on due dates for copying.
The SLE Players

SLE will undertake the production of three plays this year. The scope of these productions will depend upon student interest and enthusiasm. In the Fall quarter, we have planned a production of Lysistrata by Aristophanes. If you would like to be a part of this production in any way -- on stage or behind the scenes --, contact Suzanne Greenberg as soon as possible. An organizational meeting will be announced within the first two weeks of the quarter. All students are encouraged to participate. The performance date is set for Thursday, November 15th, at 6:00 pm.
PAPER ASSIGNMENTS FOR FALL QUARTER

Paper #1  3 pages  Due Monday, October 8th, 5:00 pm

Myth, history, and philosophy are three ways of representing and talking about the world. In some ways they overlap, i.e., there may be some historical basis to myth, which in its turn is a way of thinking about the meaning of life, the world, and everything. Choose and examine one or two myths from the assigned readings to illustrate the ways in which myth functions.

Paper #2  3 pages  Due Monday October 29th, 5:00 pm

Do Greek and Hebrew leaders rule in the same ways? From what sources does each tradition derive its sanction for leadership? How do they differ in style, substance and institution?

Paper #3  3 pages  Due Monday November 12th, 5:00 pm

What makes Greek tragedy tragic? Illustrate with two references to two of the playwrights you have read.

Paper #4  3-5 pages  Due Tuesday November 27th, 1:00 pm

In modern American culture, few would claim that justice and beauty are related concepts. (After all, the fat lady has never been chosen Miss America.) Are these ideas related for Plato? Support your conclusions with reference to specific statements found in Plato's writings.
SLE STYLE SHEET

1. Papers should be typed, double-spaced, with one inch margins on both sides to allow for comments. Keep in mind that a standard page is equal to approximately 250 words.

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

3. Papers should have a title page which includes the following information: (1) title, and (2) in the lower right-hand corner, in order: your name, your tutor's name, your discussion leader's name(s), date, and 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 word usage, Nancy Packer's 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 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 computer center, or the Macintosh cluster in the Undergraduate Library or the computers in Florence Moore, you may have the computer print out the copies of your papers. Some students have found that this saves time and energy in the long run. However, the computer facilities are often crowded and occasionally a computer can go 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.
The Rules of Bad Writing

(derived from Professor John Rodgers, Yale University, April-June 1985)

Never use a short word where a long word will do (you don't have to be sure of the exact meaning of the long word; it just needs to sound impressive).

II Never use a precise, concrete word where a wooly, abstract word will do (your meaning can't be pinned down so easily, so it won't be so easy to spot your errors in reasoning or conceptualization).

III. Never use an active verb where a passive verb will do (it pads out the sentence nicely and puts more distance between you and the facts, about which you are likely to be shaky, and the reader, who is judging your work).

IV Never use the first person where you can use ambiguous phrases like "the writer" -- or better still "it is thought" or "it is considered," so that the reader can't be exactly sure who thinks what, or what, if anything, you do think.

V. Never use a strong verb where you can hide the idea in a verbal noun, preferably one ending in -tion (you then have to introduce weak verbs like "exists", "is made", or "occurs", so the sentence is even more nicely padded, and the distance gets greater and greater).

VI Never use the same word twice for the same idea (thus you make sure that the reader never knows whether it is the same idea or not). Sportswriters particularly love this rule, though they like them all.

Never use a prepositional phrase after a noun when you want to modify it but pile up in front of it as many adjectives, with adverbs or other adjectives modifying those adjectives, and nouns used as adjectives, with their own modifying adjectives and adverbs, as you possibly can (it sounds so delightfully Germanic). Be sure not to use any commas or hyphens to make it possible to distinguish the different modifiers, for the pile-up can then be interpreted in so many different ways that your reader will marvel at your perspicacity.

Begin sentences with "this" (or "these", or "such"), preferably not modifying a noun but standing by itself and referring to any previous noun (heavily modified, if possible), or nouns, or verbs, or to the whole idea of the previous sentence, or sentences (this procedure too can be wonderfully ambiguous).

* Of course the noun "procedure" in this sentence violates this.
WEEK 1

India I

Wednesday September 26th
3:15 pm  Plenary: Myth
Mark Mancall, SLE
5:15 pm  Meet with Tutors
6:30 pm  Lecture: Bhagavad Gita
Mark Mancall, SLE

Thursday September 27th
3:15 pm  Discussion Sections
6:00 pm  Film: The Home and the World, Mark Mancall, SLE

Reading:
Bhagavad Gita

Study Questions
1. What is a myth? Is myth pre- or non-scientific? Why are myths associated with religion? Are myths necessarily false?
2. What kinds of problems do myths solve? How do myths instruct behavior? What makes a mythical explanation satisfactory?
3. What is the proper duty of a kshatriya? Does duty to the kingship come before duty to the family? Is it necessary to avoid family conflict?
4. The Bhagavad Gita was probably composed during a time in Indian history when there was pressure being placed on (male) members of society to renounce the world and live as mendicants or members of the growing Buddhist and Jaina religious communities of monks. What is the response in the Gita to this? How does the Gita attempt to solve the pull between the needs of society for householders to procreate and maintain society versus the individuals' desire for a religious life? Do you think this was successful?
5. Why do you think there was so much stress placed on properly performing the duties of one's own varna or class in society? What does this say about the divisions in Indian society and their stability at this time?
## WEEK 2

### India II

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<td>Tuesday October 2nd</td>
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### Reading:
Selections from the Ramayana (copied selection)

### Study Questions

1. The Ramayana was written about the kshatriya or warrior/ruling class of ancient India. What can be learned about this class of society from the poem? What were the role and duties of the king? What is known about the system of government? What must life have been like in a city like Ayodhya in prosperous times? Why was the proper conduct of the king so important to society?

2. The Ramayana is still the most popular and well-known epic poem of South Asia in part because the characters exemplify the ideal behavior and values expected by society especially in intrafamiliar relationships. From what you have read, what is the proper behavior of each member of a family? How does age and sex affect this relationship?

3. The court intrigue between the main queens in Dasaratha’s harem is pivotal to the events of the story. Why do you think that Manthura urges Kaikeyi to demand her boons from Dasartha? What methods does Kaikeyi use to persuade Dasartha to grant her wishes? What might happen to Kaikeyi were Rama to become king?

4. When Rama is told about his father’s promise to Kaikeyi that her son, Bharata, is to become heir apparent, why does he so readily accept his fate? Does his brother, Laksmana have the same reaction? Why is Sita so inconsistent on accompanying him to the forest?

5. The most controversial part of the story to modern audiences is the abandonment of the pregnant Sita. Why Rama feel it is necessary to banish her from the kingdom? What might have happened had he allowed her to stay in Ayodhya? What events in his past could have influenced his decision? Do you think that his action tarnished his image as the ideal man? How might audiences in Valmiki’s time have felt about it? What does this action say about the role of a proper king versus that of a proper husband?

6. In time, the heroic epic poem became part of Indian mythology. How are the characters in the poem connected with the existing gods?
### WEEK 3

**Myth and Memory: The Hebrew Epic**

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<td>Tuesday October 9th</td>
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<td>Professor Carol Delaney, Anthropology</td>
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**Reading:**

Hebrew Bible: Genesis (2000-1300 B.C.E.), Exodus (circa 13th century B.C.E.)

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### Study Questions

#### Genesis

1. What is the function of the serpent in the story of Adam and Eve?
2. What is the significance of all the "begats" in Genesis? Do they contribute to the story? Do they have any non-narrative significance? Why is there so much emphasis on descent and lineage?
3. What is the significance of the succession from Adam to Noah to Abraham? What is God’s relationship with them?
4. 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 do the writers of Genesis portray women? How do women function as daughters, wives and mothers?
5. How would you explain the following episodes: Jacob wrestling with the angel, the abandonment of Joseph by his brothers, the binding of Isaac, the fate of Lot’s wife?
6. Why are “brothers” so significant in Genesis?

#### Exodus

7. In considering Moses, how is personality defined in mythic culture? To what extent is a person thought to be free to act independent of the influences of the supernatural?
8. What is a hero? Does Moses qualify for the job?
9. What is the nature of the covenantal relationship between God and the Hebrews?
WEEK 5

The Greeks and History: Homer and Thucydides

Tuesday October 23rd  
3:15 pm  Plenary: Ancient Greek Art  
Professor Jody Maxmin, Art and Classics  
6:30 pm  Lecture: The Odyssey  
Edward Freuch, Great Works

Wednesday October 24th  
3:15 pm  Discussion Section

Thursday October 25th  
3:15 pm  Discussion Sections  
6:00 pm  Film: Iphigenia, Leigh Sealy, SLE

Reading:  
Homer, The Odyssey  

Study Questions

**Odyssey**
1. What is education in the Odyssey? How do Telemachus and Odysseus learn?
2. Why are Odysseus' "cunning" celebrated over his strength or his wisdom?
3. How is an epic poem different from other kinds of poetry? Why would this kind of poetry develop earlier than other forms of literature?
4. What is the significance of each of Odysseus' unusual adventures -- Lotus Eaters, Scylla and Charybdis, Sirens, Circe, etc. -- Odysseus has? What does each of these show about the development of his character? Is there a reason why the adventures are ordered in a particular way?
5. 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?
6. What kind of society is depicted in the Odyssey? What is this culture's attitude toward wealth, social class, family, the individual, government?
7. The Odyssey portrays a wide variety of female characters: Penelope, Helen, Nausica, Calypso, Circe, the Sirens, etc. How do they demonstrate positive and negative feminine qualities?
8. "The Odyssey depicts a struggle between nature and culture." What do you think this means?
9. 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?

**Peloponnesian War**
10. Is Thucydides an historian? Why, why not? What rule does he follow for the craft of writing history?
11. Why does Thucydides make a radical distinction between myth and history? Is there a problem with this distinction?
12. How consistent is the moral tone of the Athenian position in the "Melian Dialogue" and in the speeches over the fate of Mytilene? Are the speeches of Cleon and Diodotus all that different in terms of their underlying values?
13. Is the morality Thucydides describes compatible with a democratic form of government, i.e., can a state, as Athens did, practice imperialism abroad and democracy at home?
WEEK 6

Laugh or Cry?

Monday, October 29th 5:00 pm PAPER #2 DUE
Tuesday October 30th 3:15 pm Plenary: Ancient Greek Art
Professor Jody Maxmin, Art and Classics
6:30 pm Lecture: Aristophanes and Euripides
Professor Marsh McCall, Classics

Wednesday October 31st 3:15 pm Discussion Section
6:30 pm Lecture: The Oresteia and Greek Tragedy
Leigh Sealy, SLE

Thursday November 1st 3:15 pm Discussion Sections
6:00 pm Film: Dream of Passion, Mollie Schwartz Rosenhan, SLE

Reading:
Aeschylus, The Oresteia (458 B.C.E.)
Aristophanes, The Clouds (442-441 B.C.E.)
Euripides, Medea (431 B.C.E.)

Study Questions
Oresteia
1. How does the Chorus function in the Oresteia?
2. How would Aeschylus criticize Homer's conception of justice as revenge? How different is the
   "justice" at the end of the trilogy from the "justice" at the beginning?
3. How does our view of Clytemnestra's crime change? Does Örestes have any choice? Why does
   he feel guilty for obeying Apollo? Isn't obeying the gods' commands just?
4. Why is the third play a trial? What kind of trial is it? 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?
5. 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?
6. What can be learned from the divine, Greek or Hebrew, about the management of human affairs?
   How do the Greek Zeus and the Hebrew God differ in their management of, or intervention in,
   human affairs?

Medea
7. How can Medea be thought of as a "reaction to myth?"
8. Jason and Medea represent different cultures? Are these cultures compatible or in conflict? Is
   Jason justified? Is Medea? For whom do we feel sympathy at the end?
9. What is the structure of Euripides' version of the Medea story? What are the key episodes? What
   is the story about?
10. Does Euripides present a message or moral? Does he differ significantly from Aeschylus or
    Sophocles in his dramatic style?
WEEK 7

Plato I

Tuesday November 6th 3:15 pm  Plenary: Intro to Plato: The Beginning of Critical Thought
                                      George Cattermole, SLE
                                      6:30 pm  Lecture: The Symposium
                                      John Goheen, SLE

Wednesday November 7th 3:15 pm  Discussion Sections
                                      6:30 pm  Lecture: Athenian Democracy
                                      Professor Susan Stephens, Classics

Thursday November 8th 3:15 pm  Discussion Sections
                                      6:00 pm  Film: Black Orpheus, Jon Reider, SLE

Reading:
Plato, Euthyphro (390 B.C.E.)
   Apology, Crito (375-365 B.C.E., set in Athens circa 411 B.C.E.)
   Symposium (360 B.C.E.)

Study Questions
Apology, Crito
1. Compare the view of Athens' democratic values in Pericles' Oration and in the Apology. How do
   they both compare to modern American democracy?
2. 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?
3. 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?
4. Is Socrates a hero? If so, in what sense of the term is he heroic?
5. What is Socrates' conception of "the Laws" in the Crito, and why does he feel his loyalty to them
   to be essential?
6. Could you construct a better argument than Crito to dissuade Socrates from drinking the hemlock?
Euthyphro
7. 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?
8. 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?
9. 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?
10. Does morality require a religious justification?
11. How is the "dialectic" used as a method for knowing in Plato? How is it different from earlier
    modes of knowledge?
12. Does Plato finally arrive at a definition for piety in the Euthyphro? If not, why not?
Symposium
13. Why does this dialogue occur at a symposium or banquet?
14. What is the relationship between each speaker's ideas and his social role? Why are Socrates'
    ideas appropriate to a philosopher?
15. What does Socrates criticize in Agathon's discussion of love?
16. Why does Socrates alone attribute his ideas to someone else? Why to Diotima? Why not a
    conventional god like Zeus? Who is Diotima? What is her role in the dialogue?
17. How does the analysis of love lead to the idea of beauty? For Plato, is true love possible between humans?
18. How does Diotima reach the astonishing conclusion that love is desire for the everlasting possession of the good? Can one be in love with an idea?
19. What are the implications of Diotima's doctrine for education?
20. What is the meaning of the Alcibiades-Socrates episode at the end? Is there any relationship between Socrates' behavior and Diotima's conception of love?
21. How does the final scene relate to the elevated speeches preceding it? In what sense is the Symposium a drama?
WEEK 8

Plato II

Monday, November 12th  5:00 pm  PAPER #3 DUE
Tuesday November 13th  3:15 pm  Plenary: Plato's Political Philosophy
   6:30 pm  Lecture: The Republic
       Professor Andrea Nightingale, Classics
       Professor Julius Moravcsik, Philosophy

Wednesday November 14th  3:15 pm  Discussion Sections
   6:30 pm  Lecture: FREE

Thursday November 15th  3:15 pm  Discussion Sections
   6:00 pm  Live Performance: Lysistrata, SLE Players

Reading:
Plato, Republic, Books I-X (375-365 B.C.E., set in Athens circa 411 B.C.)
Aristophanes, Lysistrata (recommended)

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Study Questions
Republic, Book I
1. How does Socrates argue that the "stronger" can err in judgment? What role does the analogy of
   the ruler and the skilled craftsman play?
2. Why does Plato hint that Socrates is descending into the Underworld? Is the Republic a journey?
   To where?
3. What is the dramatic structure of Book I? Why are these characters speaking in a particular order?
4. Is Socrates convincing?

Republic, Book II
5. How do Glaucon and Adimantus develop the earlier arguments of Thrasymachus?
6. Why does society need a new kind of person, a just person? Why is justice not natural, but has to
   be taught and learned?
7. 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?
8. Does Socrates convince you that Thrasymachus' arguments are in error?

Republic, Book III
9. What is wrong with traditional education? Why does it cause injustices? Is there a difference
   between education and training?
10. Why does Socrates criticize Homer? Is he correct that the gods sometimes provide bad examples
    and should not be used as models in education?
11. Why does Plato condemn laughter, art, and poetry? Why is imitation bad? Why is some music
    good while all poetry is bad?
12. Is the "Noble Lie" (414c) justified? How can a philosopher, of all people, justify lying?

Republic, Book IV
13. 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?
14. What is distinctively new about Plato's concept of justice?
15. How is justice connected to "doing one's own business" (433b)?

Republic, Book V
16. Why does Plato want women to be educated? How does this differ from traditional Greek
    practice?
17. What is Plato's criticism of the traditional family?

**Republic, Books VI-X**

18. In his explanation of the "divided line," how does Plato distinguish between opinion and knowledge?

19. What is the purpose of the cave allegory? Is it a myth?

20. Plato believed that the path to knowledge was by means of the dialectic. Could you explain this process?

21. How do good states differ from bad ones? What causes good ones to degenerate?

22. What is Plato's conception of democracy?

23. Why is tyranny the natural consequence of democracy?

24. What aspects of human beings are irrational? Is the irrational evil? Can it be eradicated?

25. 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?"

26. 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?

27. Is the Republic really a description of an ideal government, or is it something else?
WEEK 9
Mother Love

Tuesday November 20th 3:15 pm  Plenary: Oedipus Rex
To Be Announced

6:15 pm  Evening Discussion Sections

Reading:
Sophocles, Oedipus Rex (427 B.C.E.)

Study Questions
1. 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?
2. 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?
3. Trace the themes of light and darkness, vision and blindness in the play. What is the symbolic role of Teiresias?
4. 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?
5. 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?
6. If Oedipus is an exemplary king, why is he punished? Could his crime have been ignored?
7. Oedipus, of course, is perfectly innocent of any crime, since he not only had no intention of committing patricide or incest but even left home to avoid that possibility. What kind of justice is it that punishes such an innocent man? Are the gods who maneuvered Oedipus into his situation fundamentally unjust, or beyond justice, or beyond all human reckoning altogether?
WEEK 10

Aristotle's World

Tuesday, November 27th
1:00 pm  PAPER #4 Due
3:15 pm  Plenary: The Greek Conception of the Good Life
         John Goheen, SLE
6:30 pm  Lecture: Aristotle's Ethics and Politics
         Professor Julius Moravcsik, Philosophy

Wednesday, November 28th
3:15 pm  Discussion Sections
6:30 pm  Lecture: Women in Ancient Greece
         Professor Susan Stephens, Classics

Thursday, November 29th
3:15 pm  Discussion Sections
6:00 pm  Film: The White Rose, Amy Sims, SLE

Reading:
Aristotle, Politics: Book I, Chapters 1-10; Book II, Chapters 1-5; Book III, Chapter 6; Book IV, Chapters 8,9,11-13.
Ethics: Book I, Chapters 1-3,7; Book II, Chapters 1,4,6,7; Book VIII, Chapters 1-4; Book IX, Chapter 9
(circa 330 B.C.E.)

Study Questions
Politics:
1. How does Aristotle study politics? What is his method? Why does Aristotle start with the household? (Hint: the Greek for the "science of household management" is oeconomia.)
2. How does Aristotle justify slavery? Why does he go wrong (presuming you disagree with slavery.) Does he present any arguments that would be useful to an abolitionist?
3. What is Aristotle's view of private property? How does this differ from Plato's? From laissez-faire capitalism? (modern America's)?
4. What is a citizen for Aristotle? What is the relationship between a citizen and the polis?
5. How does Aristotle's definition of "constitution" differ from modern American definition? What advantage does the Greek notion of constitution hold over our own?
6. How does Aristotle classify constitutions? How useful are these classifications? What causes constitutions to change and to degenerate from one form into another? What are the built-in weaknesses in a hierarchical view of society? In a patriarchal view?
7. What does Aristotle think of the middle class? Of women?
8. Does Aristotle distinguish between a good man and a good citizen? Does he differ on this subject from Socrates? From Antigone?
9. What is the task of political theory for Aristotle? How does this differ from Plato? From Thucydides? From Aeschylus? Is politics "a practical science rather than a theoretical one?" Is he a political scientist?

Ethics
10. What does Aristotle mean by happiness? How does it differ from pleasure?
11. People differ on their views of what constitutes the good life. How does Aristotle resolve these differences? How does Aristotle's view of the good life differ from that of Plato?
12. What does Aristotle mean by the irrational part of the soul?
13. Does Aristotle consider the utility of friends to be the basis of friendship?
14. What is true friendship according to Aristotle?
15. What relationship according to Aristotle?
16. Do you think the Aristotelian "mean" is an appropriate tool for achieving a "good" character?
WEEK 11

Passion

Monday December 3rd  6:00 pm  Workshop: How to Review for the Final Exam
                          Suzanne Greenberg and Tutors
Tuesday December 4th  3:15 pm  Plenary: The "Song of Songs"
                             Professor Marsha Falk
       6:30 pm  Lecture: The Music of Sappho
                             Diane deLaet
Wednesday December 5th  3:15 pm  Discussion Sections
Thursday December 6th  R E A D I N G  P E R I O D
                             6:00 pm  Film: Satyricon (optional)

Reading:
Barnard, Sappho: A New Translation (Sappho, Circa 580 B.C.E.)
Hebrew Bible: Song of Songs (4th century B.C.E.)

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FINAL EXAM:  SUNDAY DECEMBER 9th  9:00 am  Jordan Hall Room 041