PHILOSOPHICAL PERSPECTIVES ON THE HUMANITIES – 1
HUMA 11500 (AUTUMN 2011)

Section 9: Tuesday & Thursday, 9:00 – 10:20, Cobb 101
Section 10: Tuesday & Thursday, 10:30 – 11:50, Cobb 101

Professor: Nathan Bauer
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Office Hours: Wed, 9-11am, or by appointment
Gates-Blake 330

Writing Instructors:
Sect. 9: Sheela Kumar, slkumar@uchicago.edu
Sect. 10: Stina Bäckström, stina@uchicago.edu
Office Hours: by appointment

Our Class Motto: “It is through wonder that people now begin and originally began to philosophize; wondering in the first place at obvious perplexities, and then by gradual progression raising questions about the greater matters too ...” —Aristotle, *Metaphysics* (book 1, 982b)

**COURSE DESCRIPTION**

In this course we will examine some of the most important literary and philosophical texts in the ancient period. The authors under consideration — Homer, Plato, Aeschylus, and Aristotle — offer important and enduring insights into human nature and society. Two central topics will guide our reading of these works: first, the concept of justice, as it applies both to individual interactions and to our shared political structures; and, second, the questions of how and whether we can choose a well-lived life.

**CLASS OBJECTIVES**

1. Develop skills in textual analysis and interpretation by way of close readings of our texts.
2. Develop skills in reasoning and in writing academic prose through completion of the course assignments and by participation in class discussion.
3. Become familiar with great literary and philosophical works from the ancient world.

**TEXTS**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Editions</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aeschylus I</td>
<td></td>
<td>eds. Grene &amp; Lattimore; Chicago; ISBN: 0226307786</td>
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All texts are available at the Seminary Coop Bookstore (5757 S University Ave). To ensure that we are, literally, on the same page, please buy these editions of the five texts. Additional handouts and course materials will be available on the Chalk course site (http://chalk.uchicago.edu).

**INSTRUCTOR MEETINGS**

I would like to meet with each of you individually at the start of the course. Brief meetings at my office will be scheduled over the first few weeks of the quarter.
CLASS FORMAT

I will often begin a session with a short lecture, but I strongly believe that students learn more when they are actively engaging with the material. To that end, our classes will consist primarily of group discussion as we work through these texts together.

STUDENT COMMENTS ON READINGS

Students are expected to submit at least one comment on the assigned reading the night before each class. Chalk discussion forums have been set up for each day’s reading. In your comments, identify something you found significant about the text: e.g., a claim you found interesting (and why it’s interesting); a passage you found confusing (and what you think it might mean); a question or idea that came up in your reading of the text; etc. You may start a new topic or contribute by replying to another student’s post. These comments are not graded for content, but there is a penalty of 0.1 grade points (on the 4.0 scale) from your final calculated grade for each missed submission. (I will excuse up to two missed submissions, but I recommend that you save these freebies for possible sick days.)

CLASS PARTICIPATION

There is no separate participation grade (apart from the penalty for not submitting reading comments). If your total calculated grade, however, is between two letter grades, I will consider your contributions to the class discussion in determining whether to round your final grade up or down.

EVALUATION

| 1/3   | First Paper: Socratic arguments (assigned Tuesday, Oct. 4; due Friday, Oct. 14 at 5pm) |
| 1/3   | Second Paper: Iliad or Republic (assigned Thursday, Oct. 27; due Friday, Nov. 11 at 5pm) |
| 1/3   | Third Paper: Aeschylus or Aristotle (assigned Tuesday, Nov. 22; due Monday, Dec. 5 at 5pm) |

There will be three written assignments in the course. Each paper will be approximately five pages in length. Late papers will be penalized by a third of a letter grade (e.g., from B+ to B) for each day that they are late. Should you contact me before the due date with a reasonable request for additional time, I am generally willing to grant an extension.

PLAGIARISM POLICY

Plagiarism is a serious academic offense, one that will result in failure on the assignment or even the entire course. If you have any questions about using and citing sources, please consult your writing instructor or myself. For further information, see here: http://studentmanual.uchicago.edu/academic/index.shtml#honesty

WRITING SEMINARS

Group writing seminars, led by your writing instructor, will be held for each assignment, to be scheduled sometime during the following dates:

- Week 2: Wednesday, Oct. 5 – Friday, Oct. 7
- Week 6: Wednesday, Nov. 2 – Friday, Nov. 5
- Week 10: Wednesday, Nov. 30 – Friday, Dec. 2

Attendance at all three seminars is mandatory, and your participation will be graded as a separate course. Your instructor will contact you with a specific schedule and further details regarding these seminars.

CLASS COMMUNICATIONS

All course handouts will be available online at the Chalk course site. There will also be periodic course news posted in the Announcements section. When I need to contact you individually, I will do so via email. Please check the Chalk site and your University of Chicago email address regularly.
## Class Schedule

**Week 1**
- **Tue Sept 27**
  - Class introduction
  - *Iliad* proem, Book 1: lines 1-8

  **— Socratic Texts —**
  - **Thu Sept 29**
    - Plato, *Apology* (in *Five Dialogues*)

**Week 2**
- **All week**
  - *Individual meetings with Prof. Bauer*
- **Tue Oct 4**
  - Plato, *Crito* (in *Five Dialogues*)
  - *First paper assigned*
- **Wed – Fri**
  - *First writing seminars*

  **— Homer’s Iliad —**
  - **Thu Oct 6**
    - block 1 (Books 1, 2: 1-572, 3, 4, 6, 8, 9, 11: 1-706) (heroes & heroic virtues)

**Week 3**
- **All week**
  - *Individual meetings with Prof. Bauer* (continued)
- **Tue Oct 11**
  - block 1 (same reading as above) (justice & ethics; Gods & humans)
- **Thu Oct 13**
  - block 2 (Books 11: 707-end, 16, 18, 19, 22, 24) (Achilles & Hector; mortality)
- **Fri Oct 14**
  - *First paper due (5pm)*

  **— Plato’s Republic —**
  - **Tue Oct 18**
    - *Republic*, Book 1 (accounts of justice)
  - **Thu Oct 20**
    - Book 2: start – 376c (Glauc’ on’s challenge; the two cities)

**Week 4**
- **Tue Oct 25**
  - Book 4: start-421c, 427d-444e (happiness of guardians; justice in city and soul)
  - **Thu Oct 27**
    - Books 5-6: 471c-509c (philosopher king, forms, the Good, sun analogy)
  - *Second paper assigned*

**Week 5**
- **Tue Nov 1**
  - Books 6-7: 509d-521b (divided line, cave analogy)
- **Wed – Fri**
  - *Second writing seminars*
- **Thu Nov 3**
  - Books 9-10: 580d-592b, 608b-end (happiness of the just; nature of soul; myth of Er)

  **— Aeschylus’ Oresteia —**
  - **Tue Nov 8**
    - *Agamemnon & Libation Bearers* (in *Aeschylus I*)
  - **Thu Nov 10**
    - *Eumenides* (in *Aeschylus I*)
  - **Fri Nov 11**
    - *Second paper due (5pm)*

  **— Aristotle’s Nicomachean Ethics —**
  - **Tue Nov 15**
    - Book I: chapters 1-5, 7, 13 (happiness as highest good; function argument; happiness and virtue)
  - **Thu Nov 17**
    - Book I: 8-11; Book II: 1-7 (death and fortune; virtue)

**Week 6**
- **Tue Nov 22**
  - Book X: 6-8 (the philosophical life)
  - *Third paper assigned*
- **Thu Nov 24**
  - Thanksgiving (no class)

**Week 7**
- **Wed – Fri**
  - *Third writing seminars* (no classes this week)
  - **Thu – Fri**
    - *Reading Days*
  - **Mon Dec 5**
    - *Third paper due (5pm)*
ON THE INFLUENCE OF THE GREEKS

“We are all Greeks. Our laws, our literature, our religion, our arts have their root in Greece.”

“The human form and the human mind attained to a perfection in Greece which has impressed its image on those faultless productions, whose very fragments are the despair of modern art, and has propagated impulses which cannot cease, through a thousand channels of manifest or imperceptible operation, to enoble and delight mankind until the extinction of the race.”

— Percy Bysshe Shelley, Hellas (1822)

“Whatever, in fact, is modern in our life we owe to the Greeks. Whatever is an anachronism is due to mediaevalism.”

— Oscar Wilde, The Critic as Artist (1891)

“if we really want a model, we must always return to the ancient Greeks, in whose works the beauty of human kind is always represented. All the rest we must look at only historically...”

— Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, conversation reported by Eckermann (1827)

“All subsequent objective perception of the world is only elaboration on the framework the Greeks began. We see with the eyes of the Greeks and use their phrases when they speak.” (p. 12)

“for us, antiquity is only the first act of the human drama, and indeed, in our eyes, a tragedy complete in itself, one of incalculable efforts, transgressions and suffering. Though we are also the offspring of peoples who were still wrapped in the sleep of childhood at the time of the great civilizations of antiquity, it so from these that we feel we are truly descended, because they transmitted their soul to us, and their work, their path, and their destiny lives on in us.” (p. 365)

— Jacob Burckhardt, The Greeks and Greek Civilization (1898), p. 365