

CLAS 261-500: Great Books of the Classical Tradition

Fall 2018

TR 8:00-9:15

PETR 106

Instructor: Justin Lake

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Office Hours: Monday 10:00-11:00 and by appointment

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Course Description: This course surveys some of the most important and enduring works of literature, history, and philosophy from Classical Antiquity (8th century BC -2nd century AD). We will devote particular attention to two aspects of our readings: 1) Morality: how do our texts dramatize and/or explain the motives and consequences of human action? What constitutes a good life? Where do the greatest dilemmas lie? 2) Mentality: what assumptions about personal morality, social structure, and political organization are implicit in our sources, and how have these assumptions changed over time? This is a reading-intensive class. Students should expect to read between 100-200 pages every week.

Learning Outcomes: At the conclusion of this course students will be able to:

- assess and evaluate in writing the historical importance and ongoing cultural relevance of each one of the texts that we have read;
- describe in essays and response papers the development of ideas about personal morality and man's relationship to society as reflected in the assigned texts.

Core Objectives:

Critical Thinking: Students will enhance their critical thinking skills through close reading of texts that were written for people far removed from our own day who had very different views on almost all aspects of life. Students will be challenged to recognize not merely the most obvious differences in shared beliefs and mentalities, but also the unspoken assumptions revealed by our texts.

Communication: Students will develop spoken communications skills through in-depth discussion of assigned readings in class and written communication skills through response papers in which they will be required to engage closely with particular topics (e.g., how does Plato's ideal of justice compare to Aristotle's ideal of *eudaimonia*?), and through essays on the Mid-Term and Final Exam.

Social Responsibility: This course is organized in part around the study of morality and value ('What makes for a worthwhile life?') in Antiquity. Students are challenged to cultivate an appreciation for the different belief systems of Greek and Roman society and to consider with empathy ways of thinking that are alien—and sometimes offensive—to us.

Personal Responsibility: Students will cultivate personal responsibility by reflecting on topics conducive to personal growth, including (but not limited to): the nature of virtue, the proper relationship between citizen and state, and the potential of power to corrupt.

Prerequisites: none

Required Texts:*

Aeschylus, *Persians*, trans. Janet Lembke and C.J. Herington (OUP, 1991)
 Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, trans. J.A.K. Thompson (Penguin, 2004)
 Herodotus, *The Histories*, trans. Robin Waterfield (OUP, 2008)
 Homer, *Iliad*, trans. Robert Fagles (Penguin, 1988)
 Homer, *Odyssey*, trans. Robert Fagles (Penguin, 1997)
 Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, trans. A.D. Melville (OUP, 2009)
 Plato, *Protagoras*, trans. C.C.W Taylor (OUP, 2009)
 Plato, *The Republic*, trans. G.M.A. Grube (Hackett, 1992)
 Sophocles, *Philoctetes*, trans. Carl Philips (OUP, 2003)
 Tacitus, *The Annals of Imperial Rome*, trans. Cynthia Damon (Penguin, 1996)
 Thucydides, *On Justice, Power, and Human Nature*, trans. Paul Woodruff (Hackett, 1993)

* Please note that students are not required to purchase these editions of the assigned texts. In many cases high-quality translations are available for free on-line.

Grading: Your grade will be calculated according to the following scale:

Response Papers:	30%
Mid-Term Examination	25%
Attendance	10%
Final exam:	35%

* **Please note that there will be no opportunity for extra credit.**

Grading Scale: A = 100-90 B = 89-80 C = 79-70 D = 69-60 F = below 60

Response Papers: Students must complete 3 of the 4 assigned response papers (all 4 may be completed, in which case only the three highest grades will be used). Each paper should be about 750-1000 words, and no longer than 1250 words. Papers will be graded on content (40%) (in particular, how much evidence from the readings has been introduced into the argument), organization/clarity (40%), and grammar/style (20%). For every day that a response paper is handed in late, five (5) points will be deducted from the student's grade.

Attendance and Participation: Regular attendance is a prerequisite for success in this class. You will receive two (2) free unexcused absences. Every unexcused absence after this will result in a two-point deduction from your attendance grade, to a maximum of the full ten percentage points.

Absences: Absences will be excused if there is a university-excused absence. Please see <http://student-rules.tamu.edu/rule07> for current policy on university-excused absences. You are responsible for providing satisfactory evidence to me to substantiate the reason for the absence.

In accordance with University Student Rule 7.1.6.1 and 7.1.6.2, 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.

Make-up exams will be given in accordance with University regulations (Student Rule 7.3); you will normally be expected to make up any missed exam on or before the next available class day. No make-ups will be allowed for unexcused absences (see Rule 7.4). Excused absences will not affect negatively a student's attendance grade, but in the case of an absence you are responsible for completing any missed work and obtaining notes from your fellow students.

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>.

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 Disability Services, currently located in the Disability Services building at the Student Services at White Creek Complex on West Campus, or call 979-845-1637. For additional information, visit <http://disability.tamu.edu>.

SCHEDULE

Week 1: Greek Epic I

Tuesday, Aug. 28: *Iliad* 1, 3-4, 6

Thursday, August 30: *Iliad* 11, 16, 17, 18

Week 2: Greek Epic II

Tuesday, Sept. 4: *Iliad* 19-24

Thursday, Sept. 6: *Odyssey* 1, 6-8

Week 3: Greek Epic III

Tuesday, Sept. 11: *Odyssey* 9-10, 13-14, 17-18

Thursday Sept. 13: *Odyssey* 19-23

[First response paper due]

Week 4: Greek Historiography I: Herodotus

Tuesday, Sept. 18: *Histories* 1

Thursday, Sept. 20: *Histories* 6-7

Week 5: Greek Historiography II: Thucydides

Tuesday, Sept. 25: *On Justice, Power, and Human Nature*, pp. 1-56

Thursday, Sept. 27: *On Justice, Power, and Human Nature*, pp. 89-155

Week 6: Greek Tragedy

Tuesday, Oct. 2: Aeschylus, *Persians*

Thursday, Oct. 4: Sophocles, *Philoctetes*

[Second response paper due]

Week 7: Socrates and Plato

Tuesday, Oct. 9: Plato, *Crito*

Thursday, Oct 11: Plato, *Protagoras*

Week 8: Plato on Justice

Tuesday, Oct. 16:

MID-TERM EXAMINATION

Thursday, Oct. 18: Plato, *Republic* 1-3

Week 9: Plato's *Republic*

Tuesday, Oct. 23: Plato, *Republic* 4-6

Thursday, Oct. 25: Plato, *Republic* 7-9

Week 10: Aristotle's *Ethics*

Tuesday, Oct. 30: *Nicomachean Ethics* 1-2

Thursday, Nov. 1: *Nicomachean Ethics* 3-5

[Third response paper due]

Week 11: Imperial Biography

Tuesday, Nov. 6: Plutarch, *Life of Julius Caesar*

Thursday, Nov. 8: Suetonius, *Life of Augustus*

Week 12: Augustan Poetry

Tuesday, Nov. 13: Ovid, *Metamorphoses* 1-3

Thursday, Nov. 15: Ovid, *Metamorphoses* 6, 10, 15

Week 13: Imperial Biography II

Tuesday, Nov. 20: Suetonius, *Life of Domitian*

Thursday, Nov. 22: **THANKSGIVING HOLIDAY**

Week 14: Imperial Historiography

Tuesday, Nov. 27: Tacitus, *Annals* Book 1

Thursday, Nov. 29: Tacitus, *Annals* Book 4

Tuesday, Dec. 4: Tacitus, *Annals* Books 14-15

[Fourth Response Paper Due]

Date/Time: FINAL EXAMINATION