

PHILOSOPHY 102: HELLENISTIC PHILOSOPHY (UCSD, 2025)

Professor Monte Johnson (monte@ucsd.edu)

MEETINGS

- Lectures and Discussion: MWF 12-12:50pm at RWAC 0426.
- Office Hours (Professor): W 3:30pm-5pm at RWAC 0451, or by appointment.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

The works of the Cynics, Epicureans, Stoics, and Sceptics have been lost, but their ideas survive in fragments quoted in later authors, and in extant works of Roman writers. We will read biographical accounts in Diogenes Laertius (III C.E.), and fragments of the Greek philosophers of the Hellenistic period from various sources, followed by a detailed study of a dialogue of Cicero (106 - 43 B.C.E), *On Moral Ends*. The aim of the readings is to get an idea of the range of Hellenistic ethical theories, as well as the different approaches to some more concrete ethical problems, such as the relationship between ethics and physics and logic, the relative value of pleasure and virtue, consolation and the control of emotion, and techniques of obtaining of tranquility and happiness.

OBJECTIVES

1. Learn how to read, interpret, discuss, cite, quote, and paraphrase the fundamental doctrines of the Epicureans, Stoics and Sceptics in English translation.
2. Learn the ways that Greek philosophy was transformed by Roman writers for their own purposes, and to appreciate Cicero as a literary archetype for later legal, ethical, and social-political discourse. Appreciate the enduring influence of Hellenistic philosophy on the history of philosophy and science.
3. Conduct original and detailed research on Hellenistic Philosophy in relation to your own interests. Learn to utilize both primary and secondary sources in representing and criticizing philosophical views.

REQUIRED TEXTS

(available at UC San Diego Bookstore-- please obtain in hard copy as soon as possible)

- *Hellenistic Philosophy: introductory readings* / translated with introduction and notes by Brad Inwood and L. P. Gerson. Second edition. Indianapolis, 1997.
- *Cicero: On Moral Ends*. Translated by R. Woolf. Cambridge, 2001.
- Supplemental Readings (distributed in PDF on the Canvas website under "Files" or "Modules")

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EVALUATION

Up to 100 points can be earned by completing the tasks described below (and in greater detail on the weekly modules and to-do lists). All students are expected to contribute original work without using AI-enhancement. If you do use AI-enhancement, cite the resource used (e.g. Grammarly, ChatGPT, DeepSeek, etc.) and save all prompts and responses: we reserve the right to examine these for any work submitted for credit.

PARTICIPATION (10 points)

- Attendance at all meetings is required. For each class meeting missed without a written excuse (from a doctor, coach, etc.), 3 points will be subtracted from the FINAL grade (after the second absence).
- Participation is graded (10 points) at the end of the course according to timeliness of assignment submissions, preparation in class (with textbooks ready at hand in class), and online and in-person discussion.

BOOK REVIEW PROJECT (40 points)

- See detailed prompts for each assignment (posted in weekly modules).
- Assignment 1: Book Report Outline (10 points). **Due April 11.**
- Assignment 2: Book Report Draft* (10 points). **Due April 28.**
- Assignment 3: Book Report Presentation* (10 points). **Due April 28.**
- Assignment 7: Book Report Revision* (10 points). **Due June 11.**

RESEARCH PROJECT (30 points)

- See detailed prompts for each assignment (posted in weekly modules).
- Assignment 4: Research Outline (10 points). **Due May 9.**
- Assignment 5: Research Draft* (10 points). **Due May 19.**
- Assignment 6: Research Presentation* (10 points). **Due May 19.**

DISCUSSION BOARDS (20 points)

- Each week has a unique prompt, with specific requirements (for citation, reference to class discussion, etc.) See detailed weekly prompts.
- You must post a circa 100-200 word initial comment by Tuesday 11:59pm, and a follow-up comment by Thursday at 11:59pm.

GRADING SCHEME

- NP or F: >60 points; P or C: >70 points; B: >80; A: >90 points.
- All + and - modifiers at the discretion of the Professor.
- Note: all grading is done on the basis of accumulated *points*, not percentages earned on assignments.

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POLICY ON LATE WORK

- Late contributions to Discussion (including comments and replies) will not be eligible for grade points, but may be taken into consideration for + and - discretionary scores.
- Late submissions of Assignments will be penalized 2.5 points per 24-hour period of lateness.
- Assignments marked with an * can only be completed once the previous assignment has been completed (whether or not for points).
- All Assignments 1-7 must be completed in order to pass the course, regardless of accumulated points or grading option.

PROVISIONAL SCHEDULE

Week 1: Introduction to Hellenistic Philosophy

Week 2: Introduction to Epicureanism

Week 3: Epicurean Ethics

Week 4: Criticism of Epicurean Ethics, **Book Report Presentations**

Week 5: Introduction to Stoicism, **Book Report Presentations**

Week 6: Stoic Ethics, **Book Report Presentations**

Week 7: Criticism of Stoic Ethics, **Book Report Presentations**

Week 8: Introduction to Skepticism, **Book Report Presentations**

Week 9: **Research Presentations**

Week 10: **Research Presentations**

Hellenistic Philosophy Timeline

Socrates (469-399)..... Antisthenes (445-365)... Aristippus (435-356)

Academy

Plato (428-348)

Speusippus head

Speusippus dies (339)

Xenocrates head

Xenocrates dies (314)

Polemo head

Polemo dies (c. 276)

Crates head

Crates dies (273)

Arcesilaus heads the
“New Academy”

Arcesilaus dies (242)

Lacydes head

Carneades born (219)

Becomes head (?)

Embassy to Rome (155)

Carneades (Academy) Critolaus (Peripatos), andDiogenes (Stoa)..... >

Carneades dies (129)

Clitomachus head

Clitomachus dies (110)

Philo of Larissa head

Antiochus founds the
“Old Academy” (c. 87)

[*Aenesidemus* (80-10)]

Philo of Larissa dies (c. 79)

Antiochus dies (c. 67)

Cicero (106-43)

Peripatos

Aristotle (384-322)

Theophrastus head

<Euclid fl. 300>

Theophrastus dies (287)

Strato head

Strato dies (c. 269)

Lycon head

<Archimedes 287-212>

<Galen 129-199>

Diogenes of Sinope (404-323)

Stoa

Zeno born (344)

Zeno in Athens (312)

Zeno dies (262)

Cleanthes head

Cleanthes dies (c. 232)

Chrysippus head

Chrysippus dies (206)

Zeno of Tarsus, then

Diogenes of Babylon head

Diogenes dies (c. 152)

Antipater head

Antipater dies (129)

Panaetius head

Panaetius dies (109)

Posidonius (135-51)

Garden

Epicurus born (341)

Founds school (307)

Colotes (310-360)

Epicurus dies (271)

Hermarchus head

Zeno of Sidon (155-75)

Lucretius (99-55)

Philodemus (fl. 80-45)

Seneca (55 BC – 39 AD)

Epictetus (55-135 AD)

Marcus Aurelius (121-180 AD)