

PHIL/REL485 Reason and Revelation: Paganism and Christianity

Summer Session II 2023

**Course Instructor(s): Prof. Douglas Hedley
& Dr Daniel J. Tolan**

Course Description

This course introduces students to the foundations of Western philosophy, from antiquity to the renaissance, as they develop within the Platonic tradition by examining the interaction between Pagan and Christian Platonisms, and it explores key themes, arguments, and ideas related to notions such as God, freedom, and the soul.

Students will reflect upon paradigmatic texts from major thinkers, such as Plato, Aristotle, Plutarch, Plotinus, Proclus, and Ficino, and they will engage with questions that are of continuing concern and interest to the modern mind, such as ‘What does it mean for one to be free and to determine oneself?’, ‘What does it mean for the soul to be the source of the self?’, and ‘What bearing does the existence of God have on epistemology?’. Throughout the course, students will be encouraged to consider the way in which the Hellenic tradition has been received and transformed in the hands of various thinkers, and how this tradition informs contemporary philosophical discussions.

Entitled, ‘Reason and Revelation: Paganism and Christianity’, this course also probes the relationship between religious revelation and philosophy. This relationship will be approached from two angles: on the one hand, students will assess the way in which Christians used the thought of ancient philosophical schools to articulate their religious vision; on the other hand, they will evaluate the importance of revelation and religious practice to the Pagan tradition itself. This allows for an investigation of definitive philosophical issues, such as life after death and retributive theories of posthumous justice.

Course Approach

This course engages with some of the fundamental questions of human existence. As a foundation for our discussions, we will be reading primary texts from the history of philosophy which relate to the themes of God, freedom, and the soul. Students are encouraged to ask their own questions of the texts and, in class discussions, to reflect on the way in which the texts we are reading inform or shape contemporary approaches to philosophical issues. Each course will begin with an overview of the day’s readings; after this, we will read together and reflect upon crucial passages from the day’s reading, with the text serving as the stimulus for classroom discussion. Daily paragraph-long reflections are assigned to prompt engagement with the texts and to get students in the habit of reflecting critically upon what they have read.

Site visits:

Students will have an opportunity to visit Plato’s Academy, Aristotle’s Lyceum, the Athenian Agora, the temple of Poseidon at Sounion, the island of Delos, Delphi, Epidaurus, Mystras, and to become familiar with academic resources in Athens, such as the American school of Classical Studies.

Learning Objectives

By the end of the course, students should be able to:

- 1) Articulate key tenets of Platonic philosophy
- 2) Discuss Whitehead's statement that 'The safest general characterization of the European philosophical tradition is that it consists of a series of footnotes to Plato'
- 3) Engage critically with primary sources
- 4) Analyse arguments
- 5) Be able to implement traditional research methods
- 6) Write with increased clarity

Course Requirements

- Students are expected to keep up to date with course readings (40-50pp, per class) and, in advance of each course, submit a one paragraph reflection on the assigned reading.
- In place of a mid-term, students are expected to submit a three-page outline of their final essay and a one-page bibliography of relevant secondary literature (**Due Monday, 3 July**).
- Students will submit a final paper of least 10 pages of research work (approx. 4,000 words) (**Due Friday, 14 July**).

Evaluation and Grading

Your grade for this course will be based on the following distribution:

- Attendance 10%
- Daily Reflection 20%
- Participation 15%
- Paper outline 20%
- Final paper 35%

Evaluation Criteria - Course Assignments

Assignment 1: Daily Reflection (20%)

- Upon completing the assigned reading, students will write a paragraph (4-5 sentences) reflecting upon aspects of the text they found worthy of note. This will help students to gather their thoughts before classroom discussions and to help students grow accustomed to reflecting on philosophical texts through writing.

Assignment 2: Paper outline (20%) (**Due Monday, 3 July**)

- Students will provide a three-page outline of their term paper with an accompanying one-page bibliography of pertinent secondary literature. This will help students to shape their thoughts for the final paper, and it will provide students with an opportunity to dialogue with the instructors about the direction in which their work is going.

Assignment 2: Final paper (35%) (**Due Friday, 14 July**)

- Students will submit a final paper of least 10 pages of research work (approx. 4,000 words). This paper should demonstrate a deep engagement with one, or multiple, of the texts read

during the course. Throughout the paper, students should demonstrate a familiarity with pertinent secondary literature.

CYA Regulations and Accommodations

Attendance Policy

CYA regards attendance in class and on-site (in Athens or during field study trips) as essential. Absences are recorded and have consequences. Illness or other such compelling reasons which result in absences should be reported immediately to the Student Affairs Office.

Academic Accommodations

If you are a registered (with your home institution) student with a disability and you are entitled to learning accommodation, please inform the Office of Academic Affairs and make sure that your school forwards the necessary documentation.

Policy on Original Work

Unless otherwise specified, all submitted work must be your own original work. Any ideas taken from the work of others must be clearly identified as quotations, paraphrases, summaries, figures etc., and accurate internal citations and/or captions (for visuals) as well as an accompanying bibliography must be provided (Check the Student Handbook, pg. 7).

Use of Laptops

In-class or onsite use of laptops and other devices is permitted if this facilitates course-related activities such as note-taking, looking up references, etc. Laptop or other device privileges will be suspended if devices are not used for class-related work.

Class Schedule

Class Day	Day/Date/Place (if applicable)	Topic / Readings / Assignments Due
1	Mon June 26	Orientation 14:00 Check in to CYA Apartments 18:00 Orientation by CYA staff 7:30pm Welcome dinner by CYA (TBA)

2 Tue June 27 **Plato, *Apology***

Description
Forthcoming.

Required reading
Plato, *Apology*

Optional bibliography
Forthcoming.

Suggested essay question

- Forthcoming

3 Wed June 28 **Plato, *Symposium***

Description
Forthcoming.

Required reading
Plato, *Symposium*

Optional bibliography
Forthcoming.

Suggested essay question

- Forthcoming

4 Th June 29 **Plato, *Phaedrus* 227A-257C**

Description
Forthcoming.

Required reading
Plato, *Phaedrus* 227A-257C

Optional bibliography
Forthcoming.

Suggested essay question

- Forthcoming

5 Fri June 30 **Plato, *Phaedrus* 257D-279C**

Description
Forthcoming.

Required reading
Plato, *Phaedrus* 257D-279C

Optional bibliography
Forthcoming.

Suggested essay question
• Forthcoming

6 Mon July 3 **Plato, *Republic* 502c–521c**

Description
Forthcoming.

Required reading
Plato, *Republic* 502c–521c

Optional bibliography
Forthcoming

Suggested essay question
• Forthcoming

7 Tue July 4 **Plato, *Republic* 608c-621d**

Description
Forthcoming.

Required reading
Plato, *Republic* 608c-621d

Optional bibliography
Forthcoming

Suggested essay question
• Forthcoming

8 Wed July 5 **Aristotle, *Ethics* I, II**

Description
Forthcoming.

Required reading
Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* I & II

Optional bibliography
Forthcoming

Suggested essay question
• Forthcoming

9 Th July 6

Aristotle, *Ethics* VI, X

Description
Forthcoming.

Required reading
Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* VI & X

Optional bibliography
Forthcoming

Suggested essay question
• Forthcoming

10 Fri July 7

Aristotle, *Metaphysics* book XII

Description
Forthcoming.

Required reading
Aristotle, *Metaphysics* XII

Optional bibliography
Kevin Corrigan, 'How Did Aristotle's Unmoved Mover Come to Love Everything by the End of the Ancient Pagan Tradition?', *Dionysius* XXXII (December 2014): 82–115.

Suggested essay question
• Forthcoming

11 Mon July 10

Aristotle, *de Anima* book III

Paper outline due

Description
Forthcoming.

Required reading
Aristotle, *de Anima* III

Optional bibliography
Forthcoming

Suggested essay question

- Forthcoming
-

12 Tue July 11

Plutarch, *Moralia. On the Generation of the Soul in the Timaeus*

Description

Forthcoming.

Required reading

Plutarch, *On the Generation of Soul in the Timaeus*

Optional bibliography

John Dillon, 'Plutarch and Platonism', in *A Companion to Plutarch*, ed. Mark Beck, Blackwell Companions to the Ancient World (Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2014), 61–72.

Suggested essay question

- Forthcoming
-

13 Wed July 12

Hosios Loukas

Description

Forthcoming.

Required reading

The Life of Hosios Loukas (selection)

Peter Brown, 'The Rise and Function of the Holy Man in Late Antiquity', *The Journal of Roman Studies* 61 (1971): 80–101.

Optional bibliography

Garth Fowden, 'The Pagan Holy Man in Late Antique Society', *The Journal of Hellenic Studies* 102 (1982): 33–59.

Suggested essay question

- Forthcoming
-

14 Th July 13

Origen, *de Principiis* III.1

Description

Forthcoming.

Required reading

Origen, *de Principiis* III.1

Optional bibliography

Henri Crouzel, 'Theological Construction and Research: Origen on Free-Will', in *Scripture, Tradition and Reason. A Study in the Criteria of Christian Doctrine. Essays in Honour of R. P.C. Hanson*, ed. R.

Bauckham and B. Drewery, trans. B Drewery (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1988), 239–65.

Henri Crouzel, *Origen*, trans. A Worrall (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1989), 87–98.

Suggested essay question

- Forthcoming
-

15 Fri July 14

Plotinus, *Enneads* I 6, III 8, VI 9

Description

Forthcoming.

Required reading

Plotinus, *Enneads* I.6, III.8, VI.9

Optional bibliography

Kevin Corrigan, *Reading Plotinus: A Practical Introduction to Neoplatonism* (West Lafayette, Ind.: Purdue University Press, 2005).

Suggested essay question

- Forthcoming
-

16 Mon July 17

Proclus, *Elements of Theology* Props. 1, 7, 11, 15, 16, 17, 20, 21, 25, 35, 41, 53, 57, 64, 67, 123, 186, 187, 194, 195, 211

Description

Forthcoming.

Required reading

Proclus, *Elements of Theology* Props. 1, 7, 11, 15, 16, 17, 20, 21, 25, 35, 41, 53, 57, 64, 67, 123, 186, 187, 194, 195, 211

Optional bibliography

Radek Chlup, *Proclus: An Introduction* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012).

Suggested essay question

- Forthcoming
-

17 Tue July 18

Dionysius the Areopagite, *The Celestial Hierarchy*

Description

Forthcoming.

Required reading

Dionysius the Areopagite, *The Celestial Hierarchy*

Optional bibliography

Eric D. Perl, *Theophany: The Neoplatonic Philosophy of Dionysius the Areopagite* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2007).

Suggested essay question

- Forthcoming

18 Wed July 19

Eriugena, *Peri Physeon I*

Description
Forthcoming.

Required reading

Eriugena, *Peri Physeon I* (pp. 1-27 & 86-104).

Optional bibliography

Forthcoming

Suggested essay question

- Forthcoming

19 Th July 20

Marsilio Ficino, *de Amore*, second speech

Description
Forthcoming.

Required reading

Marsilio Ficino, *de Amore*, second speech 132-147 & 217- 240.

Optional bibliography

Forthcoming

Suggested essay question

- Forthcoming

20 Fri July 21

Concluding Discussion

Final Essay due

N.B.: The course schedule, in terms of subjects and readings, may be subject to change to benefit student learning and to keep up to date with current research.