

PHIL/REL485: Reason and Revelation: Paganism and Christianity

Summer Session II 2024

Course Instructors: Prof. Douglas Hedley & Dr Daniel J. Tolan

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Class Times (days, hours): M-F

(Office) Hours Available: By appointment

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 islands of Paros and Delos, and the historic sites of Delphi, Meteora, Thessaloniki, and Philippi.

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) Analyze 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 (20-40pp, 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 two-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. 3,000 words) (**Due Friday, 21 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 help students grow accustomed to reflecting philosophical texts through writing.

Assignment 2: Paper outline (20%) (**Due Monday, 1 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, 12 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 |
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| 1 | Mon June 17 | <p>Orientation</p> <p>14:00 Check in to CYA Apartments</p> <p>18:00 Orientation by CYA staff</p> <p>7:30pm Welcome dinner by CYA (TBA)</p> |
| 2 | Tue June 18 | <p>Plato, <i>Apology</i> (Tolan)</p> <p><i>Description</i></p> <p>In this dialogue, we find Socrates on trial. Here, his defense is focused less on acquitting the charges brought against him and more on defending his devotion to philosophy and practice of the philosophical life.</p> <p><i>Required reading</i></p> <p>Plato, <i>Apology</i>. (In Plato's Complete Works, 1997).</p> <p><i>Optional bibliography</i></p> <p>Hadot 1997, pp. 49-70, 93-101.</p> <p>Reeve 1989.</p> <p>Hadot 2002, pp. 55-76.</p> <p>Taylor 1960, pp 145–73.</p> <p>Taylor 1963.</p> <p><i>Suggested essay questions</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the charges brought against Socrates? • What is it that qualifies Socrates as wise? • What does the portrayal of Socrates at his trial tell us about the practice of philosophy? |

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| 3 | Wed June 19 | <p>Plato, <i>Symposium</i> (Hedley)</p> <p><i>Description</i> Forthcoming.</p> <p><i>Required reading</i> Plato, <i>Symposium</i>. (In Plato's Complete Works, 1997).</p> <p><i>Optional bibliography</i> Perl 2014, pp. 19–72. Corrigan 2004. Corrigan 2018.</p> <p><i>Suggested essay question</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Forthcoming |
| 4 | Th June 20 | <p>Plato, <i>Phaedrus</i> 227A-257C (Tolan)</p> <p><i>Description</i> In the <i>Phaedrus</i>, the topics of love and rhetoric are discussed. This first class considers the portion devoted to love.</p> <p><i>Required reading</i> Plato, <i>Phaedrus</i> 227A-257C. (In Plato's Complete Works, 1997).</p> <p><i>Optional bibliography</i> Dodds 1951, esp. 64-101. Dodds 1945, pp. 16–25. Hermias 2018. Hermias 2022. Ferrari 1987. Griswold 1986. Stern-Gillet 2020, pp 61–86. Karamanolis 2020, pp. 103–18.</p> <p><i>Suggested essay questions</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss and contrast the two speeches given in this dialogue. • What is the relationship between love and divine ascent? • What is the nature of the soul? |
| 5 | <p>Fri June 21</p> <p>Sounion</p> | <p>Plato, <i>Republic</i> 502c–521c (Hedley)</p> <p><i>Description</i> The Republic contains one of the most influential accounts of the theory of ideas.</p> <p><i>Required reading</i> Plato, <i>Republic</i> 502c–521c (In Plato's Complete Works, 1997).</p> <p><i>Optional bibliography</i> Murdoch 1970. Rosen 2005. Gerson 2020. Armstrong and Markus 1960. Piper 2011.</p> <p><i>Suggested essay question</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are forms? |
| 6 | Mon June 24 | <p>Plato, <i>Republic</i> 608c-621d (Hedley)</p> <p><i>Description</i></p> |

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| | | <p>Forthcoming. <i>Required reading</i> Plato, <i>Republic</i> 608c-621d (In Plato's Complete Works, 1997). <i>Optional bibliography</i> Murdoch 1977. Halliwell 2002, pp. 37-118. <i>Suggested essay question</i> Why does Plato banish the artists?</p> |
| 7 | Tue June 25 | <p>Aristotle, <i>Ethics</i> I, II (Tolan) <i>Description</i> Aristotle's <i>Nicomachean Ethics</i> is a definitive text in the study of ethics. In this class, we consider what he considers the aim of ethics to be. <i>Required reading</i> Aristotle, <i>Nicomachean Ethics</i> I & II (In The Complete Works of Aristotle, 1984). <i>Optional bibliography</i> Polansky 2014. Barnes 1995. Hankinson 1995, pp. 195–232. Reeve 1992. Kraut 2006. Broadie 1991. <i>Suggested essay questions</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● What is the aim of ethics? How is this achieved? ● What is virtue? |
| 8 | Wed June 26 | <p>Aristotle, <i>Ethics</i> VI, X (Tolan) <i>Description</i> In this class, we consider Aristotle's division of the soul and his understanding of happiness (<i>eudaimonia</i>). <i>Required reading</i> Aristotle, <i>Nicomachean Ethics</i> VI & X (In The Complete Works of Aristotle, 1984). <i>Optional bibliography</i> See previous class. <i>Suggested essay question</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● How does Aristotle understand the soul? ● What is <i>eudaimonia</i>? |

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| 9 | Th June 27 | <p>Aristotle, <i>Metaphysics</i> book XII (Hedley) <i>Description</i> Book Lambda of the <i>Metaphysics</i> is one of the most influential texts in Western Philosophy. Here Aristotle develops his conception of God as ‘Thought thinking itself’. <i>Required reading</i> Aristotle, <i>Metaphysics</i> XII (In <i>The Complete Works of Aristotle</i>, 1984). <i>Optional bibliography</i> Corrigan 2014, pp. 82–115. Perl 2014, pp. 73–106. <i>Suggested essay question</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Is the God of Aristotle personal? |
| 10 | <p>Fri June 28 Trip to Delos (28-30 June)</p> | <p>Aristotle, <i>de Anima</i> book III (Hedley) Paper outline due <i>Description</i> This text is the source of the mysterious notion of the active intellect. The idea of the active intellect was a major theme of late classical and medieval, especially in the Islamic and Jewish philosophical tradition. <i>Required reading</i> Aristotle, <i>de Anima</i> III (In <i>The Complete Works of Aristotle</i>, 1984). <i>Optional bibliography</i> Taylor 2012. Robinson 1989. Nussbaum and Rorty 1992. <i>Suggested essay question</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Is Aristotle’s idea of hylomorphism a critique of Plato? |
| 11 | Mon July 1 | <p>Philo, <i>de opificio mundi</i> (Tolan) Paper outline due <i>Description</i> Philo of Alexandria stands as a unique witness to the nature of Hellenised Judaism. His works present a synthesis of Platonic and Biblical thought, often weaving Platonic motifs into biblical narratives. This session’s reading lays out Philo’s understanding of the creation of both the cosmos and the human. <i>Required reading</i> Philo, ‘<i>De opificio mundi</i>’. (In Philo 1929). <i>Optional bibliography</i> Chadwick 1967, pp. 137–92. Dillon 1989. Dillon 2009, pp. 15–24. Goodenough 1946, pp. 85–108. <u>Kamesar 2009.</u> Niehoff 2018.</p> |

Reydams-Schils 2008, pp. 169–96.

Runia 2001.

Runia 1993.

Wolfson 1962.

Suggested essay question

- How does Philo understand the relationship between the human soul and God?

12 Tue July 2

Paul, 1 Thessalonians & 1 Corinthians (Tolan)

Description

The Apostle Paul is a decisive figure in the emergence of the Christian faith. Moreover, it is in the Pauline corpus that a vocabulary emerges for discussing the nature of the soul and of embodiment. In this meeting, we will consider how Paul is engaging with the philosophy of his

Required reading

1 Thessalonians & 1 Corinthians, selections.

Optional bibliography

Chadwick 1966, pp. 286–308.

van Kooten 2009.

van Kooten 2013.

Malherbe 1989, esp. 67-78.

Martin 1995.

Stowers 2015, pp. 141–56.

Stowers 2017, pp. 231–53.

Suggested essay questions

- How does Paul's tripartition of the soul relate to that of Plutarch?
- Does Paul understand the body as necessary for human existence?

13 Wed July 3
Trip to Northern Greece
(3-7 July:
Philippi, Thessaloniki,
Meteora, Delphi,
Hosios Loukas)

Plutarch, *Moralia. On the Generation of the Soul in the Timaeus; On the Sign of Socrates* (Tolan)

Description

Forthcoming

Plutarch was a 'middle' Platonist, who was also a priest at the Temple of Apollo at Delphi. With the readings for this class, we see the way in which Platonists worked with various texts across the Platonic corpus to derive their doctrines.

Required reading

Plutarch. 'On the Generation of Soul in the Timaeus', 1976. §6-7 (1014D-1115F).

Plutarch. 'On the Sign of Socrates', 1959. §22 (590B-592E)

Optional bibliography

Plato, *Timaeus* 27c-47e & *Sophist* 250a-255e (In Plato's Complete Works, 1997).

Dillon 1996, pp. 184–230.

Titchener and Zadorojnyi 2023.

Beck 2014.

Dillon 2014, pp. 61–72.

Roskam 2021.

Karamanolis 2023, pp. 211–24.

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| | | <p>Castelnerac 2007, pp. 141–63.</p> <p><i>Suggested essay questions</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How does Plutarch understand the soul? What is its function? <p>What is the relationship between the soul and motion?</p> |
| 14 | <p>Th July 4</p> <p>Trip to Northern Greece (Philippi, Thessaloniki, Meteora, Delphi, Hosios Loukas)</p> | <p>Origen, <i>de Principiis</i> III.1 (Tolan)</p> <p><i>Description</i></p> <p>Origen of Alexandria is a towering and most influential figure in early Christian thought. One of his landmark contributions to the development of Western thought is his <i>apologia</i> for human freedom, which we consider in this class.</p> <p><i>Required reading</i></p> <p>Origen, <i>de Principiis</i> III.1 (In Origen, 1936).</p> <p><i>Optional bibliography</i></p> <p>Crouzel 1988, pp. 239–65. Crouzel 1989, pp. 87–98. Jacobsen 2008, pp. 213–32. Frede 2012, pp. 102–24.</p> <p><i>Suggested essay questions</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How does Origen defend human freedom? • What sort of freedom is Origen here proposing? |
| 15 | <p>Fri July 5</p> <p>Trip to Northern Greece (Philippi, Thessaloniki, Meteora, Delphi, Hosios Loukas)</p> | <p>Plotinus, <i>Enneads</i> I 6, III 8, VI 9 (Hedley)</p> <p><i>Description</i></p> <p>Plotinus is the most important of the Neoplatonists, and is one of the key figures of the entire Western tradition.</p> <p><i>Required reading</i></p> <p>Plotinus, <i>Enneads</i> I.6, III.8, VI.9 (In Plotinus, 1966-1988).</p> <p><i>Optional bibliography</i></p> <p>Corrigan 2005.</p> <p><i>Suggested essay question</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is Plotinus a mystic? |
| 16 | <p>Mon July 8</p> | <p>Proclus, <i>Elements of Theology</i> Props. 1, 7, 11, 15, 16, 17, 20, 21, 25, 35, 41, 53, 57, 64, 67, 123, 186, 187, 194, 195, 211 (Tolan)</p> <p><i>Description</i></p> <p>In his <i>Elements of Theology</i>, Proclus attempts to express the main principles of the Platonic system in the ‘geometrical’ form, following Euclid’s <i>Elements</i>. In this work, he addresses all aspects of the Platonic system: One, mind, soul, body, procession, and return.</p> <p><i>Required reading</i></p> <p>Proclus, <i>Elements of Theology</i> Props. 1, 7, 11, 15, 16, 17, 20, 21, 25, 35, 41, 53, 57, 64, 67, 123, 186, 187, 194, 195, 211. (In Proclus, 1963)</p> <p><i>Optional bibliography</i></p> <p>Chlup 2012. Hoine and Martjin 2017. Baltzly 2004, pp. 297–321.</p> |

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| | | <p>Gersh 1973. Gersh 2014. ‘The Life of Proclus’ (In Edwards 2000) <i>Suggested essay questions</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is the role of unity in Proclus’ thought? • What is the importance of ‘reversion’ to Proclus’ thought? |
| 17 | Tue July 9 | <p>Dionysius the Areopagite, <i>The Celestial Hierarchy</i> (Hedley) <i>Description</i> Regarded as a contemporary of St Paul, this Neoplatonic thinker is one of the seminal figures of the Western intellectual tradition. <i>Required reading</i> Dionysius the Areopagite, <i>The Celestial Hierarchy</i> (In Pseudo-Dionysius 1987) <i>Optional bibliography</i> Perl 2007. <i>Suggested essay question</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is ‘hierarchy’ for Dionysius? |
| 18 | Wed July 10 | <p>Eriugena, <i>Peri Physeon I</i> (Hedley) <i>Description</i> John Scot Eriugena is one of the most fascinating figures in the medieval period. Called to the court of Charles the Bald during a tumultuous age, he developed a remarkable system of Christian Platonic thought. <i>Required reading</i> Eriugena, <i>Peri Physeon I</i> (pp. 1-27 & 86-104). (In Eriugena 1968) <i>Optional bibliography</i> Beierwaltes 1990, pp. 53–72. Moran 1989. <i>Suggested essay question</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is John Scot a pantheist? |
| 19 | Th July 11 | <p>Marsilio Ficino, <i>de Amore</i>, second speech (Hedley) <i>Description</i> Ficino is the greatest philosopher of the European Renaissance, and his interpretation of Plato dominated European thought until the 19th century. His treatise on Love is a key text of the Renaissance and early modern period. <i>Required reading</i> Marsilio Ficino, <i>de Amore</i>, second speech 132-147 & 217-240. (In Ficino, 1944) <i>Optional bibliography</i> Allen 1981. Robichaud 2018. <i>Suggested essay question</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is love for Ficino? |
| 20 | Fri July 12 | <p>Concluding Discussion Final Essay due</p> |

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.

Course Bibliography

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