

## Topics in the History of Philosophy - PHIL 4004

Carleton University, Fall 2016

Mondays, 5:35 – 8:25pm, Seminar Room (PA 3A36)

Professor: Annie Larivée

Office hours: Monday 2:45-3:45pm, Wednesday 2:30-3:30pm, or by appointment

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### The Role of Pleasure in the Flourishing Life from Plato to Epicurus

#### I – DESCRIPTION

Whereas most ancient philosophers agree on the fact that philosophy, as a way of life, should provide a form of therapy for the soul (*psyche*), their opinions on the specific form such therapy should take diverge widely. They agree on the therapeutic goal of philosophy, but offer different methods to reach *eudaimonia* (flourishing, happiness).

In this seminar, we will focus our attention on one element of the good life about which ancient philosophers were particularly divided as therapists of the soul: *hedone* (pleasure). Our trajectory will start with the highly critical and subtle account of the nature and role of pleasure provided by classical philosophers such as Plato and Aristotle and will culminate in the celebration of pleasure as the central element of philosophical therapy with Epicurus.

#### II – REQUIRED TEXTS

Our inquiry will be centered on the following texts: Plato (*Protagoras*, *Gorgias*, *Philebus*), Aristotle (*Nicomachean Ethics* Books VII and X, 1-6), Epicurus (Diogenes Laertius' testimony, Epicurus' letters to Herodotus, to Pythocles, to Menecaeus, Principal Maxims), Cicero (*De Finibus* 1, 2), Seneca (*Letters to Lucilius*, 9, 18, 21, 24, 25), Martha Nussbaum's *The Therapy of Desire* (chapters 4-7 inclusive).

Students will also be invited to read a few pages of Lucretius' epicurean Poem *On the Nature of Things* every day as way to integrate Epicurean principles (whereas the previous readings will be mandatory, this practical experiment is optional).

All texts will be available via Ares (Carleton's online reserve system), except for the following book which is available at **Haven Books** (43 Seneca Street, at Sunnyside, tel.: 613-730-9888, info@havenbooks.ca):

**-Martha Nussbaum, *The Therapy of Desire*, Princeton University Press, 1994.**

A copy of this book will be placed on reserve at the library.

Suggested editions for Lucretius' *De Natura Rerum* (I have ordered the first one at Haven but you can also get it through Chapters or Amazon):

- *Lucretius on the nature of the universe*, translated and with an introduction by Ronald Latham. Harmondsworth, Middlesex : Penguin Books, 1951.

- *Lucretius, the nature of the universe* : a translation of *De rerum natura*, translated and with an introduction by G.B. Cobbold, Mundelein, Illinois, USA : Bolchazy-Carducci Publishers, 2016.

### III – OUTLINE AND CALENDAR

Students are required to attend all classes and to do the readings in advance of class meetings.  
Classes start at 5:35 sharp. Please be on time, systematic lateness is disruptive and disrespectful.

Week 1 09/12 **Introduction to the seminar**

Week 2 09/19 **Plato: *Protagoras*** (especially 351b-end)

<http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus:text:1999.01.0178:text=Prot.>

Week 3 09/26 **Plato: *Gorgias*** (especially 461b-end)

<http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus%3atext%3a1999.01.0178%3atext%3dGorg.>

Week 4 10/03 **Plato: *Philebus* part 1** (11a-39c)

<http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus%3atext%3A1999.01.0174%3atext%3DPhileb.%3Apage%3D11>

Week 5 10/17 **Plato: *Philebus* part 2** (39d-end)

Week 6 10/31 **Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* VII, X** (1-6)

<http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus%3atext%3A1999.01.0054>

Week 7 11/07 **Epicurus (Diogenes Laertius): *Letters to Herodotus, to Pythocles, to Meneceus; Capital maxims***

<http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus%3atext%3A1999.01.0258%3Abook%3D10%3Achapter%3D1#note-linkb>

Week 8 11/14 **Cicero: *On the Ends* 1, 2; Seneca: *Letters to Lucilius* 9, 18, 21, 24, 25**

[http://penelope.uchicago.edu/Thayer/E/Roman/Texts/Cicero/de\\_Finibus/home.html](http://penelope.uchicago.edu/Thayer/E/Roman/Texts/Cicero/de_Finibus/home.html)  
[https://en.wikisource.org/wiki/Moral\\_letters\\_to\\_Lucilius](https://en.wikisource.org/wiki/Moral_letters_to_Lucilius)

Week 9 11/21 **Nussbaum: *Therapy of Desire*, chapter 4** (Epicurean surgery: Argument and empty desire)

Week 10 11/28 **Nussbaum: *Therapy of Desire*, chapter 5** (Beyond obsession and disgust: Lucretius on the Therapy of Love)

Week 11 12/05 **Nussbaum: *Therapy of Desire*, chapter 6** (Mortal immortals: Lucretius on Death and the Voice of Nature).

Week 12 12/09 **Nussbaum: *Therapy of Desire*, chapter 7** (“By words, not arms”: Lucretius on Anger and Aggression)  
(ATTENTION!!!! \*\*\*Friday Dec. 9 follows a Monday schedule...)

### IV – COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND GRADING

1. Discussion facilitation.....: 20%
2. Discussion Prep. Sheets + Diary.....: 40%
3. Final seminar report .....: 20%
4. Attendance and class participation.....: 20%

### 1. Discussion facilitation:

Each student will be in charge of the discussion for one of our weekly meetings. In order to give a structure to our discussion, please follow these guidelines:

- a) Present two problems you were confronted with while reading the text(s) either because some ideas were unclear or because you found them disputable. *Favor problems that are conducive to discussion!*
- b) Present one idea that was of special interest to you and explain why you found it especially stimulating.

Send me your preparation sheet via e-mail on the previous Saturday night at the latest (there will be a penalty for late submission). Also, please provide each member of the seminar with a printed copy of your Discussion Outline so that we can examine it together and discuss it critically. **ONE PAGE MAXIMUM!**

### 2. Discussion Preparation sheets + Diary: ONE PAGE MAXIMUM!!!

In order to prepare for our weekly meeting, each of you is asked to write a *Discussion Preparation Sheet* on the text(s) to be discussed that day. You will hand in this sheet at the end of the class and I will give it back to you at the beginning of next class. *Please keep all of them so as to hand them all back to me at the end of the semester.*

Part 1 – Discussion preparation: This part shall include the same items listed above. You can, however, limit yourself to one problem and one idea of special interest, or, if you prefer, two problems.

Part 2 – Gnothi seauton Diary: The purpose of this part of the weekly assignment is to incite you to engage in self-observation and to apply the material to your own situation. Observe your relationship to pleasure(s)/pain(s), be attentive to the types of pleasure/pain you seek or avoid, observe the impact it has on the organisation of your life, your mental state, your relationship with others. You may also try to make sense of your experience of pleasure(s)/pain by discussing some of the ideas present in the texts, or offer a critique of an idea or argument in light of your experience. Try to be as honest as you can (I am not expecting to be 'edified' by your responses!)

### 3. Seminar Final Report:

The seminar report (6-8 pages maximum) is due on Dec. 9<sup>th</sup>.

At the beginning of the semester, identify one specific question that you have (or a problem that you face) concerning pleasure and submit it to me in written form (one ten lines paragraph minimum—one page maximum) on September 19<sup>th</sup>. In your final report, explain how the texts we have worked on over the semester contributed to answer that question, modify it, or make your position toward your initial question more complex.

*Note:* you do not have to discuss all texts and may focus on the one(s) that seem the more relevant in light of your question.

### 4. Attendance and class participation:

In order for this kind of seminar to work, it is important that everyone reads the texts assigned before our weekly meeting and actively takes part in discussions. Hence the 20% devoted to attendance and class participation. Punctuality will also be taken into account.

#### 12 marks for attendance:

- One class missed: -2
- Two classes missed: -4
- Three classes missed: -8
- More than three classes missed: -12

#### 8 marks for participation

Penalty for regular lateness (more than twice): -4 of the total

## Department of Philosophy and Carleton University Policies (2016-17)

### **Assignments:**

Unless specifically told otherwise by their instructors, students:

- must not use a plastic or cardboard cover or paper clips
- must staple the paper (there is a stapler on the essay box)
- must include the following:
  - student name
  - student number
  - course number and section
  - instructor's name
- No assignments will be accepted after the last day for handing in term work – see dates in next column.
- Assignments handed in through the essay box (just inside the glass doors, Paterson Hall, Floor 3A) must be dropped into the box by **4:15** on a regular business day in order to be date-stamped with that day's date. Assignments handed in after 4:15 or on a non-business day will be stamped as having been handed in on the next business day.
- Students are required to keep copies of their assignments. If your paper is lost at any point, you will be considered not to have submitted it if you cannot produce a copy immediately on request.

### **Deferrals for Term Work:**

If you miss a final examination and/or fail to submit a final assignment by the due date because of circumstances beyond your control, you may apply for a deferral of examination/assignment. For deferred examinations, you must apply within 5 working days after the scheduled date of your exam. To apply for deferral of a final assignment, you must apply within 5 working days of the last scheduled day of classes. Visit the Registrar's Office for more information.

### **Plagiarism:**

It is the responsibility of each student to understand the meaning of 'plagiarism' as defined in the Undergraduate or Graduate Calendars, and to avoid both committing plagiarism and aiding or abetting plagiarism by other students. (Undergraduate Calendar Academic Regulations, section 14.3, or <http://calendar.carleton.ca/undergrad/regulations/academicregulationsoftheuniversity/acadregsuniv14/>)

### **Academic Accommodation:**

You may need special arrangements to meet your academic obligations during the term. For an accommodation request the processes are as follows:

**Pregnancy obligation:** write to your professor with any requests for academic accommodation during the first two weeks of class, or as soon as possible after the need for accommodation is known to exist. For more details visit the Equity Services website: <http://www2.carleton.ca/equity/>

**Religious obligation:** write to your professor with any requests for academic accommodation during the first two weeks of class, or as soon as possible after the need for accommodation is known to exist. For more details visit the Equity Services website: <http://www2.carleton.ca/equity/>

**Academic Accommodations for Students with Disabilities:** The **Paul Menton Centre** for Students with Disabilities (PMC) provides services to students with Learning Disabilities (LD), psychiatric/mental health disabilities, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD), chronic medical conditions, and impairments in mobility, hearing, and vision. If you have a disability requiring academic accommodations in this course, please contact PMC at 613-520-6608 or [pmc@carleton.ca](mailto:pmc@carleton.ca) for a formal evaluation. If you are already registered with the PMC, contact your PMC coordinator to send your **Letter of Accommodation** at the beginning of the term, and no later than two weeks before the first in-class scheduled test or exam requiring accommodation (*if applicable*). After requesting accommodation from PMC, meet with your professor to ensure

accommodation arrangements are made. Please consult the PMC website for the deadline to request accommodations for the formally-scheduled exam (*if applicable*) at <http://www2.carleton.ca/pmc/new-and-current-students/dates-and-deadlines/>

You can visit the Equity Services website to view the policies and to obtain more detailed information on academic accommodation at <http://www2.carleton.ca/equity/>

### **Important Dates:**

|            |   |
|------------|---|
| Sept. 7    | Classes start.  |
| Sept. 20   | Last day for registration and course changes in Fall and Fall/Winter courses.   |
| Sept. 30   | Last day for entire fee adjustment when withdrawing from Fall term or two-term courses.   |
| Oct. 10    | Thanksgiving Day – University closed.   |
| Oct. 24-28 | Fall Break – no classes.  |
| Nov. 25    | Last day for tests or examinations in courses below 4000-level before the Final Examination period.   |
| Dec. 9     | Last day of classes, Fall term. Classes follow a Monday schedule.   |
| Dec. 9     | Last day for handing in term work and the last day that can be specified by a course instructor as a due date for Fall term courses.  |
| Dec. 9     | Last day to withdraw from Fall term courses (academic purposes only).   |
| Dec. 10-22 | Final examinations for Fall courses, mid-terms for Fall/Winter courses. Exams are normally held all seven days of the week.   |
| Dec. 22    | Take-home exams are due.  |
| Jan. 5     | Winter term classes begin.  |
| Jan. 18    | Last day for registration and course changes in Winter term classes.  |
| Jan. 31    | Last day for entire fee adjustment when withdrawing from winter courses or winter portion of two-term courses.  |
| Feb. 20    | Family Day – University closed.   |
| Feb. 20-24 | Winter Break, no classes.   |
| Mar. 24    | Last day for tests or examinations in courses below 4000-level before the Final Examination period.   |
| Apr. 7     | Last day of Fall/Winter and Winter term classes. Last day for handing in term work and the last day that can be specified by a course instructor as a due date for term work for Fall/Winter and Winter term courses. |
| Apr. 7     | Last day to withdraw from Fall/Winter and Winter term courses (academic purposes only).   |
| Apr. 10-25 | Final Examinations. Exams are normally held all seven days of the week.   |
| Apr. 14    | Good Friday – University closed.  |
| Apr. 25    | Take-home exams are due.  |

### **Addresses:**

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|----------------------------------|---|
| Department of Philosophy:        | 3A35 Paterson Hall<br><a href="http://www.carleton.ca/philosophy">www.carleton.ca/philosophy</a><br>520-2110  |
| Registrar's Office:              | 300 Tory<br><a href="http://www.carleton.ca/registrar">www.carleton.ca/registrar</a><br>520-3500  |
| Student Academic Success Centre: | 302 Tory<br><a href="http://www.carleton.ca/sasc">www.carleton.ca/sasc</a><br>520-7850  |
| Writing Tutorial Service:        | 4 <sup>th</sup> Floor, Library<br><a href="http://www1.carleton.ca/sasc/writing-tutorial-service/">http://www1.carleton.ca/sasc/writing-tutorial-service/</a><br>520-6632 |
| MacOdrum Library                 | <a href="http://www.library.carleton.ca/">http://www.library.carleton.ca/</a><br><br>520-2735   |