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Preceptorial List 2013-2014

Determinism, Chaos, and Order

(Mr. James Beall)

The preceptorial will work through some papers on the relationship between predictability, determinism, and chaos. We will begin with the first chapters of Laplace's *A Philosophical Essay on Probabilities*. Chapter II of that text first introduced to the world Laplace's idea of a radical determinism which could be accomplished by a "sufficiently vast intelligence," one that could for all time predict the evolution of any system subject to its analysis. This became known as Laplace's "Demon." In addition, we will read through a series of papers on "deterministic" chaos, including Robert May's paper, published in *Nature* in 1976, entitled, "Complicated Behavior of Simple Dynamical Systems," and some parts of a paper by Lorenz on dynamical chaos. The mathematics of the Junior year at the time of the preceptorial will be sufficient for the class. If time permits, we could undertake some laboratory work or some discussions of political systems.

Leonardo da Vinci

(Ms. Sarah Benson)

Leonardo da Vinci: Notebooks. Selected by Irma Richter. Oxford University Press, 2008. ISBN: 978-0-19-929902-7

According to Leonardo "all our knowledge has its origins in perceptions." By examining selections from his notebooks, we will explore Leonardo as a thinker who relied on vision both to observe the world and to represent it for himself and others. In a combination of text and graphic representations, Leonardo experiments on the page with anatomy, meteorology, engineering, architecture, painting, and geometry.

Augustine's *Confessions*

(Mr. Michael Brogan)

The Big Bang Theory

(Mr. Radoslav Datchev)

Based mainly on Hubble, *The Realm of the Nebular*, and Weinberg, *The First Three Minutes*, which are both popular books, but including also more technical papers, or parts of papers, by Einstein, Hubble, Friedmann, Lemaître, Penzias, Wilson, and Guth.

Plato's Dialogues *Protagoras* and *Euthydemus*

(Mr. Robert Druecker)

Translation: J. Sachs, *Socrates and the Sophists*.

Conrad's *Lord Jim*, followed by Bakhtin's essay "Epic and Novel"

(Ms. Catherine Haigney)

Gottlob Frege - *The Foundations of Arithmetic*

(Mr. Daniel Harrell)

To those unfamiliar with this book, Bertrand Russell has given perhaps the best brief description of it, while mentioning his own role in helping to make it a seminal text in the philosophy of mathematics: "The question 'What is a number?' is one which has been often asked, but has only been correctly answered in our own time. The answer was given by Frege in 1884, in his *Grundlagen der Arithmetik*. Although the book is quite short, not difficult, and of the very

highest importance, it attracted almost no attention, and the definition of number which it contains remained practically unknown until it was rediscovered by the present author in 1901."

Aristotle, *Ethics* (Mr. Henry Higuera)

**Poetry of Wallace Stevens, Robert Frost,
Richard Wilbur** (Ms. Hannah Hintze)
Reading, recitation, and discussion of selected poems.

**Parmenides' poem (with attention to the Greek text),
Plato's *Parmenides*, excerpts from other dialogues
(on the forms)** (Mr. Peter Kalkavage)

Homer, *Odyssey* (Ms. Anita Kronsberg)

G. W. F. Hegel, *Philosophy of Nature* (Mr. Matthew Linck)

***Phenomenology of Perception*, Maurice Merleau-Ponty** (Ms. Patricia Locke)

Trans. Donald A. Landes, 2012. An engaged, embodied approach to phenomena, with a ground-clearing critique of Descartes and Kant. Topics addressed include the sensing body, space and time, the perceived world and the status of the human being intertwined within it.

Plutarch, *Lives* (Mr. Joseph Macfarland)

We will read between seven and ten of pairs of parallel lives, endeavoring to discern the distinct merits and faults of the regimes of Rome, Athens, and Sparta, as revealed in the virtues and vices of their distinguished statesmen. The selection will include several founders, men from the peak of those regimes, and those who attempted to preserve or restore the regimes when they were failing.

**Friedrich Schiller, *Letters on the Aesthetic
Education of Man* Hannah Arendt,
*The Human Condition*** (Mr. Gregory Recco)

Human practices ought to follow human understanding, one might think. But it must be acknowledged that the two realms of activity are often out of step with each another. Schiller and Arendt both take this apparently brute fact as something that is not accidental, but reveals essential and permanent features of the human situation. To state the matter broadly, the human being is a "historical" being. For Schiller, proper recognition of this fact leads one to recognize further the supreme importance of fine art and culture generally in humanity's time- and place-bound project of self-education and liberation. For Arendt, recognition that the human being is the sort of being whose nature is to inhabit its circumstances as an incompletely understood "condition" leads to an appreciation of the necessity for action as well as of what makes it difficult and fragile.

Plato, *Laws* (Mr. Eric Salem)

Thucydides (Mr. Adam Schulman)

F.von Hayek, *The Constitution of Liberty* (Mr. Mark Sinnett)

Shakespeare: Richard II; Henry IV, Parts I & II; Henry V (Mr. Walter Sterling)

Faulkner's "Snopes Trilogy" (Mr. Cary Stickney)

"The human heart and its dilemma", seen in the lives of some memorable characters. By a storyteller, of storytellers, for storytellers.

Three novels, one thousand pages: that will be about five meetings per novel. We will read them according to Faulkner's subdivisions as much as possible.

Husserl, *Crisis of European Sciences* (Mr. Jason Tipton)

Aquinas on Free Will (Mr. John Tomarchio)

Summa Theologiae, Prima pars, questions 75-83; & Prima secundae, questions 1-21.

Aristotle, *Metaphysics* (Mr. John White)

We will look especially at the being of 'things' (the main sense of being) and the principle of the knowledge of things (Principle of non-contradiction). This will include a brief look at the beginning of Hegel's *Logic*.

The films of Andrei Tarkovsky (Mr. Kenneth Wolfe)

Su Shi (also known as Su Dongpo), poetry and prose (in Chinese) (Mr. Cordell Yee)

Su Shi (1037-1101) is one of China's great polymaths, with achievements in politics, hydraulic engineering, politics, painting, and literature. We will read a selection of his poetry and prose all in classical Chinese. No prior knowledge of Chinese is necessary.