

Spring 2017 Graduate Institute Preceptorial Descriptions

All preceptorials are open to students in either of the spring segments: Philosophy & Theology or Politics & Society.

Thucydides, *History of the Peloponnesian War*

This vivid account of the war between Athenian and Spartan-led coalitions brings into question the nature of political power and the effects of that power on both victors and victims. Thucydides' narrative style makes the war (431-404 BC) happen before our eyes, incorporating breathtaking descriptions of battles, yes, but also analysis of political and strategic motivations. How do we get caught up in violence? What kinds of rhetoric do we employ to exert our power over others?

Required Editions: Please use one of these translations—

The Landmark Thucydides: A Comprehensive Guide to the Peloponnesian War, Robert B. Strassler (ed.) and Richard Crawley (translator) (Free Press, Touchstone ed. Edition 1998) [ISBN-10: 0684827905; ISBN-13: 978-0684827902].

Thucydides: The War of the Peloponnesians and the Athenians (Cambridge Texts in the History of Political Thought), Jeremy Mynott (translator) (Cambridge University Press, 1st edition) [ISBN-10: 0521612586; ISBN-13: 978-0521612586].

First Assignment: Book 1.

Tutor: Ms. Patricia Locke

Hans Jonas, *The Phenomenon of Life*

The initial concerns of the preceptorial will be what to make of, and how to account for, a distinction between animate and inanimate forms of existence. To frame our discussion we will look first at some sections of Aristotle's *De Anima* for a classical perspective, followed by a reading of Schrödinger's short, scientifically oriented text, *What is Life?* With these as background, our main focus will turn to *The Phenomenon of Life*, subtitled, "Toward a Philosophical Biology." Following Jonas, our interest will extend to what is distinctive about human life in particular, and the degree to which the associated philosophical questions can be accounted for in biological terms, developed from a phenomenological and existentialist perspective.

Recommended Editions:

Aristotle, *De Anima (On the Soul)*. Any translation with line numbers is acceptable.

Erwin Schrödinger, *What is Life?* (Cambridge University Press, reprint edition 2012) [ISBN-10: 1107604664; ISBN-13: 978-1107604667].

Hans Jonas, *The Phenomenon of Life*. (Northwestern University Press, 1st edition 2001) [ISBN-10: 0810117495; ISBN-13: 978-0810117495].

First Assignment: Aristotle, *De Anima*: Book II, Chapters 1 – 4.

Tutor: Mr. Tom Crouse

Herman Melville, *Moby Dick*

Reading *Moby Dick* is a quest. Your reading voyage will be shaped by what you bring, where you are going, and your sympathy or distaste for each character Melville depicts. Each reader takes the risk of journeying through the book and encountering the whale. The book transcends all genres: literature, theology, philosophy, politics, science, etc.

Recommended Edition: Herman Melville, *Moby Dick* (Norton Critical Edition, W. W. Norton & Company, 2nd edition, 2001) [ISBN-10: 0393972836; ISBN-13: 978-0393972832]. **Also okay:** The Wordsworth edition (Wordsworth Editions Ltd., 1999) [ISBN-10: 1853260088; ISBN-13: 978-1853260087] or the Northwestern Newberry edition (Northwestern University Press, 1st edition, 1988) [ISBN-10: 0810102692; ISBN-13: 978-0810102699].

Note from Mr. Townsend: Edition recommendation for *Moby Dick* is tricky. I recommend the Norton Critical Edition, which does its best to reproduce the American text with the legitimate variations of the English Edition (The Whale). The Norton Critical Edition is in print and available at the college bookstore. The Wordsworth edition appears to be all right; the Northwestern Newberry edition is standard but starts at about \$50 for a paperback.

First Assignment: Etymology, Extracts, and Chapters 1-9 and look at Jonah.

Tutor: Mr. David Townsend

John Milton, *Paradise Lost*

In *Paradise Lost*, considered the greatest epic poem in the English language, John Milton depicts the calamitous fall of Satan and the rebel angels, the creation of heaven and earth, and most famously the loss of Eden by Adam and Eve: “Things unattempted yet in prose or rhyme.” The poet addresses many of the questions most frequently raised by the biblical narrative, including the origin, nature, and purpose of human life and happiness; the relation of divine providence and foreknowledge to angelic and human freedom; and the character of legitimate sovereignty and a just society. We will read *Paradise Lost* in its entirety, as well as relevant selections from his other writings to support our common endeavor.

Recommended Text: John Milton, *Paradise Lost*, Merritt Y. Hughes, ed. (Hackett Classics edition, Hackett Publishing Co., 2003) [ISBN-10: 0872206726; ISBN-13: 978-0872206724].

Note from Mr. May: There are two Hackett Classics editions, one edited by Merritt Y. Hughes, the other by David Scott Kasten. The preferable one is by Merritt Hughes, which preserves Milton’s spelling where it affects his line and meter, e.g., Heav’n for heaven, advent’rous for adventurous, etc.; and his distinction between stressed and unstressed pronouns, e.g., hee for he, yee for ye, etc. There are copies of this edition available in the bookstore.

First Assignment: *Paradise Lost*, Milton’s note “The Verse” and Book I.

Tutor: Mr. Tom May

Ancient Greek: Xenophon, *Symposium* and Plato, *Symposium*

**Note: The Ancient Greek translation preceptorial meets on Tuesday and Thursday evenings from 7:30-9:30 pm.*

What did Socrates do at dinner parties? Okay, at drinking parties? If you believe his student Xenophon, Socrates competed with his fellow drinkers to display in speech whatever good thing each of them knew — in Socrates' case, the good of pimping. (Then he lost a beauty contest, and Dionysus and Ariadne appeared.) If you believe his student Plato, Socrates competed with his fellow drinkers to speak in praise of the god Eros. (Then a drunk Alcibiades stumbled in, and spoke in praise of Socrates.) Among these playful deeds and speeches, both Xenophon and Plato give us glimpses into the foundations and the limits of Socrates' philosophy: what he can do for himself and for others, and why he wants to.

We will read the whole of both Xenophon's *Symposium* and Plato's *Symposium* in English, and substantial parts of both works in the original Greek. We will also complete the last lessons in Mollin & Williamson's *An Introduction to Ancient Greek*, and continue to hold quizzes on grammar and parsing in each class.

Required Text: Xenophon, *Symposium* (Bryn Mawr Greek Commentaries edition) [ISBN-13: 978-1931019026; ISBN-10: 1931019029] and Plato, *Symposium* (Bryn Mawr Greek Commentaries edition) [ISBN-13: 978-0929524320; ISBN-10: 0929524322].

Also required: a complete English translation of each book, with the *recommended* but *not required* editions being Bartlett's for the Xenophon [ISBN-13: 978-0801472985; ISBN-10: 0801472989] and Benardete's for the Plato [ISBN-13: 978-0226042756; ISBN-10: 0226042758].

Plus, Alfred Mollin and Robert Williamson, *An Introduction to Ancient Greek* (University Press of America, revised 1997) [ISBN-10: 0761808531; ISBN-13: 978-0761808534].

First Assignment: The whole of Xenophon's *Symposium* in English.

Tutor: Mr. Jeff Black

(more)

**G.W.F. Hegel, *The Philosophy of History* and Friedrich Nietzsche,
The Use and Abuse of History
(and other texts)**

When did it happen?

At other colleges, context (history and historicism) is still all the rage. Yet we ban it from our seminars and tutorials – and with good reason, as such an approach has often and might well continue to undermine our engagement with texts and with one another. But can a more historical approach ever be fertile and in fact revealing? We will explore this with Hegel in *The Philosophy of History*, slightly framed by the *Phenomenology*, with Nietzsche in *The Use and Abuse of History*, with a chorus of *The Birth of Tragedy*, with Heidegger and “The Age of the World Picture” and his take on “The Origin of the Work of Art,” and late next spring with an afternoon in some park with Foucault. (Yes, it’s a partial and modified history tutorial for those who can’t take the original, if there is an original, and for those who have already but wish to reread and rethink some of its offerings from a different perspective.)

Required texts: G.W.F. Hegel, *The Philosophy of History* and Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Use and Abuse of History* – any editions okay. Also needed later in the term: Nietzsche’s *The Birth of Tragedy* and Martin Heidegger’s “The Age of the World Picture” and “The Origin of the Work of Art.” (The Heidegger can be found online. Foucault texts will be distributed to the class, or also can be found online.)

First Assignment: Hegel, *The Philosophy of History*, intro pages 1-27, and selections from Hegel’s *Phenomenology* (the latter will be distributed to the class prior to the first meeting).

Tutor: Mr. Howard Zeiderman