

Spring 2018 Graduate Institute Preceptorial Descriptions St. John's College - Annapolis

All preceptorials are open to students in any of the spring 2018 segments: History or Philosophy & Theology or Politics & Society.

Kierkegaard Preceptorial

Required Text: Kierkegaard, *Fear and Trembling* and *Philosophical Fragments*; Pascal, (selected) *Pensees*; Hans Jonas, essays ("Gnosticism, Existentialism, and Nihilism" and "Matter, Mind, and Creation: Cosmological Evidence and Cosmogonic Speculation")

Recommended Editions: *Fear and Trembling*, tr. Alastair Hannay, Penguin Classics; *Philosophical Fragments*, tr. Howard and Edna Hong, Princeton; *Pensees*, handout; Jonas essays, TBD

First Assignment: *Genesis* 12-22; *Fear and Trembling* Preface, Attunement, Speech in Praise of Abraham (pp.41-56 in Penguin ed.)

Tutor: Kathleen Blits

Dostoevsky's *Demons*

Description: *Demons*, first published in 1871-2, is Dostoevsky's penetrating and psychologically acute presentation of the ideologies that spread in Russia during the 19th century—the political and moral nihilism that they spawned and the conspiracies and assassinations that followed.

Required Text: The translation by Pevear and Volokhonsky is required.

First Assignment: Part 1, Chapter 1, "Instead of an Introduction."

Tutor: Pamela Kraus

An Introduction to Ancient Greek

Description: This is the second half of a year-long course in ancient Greek language through which students first learn ancient Greek, then apply that knowledge by translating texts. In this half of the preceptorial, our approach will be to translate Greek while thinking a lot about English and about language in general. We will also discuss the content, not just the language, of many passages and, eventually, of whole works that we read in the original Greek.

Required Text: Mollin and Williamson, *An Introduction to Ancient Greek*; another text to translate, to be determined.

First Assignment: to be determined

Tutor: Paul Ludwig

Whitehead Preceptorial

Description: Both of these books were based on a lecture series given by Whitehead during the time when he was developing his “philosophy of organism” or “process philosophy.” His approach to natural sciences was inspired by the new quantum theory, and permits application to what is called the “consistent histories” formalism of quantum mechanics. *Science and the Modern World*, in addition to being a novel tour of a wide range of philosophies and writers can also be regarded as the first draft of his greatest philosophical work, *Process and Reality*.

Required Text: Whitehead, *Science and the Modern World* and *Process and Reality*

First Assignment: to be determined

Tutor: Mark Sinnett

The Poetry of William Butler Yeats

Description: William Butler Yeats is a poet of terrible beauty. He may have the best ear of any poet writing in English in the past 150 years. His lyrics have been set to music, and it is hard not to break into chant when reading his poems, which seem to speak out of the page. Yeats explores love and death, politics and faith, and spiritual power in poems short and long. He wears masks of poet, philosopher, mystic, minstrel, and revolutionary leader. He is at home with classical Greek philosophy, the Celtic heritage of Ireland, and the universe of the spirit. An Irish Senator steeped in druidic lore, his complex rich vision illuminates all his work. It is not surprising that T. S. Eliot judged him to be “the greatest poet of our time.”

Recommended Text: We will read carefully a number of Yeats’ poems. W. B. Yeats. The Poems. Ed. Richard J. Finneran. This volume is published independently and also as Volume I in Collected Works.

First Assignment: “The Stolen Child”; “Down by the Sally Gardens”; “To the Rose upon the Rood of Time”; “The Rose of the World”, “The Lake Isle of Innisfree”.

Tutor: David Townsend