

Philosophy 210: Seminar in Greek Philosophy  
Winter 2016: **Wisdom in Ancient Philosophy**  
Monte Johnson and Don Rutherford  
W 4-7 pm, Philosophy Department Seminar Room

### **Course Description**

This seminar is intended as a survey of ancient views about wisdom as the end of philosophical inquiry, with special reference to the relation of theoretical and practical wisdom, and conceptions of theoretical wisdom as centered on the goal of becoming god-like or one with god. Our primary goal is to investigate how and why wisdom serves as a reference point across a broad range of different philosophies in antiquity and, more briefly, how this was challenged by later developments in philosophy. A secondary goal is to raise the issue of whether wisdom has a role to play in guiding philosophy today—a topic of which there has been surprisingly little discussion.

No prior background in ancient philosophy is supposed. Enrolled students will be required to write a take-home midterm exam, and a longer final paper in which one may explore the topic from a perspective of one's choosing (historical or contemporary).

### **Readings**

The readings for week 1 are available for download at:

[https://www.dropbox.com/sh/20r1wyf7p6pqdjt/AACC\\_V2wuDxcBq303dq5H9RXa?dl=0](https://www.dropbox.com/sh/20r1wyf7p6pqdjt/AACC_V2wuDxcBq303dq5H9RXa?dl=0)

Thereafter, readings will be uploaded to tritonlink.

Recommended purchase: Cicero, *On Moral Ends*, tr. R. Woolf (Cambridge 2000).

### **Evaluation**

- (1) In-class Participation;
- (2) Mid-term examination (take-home, open-book) due week 7 (in class);
- (3) Research term paper due Wednesday of week 11. We expect to consult with students individually at the end of week 8 regarding research projects.

## Schedule:

### Week 1: **Introduction: Wisdom, Then and Now**

- Cooper, J. (2012). *Pursuits of Wisdom* (Princeton), chaps. 1-2
- Ryan, S. (2014). "Wisdom," *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, Edward N. Zalta (ed.), URL = <<http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/win2014/entries/wisdom/>>.
- Baehr, J. (2012). "Two Types of Wisdom," *Acta Analytica* 27: 81-97.
- Jeste, D. V., Ardel, M., Blazer, D., Kraemer, H. C., Vaillant, G., & Meeks, T. W. (2010). "Expert consensus on characteristics of wisdom: A Delphi method study." *The Gerontologist* 50 (5), 668–680. doi:10.1093/geront/gnq022
- Meeks, T. W. and D. V. Jeste, 2009, "Neurobiology of wisdom: a literature overview." *Arch Gen Psychiatry*. 66(4):355-65. doi: 10.1001/archgenpsychiatry.2009.8.

### Week 2: **Socrates and Plato**

- Plato, *Symposium* 207e-209e; *Theaetetus* 172c-177c; *Republic* VII; *Timaeus* (selections), including the main passages referred to in the following:
- J. Cooper, *Pursuits of Wisdom*, chapter 2;
- J. Annas, "Becoming Like God: Ethics, Human Nature, and the Divine" in *Plato's Ethics, Old and New*, 52-71 (New York, 1999);
- D. Sedley, "The Ideal of Godlikeness." In *Plato: Ethics, Politics, Religion, and the Soul*. Vol. 2 of *Plato, Oxford Readings in Philosophy*, 309-328. New York: Oxford University Press, 1999.

### Week 3: **Aristotle's Exhortation to Philosophy**

- Aristotle, *Protrepticus*: a provisional reconstruction by D. S. Hutchinson and M. R. Johnson (handout; read the whole dialogue and the front matter)

### Week 4: **Aristotle's Ethics**

- Aristotle, *Metaphysics* Book I.1-2
- Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* Book I, VI, and X.6-8
- J. Cooper, *Pursuits of Wisdom*, chapter 3

#### Week 5: **Epicureanism**

- Epicurus, *Letter to Menoeceus*, *Principle Doctrines* (readings will be available in a packet on tritonlink)
- Cicero, *On Moral Ends*, Books I-II
- J. Cooper, *Pursuits of Wisdom*, chapter 5.1-4

#### Week 6: **Greek Stoicism**

- Readings from Diogenes Laertius and Arius Didymus (will be available in a packet on tritonlink)
- Cicero, *On Moral Ends*, Books III-IV
- R. Brouwer, *The Stoic Sage*, chapters 1-2
- J. Cooper, *Pursuits of Wisdom*, chapter 4

#### Week 7: **Roman Stoicism**

- Seneca, *On the Happy Life* and *On the Shortness of Life* and *Letters* (selection will be available in a packet on tritonlink)
- Epictetus, *Discourses* (selections will be available in a packet on tritonlink)

#### Week 8: **Academic and Pyrrhonian Scepticism**

- Cicero, *On Moral Ends* Book V
- Sextus Empiricus (selections will be available in a packet on tritonlink)
- J. Cooper, *Pursuits of Wisdom*, chapter V.5-7

#### Week 9: **Christianity**

- Augustine, *Confessions* Book III
- Augustine, *City of God* Books XIV and XIX
- P. Hadot, *Philosophy as a Way of Life* (selections)
- P. Hadot, *What is Ancient Philosophy* (selections)

#### Week 10: **Future Prospects**

- Julia Annas, *Intelligent Virtue*
- Valerie Tiberius, *The Reflective Life: Living Wisely With Our Limits*
- TBD