

# PHILOSOPHY 102: HELLENISTIC PHILOSOPHY

Professor Monte Johnson

UCSD 2019 Spring  
MWF 1-1:50pm SOLIS 111

[H&SS 8009](#) Office hours: M 3:30-4pm and W 2:30-3:30  
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## COURSE DESCRIPTION

The works of the Cynics, Epicureans, Stoics, and Sceptics have been lost, but their ideas survive in fragments quoted in later authors, and in extant works of Roman writers. We will read biographical accounts in Diogenes Laertius (III C.E.) and fragments of the Greek philosophers of the Hellenistic period, followed by some ethical and political writings of Cicero (106 - 43 B.C.E) and Seneca (4 B.C.E. - 65 C.E.). The aim of the readings is to get an idea of the range of Hellenistic ethical theories, as well as the different approaches to some more concrete ethical problems, such as the relationship between ethics and physics and logic, the relative value of pleasure and virtue, consolation and the control of emotion, and techniques of obtaining of tranquility and happiness.

## OBJECTIVES

1. Learn how to read, interpret, discuss, cite, quote, and paraphrase the fundamental doctrines of the Epicureans, Stoics and Sceptics in English translation.
2. Learn the ways that Greek philosophy was transformed by Roman writers for their own purposes, and to appreciate Cicero and Seneca as literary archetypes for later legal, ethical, and social-political discourse. Appreciate the enduring influence of Hellenistic philosophy on the history of philosophy and science.
3. Conduct original research on Hellenistic Philosophy in relation to your own interests. Learn to utilize both primary and secondary sources in representing and criticizing philosophical views. Present your ideas and give feedback to your peers, and receive helpful criticism from them.

## REQUIRED TEXTS (available at UC San Diego Bookstore)

- *Hellenistic Philosophy: introductory readings* / translated with introduction and notes by Brad Inwood and L. P. Gerson. Second edition. Indianapolis, 1997.
- *Cicero: On Moral Ends*. Translated by R. Woolf. Cambridge, 2001.
- *Seneca: Dialogues and Essays*. Translated by J. Davie. Oxford, 2007.
- *Supplemental Readings* (PDF downloadable from [tritoned.ucsd.edu](http://tritoned.ucsd.edu))

## EVALUATION (see separate evaluation form, which must be completed and submitted)

This course uses a method of evaluation called *specifications grading*. All modules for the course are graded pass/fail on the basis of the written specifications for each module. Final grades (including P/NP grades) are computed on the basis of the number of modules completed. All written work for the entire course, including copies on which feedback has been written, must be retained and submitted as a package at the end of the final exam (June 13, 2019, 2:30pm, no early or late submissions accepted). Attendance at all 30 meetings is mandatory and participation in the discussion is graded. See evaluation form for policy on absence and late submission of work.

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### SCHEDULE

Note: All readings are in the required textbooks unless otherwise noted. All readings should be done prior to the meeting during which they will be discussed. Bring textbooks to class and be prepared to ask questions or make comments about the material. If possible, consult alternate translations and editions.

#### Meeting (2019)            Topics, Readings, and Deadlines

##### Week 1: Overview and Background

1. April 1                    Syllabus and Evaluation
2. April 3                    Historical and Philosophical overview  
Research resources and techniques in Hellenistic Philosophy  
Reading: Bibliography (PDF)
3. April 5                    Democritus and the Atomists  
Reading: Diogenes Laertius IX.6.34-49  
(pp.1-7 of *Supplemental Readings*)  
**Select and acquire book for scholar assignment!**

##### Week 2: The Socratic Circle; Cynicism, and Hedonism

4. April 8                    Socrates and the Socratic Circle  
Reading: Diogenes Laertius II.5.18-47  
(pp.8-15 of *Supplemental Readings*)
5. April 10                    Diogenes of Sinope and the Cynics  
Reading: Diogenes Laertius VI.2.20-80  
(pp.16-24 of *Supplemental Readings*)
6. April 12                    Aristippus of Cyrene and the Cyrenaics  
Reading: Diogenes Laertius II.8.65-103  
(pp.25-32 of *Supplemental Readings*)  
**Student Information Form Due!**

##### Week 3: Inquiry and Scepticism

7. April 15                    Aristotle of Stagira and Questions about *eudaimonia*  
Reading: *Nicomachean Ethics* I  
(pp.33-45 of *Supplemental Readings*)
8. April 17\*                    Arcesilaus, Carneades and Academic Scepticism  
Reading: Pp. 261-284 of *Hellenistic Philosophy*
9. April 19\*                    Pyrrho and Pyrrhonian Scepticism  
Reading: Pp.285-296, 302-324, 387-398 of *Hellenistic Philosophy*

\*Guest Lecturer: Dr. Blythe Greene

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### Week 4: Epicureanism

10. April 22 Introduction to Epicureans  
Reading: pp.3-45 of *Hellenistic Philosophy*
11. April 24 Epicurean Ethics  
Reading: Cicero, *On Moral Ends* Book 1  
and Epicurus, Letter to Menoeceus  
(pp.46-48 of *Supplemental Readings*)
12. April 26 Criticism of Epicurean Ethics  
Reading: Cicero, *On Moral Ends* Book 2  
**Scholar assignment due (hard copy only).**

### Week 5: Stoicism

13. April 29 Introduction to Stoics  
Reading: pp. 110-178 of *Hellenistic Philosophy*
14. May 1 Stoic Ethics  
Reading: Cicero, *On Moral Ends* Book 3
15. May 3 Criticism of Stoic Ethics  
Reading: Cicero, *On Moral Ends* Book 4  
**Research Essay Draft 1 Due (hard copy only).**

### Week 6: Academic Scepticism about Ethics

16. May 6 Academic Ethics  
Reading: Cicero, *On Moral Ends* Book 5
17. May 8 Debate  
Students will divide into groups of Stoics, Epicureans, and Academics, and debate the relative merits of their philosophical Schools.
18. May 10 Scholar Presentations  
**Rehearse your presentation to be spoken within 5 minutes.**  
**Scholar Assignment Revision Due (electronic copy only).**

### Week 7: Student Presentations

19. May 13 Scholar Presentations  
**Rehearse your presentation to be spoken within 5 minutes.**
20. May 15 Scholar Presentations
21. May 17 Scholar Presentations  
**Research Essay Draft 2 Due (hard copy only).**

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### Week 8: Seneca and the Stoic Theory of Emotion

22. May 20 Introduction to Seneca  
Reading: Seneca, *On the Happy Life*  
and *Letter to Lucillus 1* (p.49 of supplemental readings)
23. May 22 Anger  
Reading: Seneca, *On Anger III*  
and *On Anger I-III*: pp.3-96 of the text available at:  
<http://roger.ucsd.edu/record=b7218393~S9>
24. May 24 Consolation  
Reading: Seneca, *Consolation to Marcia*, *Consolation to Helvia*

### Week 9: Seneca on Politics and Tranquility

- May 27 MEMORIAL DAY—NO CLASS
25. May 29 Mercy  
Reading: Seneca, *On Mercy*
26. June 31 Tranquility and Shortness of Life  
Reading: Seneca, *On Tranquility of Mind*, *On the Shortness of Life*

### Week 10: Student Presentations

27. June 3 Final Research Presentations  
**Rehearse your presentation to be spoken within 5 minutes.**
28. June 5 Final Research Presentations
29. June 7 Final Research Presentations

### Finals Week: Student Presentations and Submission of Work

30. June 13 (Th) 11:30am-2:30pm
- Final Research Presentations  
**Final Examination Due**  
**Research Essay Final Draft Due (hard copy only).**  
**Portfolio and Completed Evaluation form due.**