

# Ancient Philosophy After Aristotle (PHL302H1S)

## Stoicism, Scepticism, & Epicureanism: Philosophies of Life

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Meetings on Fridays from 12:00 to 15:00 in OISE 5240. Course website on Quercus, at [q.utoronto.ca](http://q.utoronto.ca). Office hours on Mondays from 13:30 to 15:30, in person in JHB 424 or online by text/voice/video chat via Bb Collaborate on Quercus. To meet with me outside of my regularly scheduled office hours, just send me an email with a few times that'd work for you.

### *Course description*

This class will explore ancient Stoicism, Scepticism, and Epicureanism, the three major philosophical movements of the Hellenistic period (roughly 322 BCE to 200 CE). These movements are chiefly distinguished by their different conceptions of human happiness: for the Epicurean the key to happiness is pleasure, for the Stoic it is virtue, and for the Sceptic it is the suspension of judgement. Yet these movements were more than mere ethical theories; crucially, each also conceived of itself as a “philosophy of life”: a comprehensive philosophical practice designed to guide one through life’s twists and turns. How ought we understand these opposing philosophies? How do we assess their relative merits? And what relevance might these ancient philosophies of life have for our ethical lives today?

### *Course learning objectives*

By the end of this course, you should be able to...

- explain the **key ideas & arguments** of Stoicism, Scepticism, & Epicureanism
- apply these ancient philosophies of life to **everyday ethical situations**
- analyze & evaluate the **merits** of these ancient philosophies of life
- **help others** understand these ancient philosophies of life & how to adopt them
- **personally appreciate** what it means to adopt philosophy as a way of life

### Course contract

This course is a collaboration between me, you, and your classmates. You will be regularly called upon to actively participate in class discussions and other activities, and your contributions will directly influence what we cover in class. **It is not necessary that you agree with everything I or anyone else says in this class, but it is necessary that you always listen and respond with respect.** With this in mind, I put forth the following “course contract”, applying to everyone in the class (students and instructor alike):

- we have the responsibility to **contribute** to the collective learning process (which includes asking questions when we’re not understanding something)
- we have the responsibility to **be receptive** to other points of view than our own
- we have the right to **dissent or differ** from the instructor and others in class
- we have the responsibility to **welcome challenges** to our own opinions, and to support our claims with further reasons or be honest when we don’t have any
- we have the right to **personal dignity**, which at no point should be infringed upon in any way by the conduct of others

### Evaluation

Your grade for the course will be determined by the following components: micro-assignments (informal reading exercises, done before each class meeting); entrance/exit tickets (informal writing exercises, done at the start or end of each class meeting); in-class and out-of-class engagement (determined via periodic self-assessments); one paper (developed in several stages); a journaling assignment; and a final exam. The full grade breakdown is as follows:

| <i>Component</i>            | <i>Weight</i> | <i>Due date</i>                        |
|-----------------------------|---------------|--|
| Micro-assignments           | 10%           | before each class                      |
| Entrance tickets            | 5%            | at the start of each class             |
| Exit tickets                | 5%            | at the end of each class               |
| Engagement self-assessments | 10%           | 1/25, 2/15, 3/15, 4/5                  |
| Paper presubmission         | 0%            | 2/4 (required to complete peer review) |
| Paper peer review           | 5%            | 2/11                                   |
| Paper first draft           | 10%           | 2/18                                   |
| Paper final draft           | 15%           | 3/18                                   |
| Philosophical journals      | 10%           | 2/25, 4/1                              |
| Final exam                  | 30%           | final exam period                      |

### *Texts*

You are required to purchase the following texts for this course:

- Brad Inwood & L. P. Gerson, *Hellenistic Philosophy* (Hackett, 9780872203785) – \$25
- A. A. Long, *How To Be Free* (Princeton, 9780691177717) – \$22
- Julia Annas, *Cicero: On Moral Ends* (Cambridge, 9780521669016) – \$40

All other required readings can be downloaded from: [cr.library.utoronto.ca/studenthome/id/281148](http://cr.library.utoronto.ca/studenthome/id/281148)

### *Technology in the classroom*

During our class meetings, **portable electronic devices** (laptops, smartphones, tablets, etc.) **may only be used for the purposes of taking notes or completing in-class assignments and activities.** You may also use an electronic device to reference points from the day's readings; but if you choose to do so, please keep the device closed or off when not in use. Whenever you are using your device, remember to be sensitive to the fact that the use of such devices can be distracting to those around you.

### *Academic Integrity*

One of the aims of this (and really, *any* university-level) course is to develop your ability to express yourself intelligently and responsibly. Part of what expressing yourself intelligently and responsibly involves is situating your own views in relation to others'. Plagiarizing others' views, or failing to acknowledge views you are drawing on, runs counter to this aim. Because of this, plagiarism and all other forms of academic dishonesty will be treated with the greatest severity in this course. Students should make themselves familiar with the University of Toronto's Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters; see [artsci.utoronto.ca/osai/students](http://artsci.utoronto.ca/osai/students).

### *Accessibility*

Students with diverse learning styles and needs are welcome in this course. If you have a disability and/or health consideration that may require accommodation, please approach me and/or Accessibility Services at 416-978-8060 or [accessibility.utoronto.ca](http://accessibility.utoronto.ca).

### *Email*

Questions should ideally be brought to me in person, either at lecture or during my office hours. If you would prefer to correspond via email, my email address is [willie.costello@mail.utoronto.ca](mailto:willie.costello@mail.utoronto.ca).

## Schedule

Readings can be found in the required course texts (as noted) or through Library Course Reserves, accessible via Quercus or at [cr.library.utoronto.ca/studenthome/id/281148](http://cr.library.utoronto.ca/studenthome/id/281148).

| DATE | TOPIC & READINGS  |   |
|------|---|---|
| 1/11 | Introduction: (Ancient) philosophy as a way of life   |   |
| 1/18 | Ancient Epicureanism  |   |
|      | Epicurus, <i>Letter to Menoecus</i> & <i>Principal Doctrines</i>                                    | Inwood & Gerson: 28–36                  |
| 1/25 | Ancient Stoicism  |   |
|      | Epictetus, <i>Encheiridion</i>  | Long: 3–96                              |
| 2/1  | Ancient Scepticism  |   |
|      | Sextus Empiricus, <i>Outlines of Pyrrhonism</i>   | Inwood & Gerson: 302–308                |
| 2/4  | <b>PAPER PRESUBMISSION DUE</b>  |   |
| 2/8  | Ancient Stoicism  |   |
|      | Epictetus, <i>Discourses</i>   Chrysippus, on fate  | Long: 97–151   Inwood & Gerson: 182–186 |
| 2/11 | <b>PEER REVIEW DUE</b>  |   |
| 2/15 | Ancient Scepticism  |   |
|      | Sextus Empiricus, <i>Outlines of Pyrrhonism</i>   | Inwood & Gerson: 325–339, 387–397       |
| 2/18 | <b>PAPER FIRST DRAFT DUE</b>  |   |
| 2/22 | UNIVERSITY READING WEEK; NO CLASS   |   |
| 2/25 | <b>PHILOSOPHICAL JOURNAL #1 DUE</b>   |   |
| 3/1  | Reflections on Epicureanism   |   |
|      | Cicero, <i>On Moral Ends</i> I & II   | Annas: 3–64                             |
| 3/8  | Reflections on Stoicism   |   |
|      | Cicero, <i>On Moral Ends</i> III & IV   | Annas: 65–116                           |
| 3/15 | Reflections on Scepticism   |   |
|      | Ribeiro, ‘Is Pyrrhonism Psychologically Possible?’   Thorsrud, ‘Is the Examined Life Worth Living?’ |   |
| 3/18 | <b>PAPER FINAL DRAFT DUE</b>  |   |
| 3/22 | CLASS CANCELLED FOR ANNUAL TORONTO WORKSHOP IN ANCIENT PHILOSOPHY                                   |   |
| 3/29 | Hellenistic themes today  |   |
|      | Crisp, ‘Well-Being’   Wolf, ‘Moral Saints’  |   |
| 4/1  | <b>PHILOSOPHICAL JOURNAL #2 DUE</b>   |   |
| 4/5  | Hellenistic themes today  |   |
|      | Friedman, ‘Why Suspend Judging?’  |   |

*Further information on course assessments*

- » **Micro-assignments:** Before each class you are to complete an exercise relating to the day's required reading – a “micro-assignment”. The purpose of these micro-assignments is: (a) to deepen your appreciation of the readings; (b) to enhance our classroom discussions of the readings; and (c) to prepare you for the paper assignment and the final exam.

**Micro-assignments must be submitted online by 11:00 A.M. before each class meeting.** Micro-assignments submitted after this deadline will receive no credit. **Each micro-assignment counts for 1% of your final grade, up to 10%.** You will have, in total, eleven opportunities to submit micro-assignments over the course of the term (there is no micro-assignment for the first class). This means that **you can skip one micro-assignment without penalty.** (You do not need to tell me when you're choosing not to submit a micro-assignment.) Full credit for micro-assignments is awarded when the student has made an honest attempt to complete the task; determination of this criterion is at the discretion of the instructor.

- » **Entrance/exit tickets:** At the start and end of each class you will be asked to write a short reflection relating to the day's material – an “entrance ticket” and an “exit ticket”. Your reflections can be written and submitted either through Quercus or on an index card that will be provided to you in class. The purpose of these tickets is: (a) to provide you an opportunity to review and reflect on what you've learned; and (b) to maintain a record of class attendance.

**Entrance/exit tickets must be submitted at the start/end of each class meeting.** You will have, in total, eleven opportunities to hand in tickets over the course of the term (one for each class meeting), and each ticket counts for 0.5% of your final grade, up to 5% each. This means that **you can skip one entrance/exit ticket without penalty.** Full credit for entrance/exit tickets is awarded when the student has made an honest attempt to respond to the assigned prompts; determination of this criterion is at the discretion of the instructor.

- » **Engagement self-assessments:** You are expected to actively engage in this course, not only during class, but also outside of class, both on the course website, online more broadly, and in real life. (You will be provided in advance with a list of example ways of engaging, as guidance.) Four times throughout the term, you will be asked to assess your engagement in the course. The purpose of these self-assessments is: (a) to provide you an opportunity to critically reflect on how you're engaging; (b) to allow for and encourage diverse modes of course engagement; and (c) to foster a cooperative learning community.

**Self-assessments must be submitted online by end of day on the day they are due.** Self-assessments submitted after this deadline will receive no credit. **Each self-assessment counts**

for 3% of your final grade, up to 10%. You will have, in total, four opportunities to submit self-assessments over the course of the term. Each self-assessment will consist of four questions:

1. How have you tried to engage **yourself** in this course?
2. How have you tried to engage and support **others** in or through this course?
3. What are some ways you could **improve** your engagement in this course?
4. On a scale from 0 to 3, how would you rate your overall engagement in this course?

In general, **your grade for each self-assessment will match the rating you give yourself on question (4)**, so long as the rating is warranted by the evidence provided in your answers to questions (1) and (2). Determination of this criterion is at the discretion of the instructor.

» **Paper:** Over the course of the term you will develop a single analytical essay over two drafts. The first draft will have you analyze an argument from a text and present an objection to that argument; the final draft will have you revise and expand the first draft, adding a response to your objection and an evaluation of that response. You will have a choice of three assigned topics (one for each of our Hellenistic movements). The purpose of this assignment is: (a) to deepen your understanding of the key ideas and arguments of one Hellenistic movement; and (b) to hone your skills in argument reconstruction, textual analysis, philosophical evaluation, and written expression. The timeline for this assignment is as follows:

- By 2/4, you are to submit an initial version of your first draft – a “presubmission”. This presubmission will not be graded by me, but it will be assigned to and evaluated by one of your peers for their peer review assignment, allowing you to see and incorporate their feedback before you submit your first draft.
- By 2/11, you are to complete your peer review of another student’s presubmission, which will be automatically assigned to you on Quercus. To complete your peer review, evaluate your peer’s paper according to the provided qualitative grading rubric and leave at least one substantive comment on the paper itself.
- By 2/18, you are to submit the first draft of your paper.
- By 3/4, you will receive my feedback on your first draft, which will advise you on how your paper can be improved for its final draft. Your grade on the first draft, however, will be withheld until your final draft is submitted.
- By 3/18, you are to submit the final draft of your paper.

**Your paper assignments must be submitted online by end of day on the day they are due** (or, for all you night owls, by 8 A.M. the following morning), in PDF format.

**No late submissions will be accepted for the paper presubmission assignment.** Though this assignment does not count toward any portion of your final grade, **failure to submit this assignment on time will result in you not being able to complete the peer review assignment.**

For the other paper assignments, **late submissions will be docked 5% for each 24-hour period between the due date and when they are handed in** (unless accompanied by valid medical documentation). Late assignments may be submitted up to 7 days after the due date; any papers not received by this time will automatically receive a 0. Assignment instructions and formatting guidelines will be provided on the course website.

» **Philosophical journal:** In addition to all the reading, writing, and thinking about Hellenistic philosophy we will be doing in this course, we will also be learning about our three philosophies of life by actually putting them into practice, that is, by trying to follow these philosophies of life in our own daily lives. Instructions on how to live according to our ancient philosophies of life will be provided to you. You may put these philosophies into practice at your own pace, whenever suits you best, but twice during the term you are to submit a journal documenting and reflecting on your experiences. The timeline is as follows:

- Journal #1 (due 2/25): one daily reflection each on Epicureanism, Stoicism, and Scepticism, plus one overall reflection on what you've learned from your experience of putting these different philosophies of life into practice
- Journal #2 (due 4/1): three daily reflections on the school of your choice, plus one overall reflection on what you've learned from your experience of putting this particular philosophy of life into more in-depth practice

For your reflections you are free to use whichever media format suits you best: you may submit written reflections, voice note recordings, video diaries, a blog, a Twitter feed, a comic – almost anything really! Your daily reflections may either chronicle your experiences throughout the day as they occur, or present a retrospective of the day's events.

**Your journal assignments must be submitted online by end of day on the day they are due** (or, for all you night owls, by 8 A.M. the following morning). **Late submissions will be docked 5% for each 24-hour period between the due date and when they are handed in** (unless accompanied by valid medical documentation). Late assignments may be submitted up to 7 days after the due date; any journals not received by this time will automatically receive a 0.

» **Final exam:** Your final exam will consist of a series of questions assessing your ability to apply our ancient philosophies of life to novel ethical situations. We will practice answering this kind of question each week in class.

*Bibliography of assigned readings*

- Annas, J. (2001). *Cicero: On Moral Ends*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Crisp, R. (2006). 'Well-Being.' In 'Reasons and the Good,' chap. 4, 98–125. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Friedman, J. (2017). 'Why Suspend Judging?' *Noûs* 51(2): 302–326.
- Inwood, B. and Gerson, L. P. (1997). *Hellenistic Philosophy: Introductory Readings*. Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, second edn.
- Long, A. A. (2018). *How To Be Free: An Ancient Guide to the Stoic Life*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Ribeiro, B. (2002). 'Is Pyrrhonism Psychologically Possible?' *Ancient Philosophy* 22(2): 319–331.
- Thorsrud, H. (2003). 'Is the Examined Life Worth Living? A Pyrrhonian Alternative.' *Apeiron* 36(3): 229–249.
- Wolf, S. (1982). 'Moral Saints.' *Journal of Philosophy* 79(8): 419–439.