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Office Hours: Tues 12–2
and by appointment

Spring 2010
Rutgers University
Tues/Thurs 2:15—3:35
Thomson 101

RELIGION 393:01: THE ORIGINS OF WESTERN MORALITY

The course treats the ways that early Christian groups appropriated Jewish and Hellenistic moral traditions and reshaped them according to their developing interests. These interests came to shape the moral language, laws, politics, social codes and sociality of Christian Europe and America. The course will pay particular attention to the roles of Hellenistic philosophy, the Greek translation of the Hebrew Bible, the letters of Paul, the teachings attributed to Jesus in writings from the end of the first century C. E., and the development of ascetic practices and ideology. Issues of importance to the course include the variety of ancient options available for thinking about ethical psychology, the concept of *porneia* (harlotry) and the attack on traditional Mediterranean religion, the family/household and opposition to it, wealth/poverty, slavery, sexual ethics and gender norms.

Requirements for the Course:

1. Attendance is mandatory. In the case of illness or emergency, please inform the instructor as soon as possible. In the case of more long-term illnesses or other issues, please provide a note from a health-care provider, or, if appropriate, from a dean. It is the student's responsibility to inform the instructor of any illness or other absence and to make up all missed work. After the first two absences, additional absences may result in a deduction of 1/3 of your overall grade (e.g. B to B- etc.). *If you miss a class it is your responsibility to get any and all relevant notes or handouts and to keep up with relevant announcements and to hand in any assignments.*
2. Reading responses: for (almost) every class, students will complete a reading response for the assigned readings and post it to Sakai before class begins. Responses should normally be about 100 words and include at least two questions about the reading. Students may choose not to hand in up to 4 reading responses without it negatively affecting their grades; alternatively, the instructor will drop the lowest 4 grades. The responses will be graded pass or fail according to whether or not they demonstrate knowledge of the reading and effort to understand it.
3. Exams: A mid-term and a final exam covering the second half of the course. The final is scheduled for Monday, May 10, 8:00 a.m. - 11:00 a.m. in our normal meeting room.
4. Paper: A 6–8 page paper on a topic and set of readings read and discussed in the second half of the course. Due on the last day of scheduled classes for the University (Monday May 3rd).

Assignments will be weighted roughly as follows:

- a. Midterm 25%
- b. Final 25%
- c. Paper 25%
- d. Reading Responses and Participation 25%

Books Required for Purchase:

Kathy Gaca, *The Making of Fornication: Eros, Ethics, and Political Reform in Greek Philosophy and Early Christianity*
Anthony Long, *Hellenistic Philosophy*
The Harper-Collins Study Bible

Other Resources: Readings that are in addition to the textbooks will be available on Sakai. For texts of the Hellenistic philosophers and critical discussion, see A. A. Long and D. Sedley, *Hellenistic Philosophy: Translations of the Principal Sources, with Philosophical Commentary* (vol. 1).

Schedule of Topics and Readings

1/19 Tues Introduction to the Course

PART 1: TRADITIONAL VALUES AND THEIR CRITICS

1/21 Thurs Ancient Cities, Families/Households, and Their Power
1 Cor 7; Mark 3:31–5; Matt 10:34–41; Luke 14:25–7, 8:19–21, 9:59–62, 18:28–30; Col 3:18–4:1; Eph 5:21–6:9; Titus 2:3–9

Note that these texts are not all from the same time period and are not all written by the same authors (consult the historical order and time-line handouts for specifics). Though all of these texts come from the later Christian canon, they do not represent a single, unchanging, and static Christian message about the family but instead show significant variation and divergence on many points. As you read, make notes about the persons/roles/relations addressed in each of the NT texts and think about how this compares to the modern so-called nuclear family. Who counts as members of a household in antiquity? What ideas about the family are upheld, redefined, or challenged in each of these texts?

1/26 Tues The Traditional Mediterranean Family and Its Logic:
Xenophon's *Oeconomicus*, selections (Sakai)

Xenophon's *Oeconomicus*, likely dating to about 360 bce, is a dialogue about household management that represents one view on the ideal structure and maintenance of a traditional Mediterranean household. As you read, make notes about the persons/roles/relations addressed in the text. What is the role of the head of household and how does this relate to women and slaves? What kinds of assumptions and values does the writer seem to hold in relation to women, slaves, and the head of household? What kind of work is done in the household/estate and who does it?

1/28 Thurs The Cynic Critique of Traditional Morality and the Beginnings of
Hellenistic Philosophy
Diogenes Laertius, *Lives of the Eminent Philosophers: On Diogenes, Crates, and Hipparchia*; Long, 1–13

With what traditional social values and norms do the Cynics take issue? What types of training (*askêsis*) do they practice? The Cynics have sometimes been criticized as mainly

attacking or criticizing others, without developing much of an alternative philosophy.
Does this critique seem to have any merit? Why or why not?

PART 2: THE STRUCTURED SELF: THE EPICUREANS AND THE STOICS

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| 2/2 | Tues | Epicureanism Tad Brennan, "The Ancient Philosophical Background," 21–34 (Sakai) Long, 14–41 |
| 2/4 | Thurs | Epicureanism Long, 42–74 |
| 2/9 | Tues | Stoicism Long, 107–175 (you may skim 121–147) |
| 2/11 | Thurs | Stoicism Graver, <i>Stoicism and Emotion</i> , 15–60. |
| 2/16 | Tues | Stoicism Graver, <i>Stoicism and Emotion</i> , 133–171 |
| 2/18 | Thurs | Plato on Eros and Social/Political Theory Gaca, <i>Making of Fornication</i> , 1–11; 23–58 |
| 2/23 | Tues | Stoics on Eros and Social/Political Theory Hesiod, <i>Theogony</i> (Sakai) Gaca, 59–93 |

PART 3: JEWISH TRADITIONS, APOCALYPSES, AND DIVINE COMMAND ETHICS

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| 2/25 | Thurs | Judean Epic, Divine Law, Cultic Purity and Holiness Exodus 34:1–35:19; Deut 9:1–12:32; Lev 11:1–22:33 Saul Olyan, <i>Rites and Rank: Hierarchy in Biblical Representations of Cult</i> , 3–14 |
| 3/2 | Tues | Judean Apocalyptic Traditions 1 Enoch 1–32 (Sakai); Daniel 7–12 |
| 3/4 | Thurs | Philosophical Allegory and the Jewish Creation Story Genesis 1–6:4 Philo, <i>On the Creation of the World according to Moses</i> (selections; Sakai) |
| 3/9 | Tues | <u>Mid-Term Examination</u> |

PART 4: JUDAISM, CHRISTIANITY, AND GREEK MORAL TRADITIONS

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| 3/11 | Thurs | Philo: The Platonic and Pythagorean Revivals and Divine Law Gaca, 94–116, 190–217 |
| 3/16 | Tues | <u>No class, Spring Recess</u> |

- 3/18 Thurs No class, Spring Recess
- 3/23 Tues Introducing Paul and Early Christianity
1 Thessalonians; Galatians
Stowers, “Paul,” *History of the Western Philosophy of Religion*, 1–10
- 3/25 Thurs Paul on Self-Mastery
1 Corinthians
Stowers, “Self-Mastery” in *Paul in the Greco-Roman World*, 524–50
- 3/30 Tues Paul and Self-Mastery in Romans
Romans 1–8
Wasserman, “Paul Among the Philosophers? The Case of Sin in Romans 6–8,” *JSNT* 30.4 (2008) 387–415; you may skim 388–393.
- 4/1 Thurs The Question of Paul and Hellenistic Philosophy
Romans 9–16
Stowers, “Does Pauline Christianity Resemble a Hellenistic Philosophy?” in *Paul Beyond the Judaism/Hellenism Divide*, 81–102
- 4/6 Tues Paul, Porneia and the LXX according to Gaca
Gaca, 119–159.
- 4/8 Thurs Paul, Porneia and the LXX according to Gaca
Gaca, 160–189.
- 4/13 Tues Introducing Jesus and the Gospel Traditions
Mark; Infancy narratives of Matthew and Luke (Matt 1–2; Luke 1–2)
Synoptic Exercise (Sakai)
- 4/15 Thurs Jesus as Teacher of Ethics According to the Synoptic Gospels
Matthew 5:1–7:27 (sermon on the Mt); Luke 6:17–49 (sermon on the plane)
Mark 4:10–12 and Matt 13:10–17 (on parables)
Stowers, “The Gospel of Matthew and Stoic Ethics” 1–28 (Sakai)
- 4/20 Tues Tatian, Clement and Epiphanes
Gaca, 221–305
- 4/22 Thurs From Sages to Saints: Origen and Asceticism
Peter Brown, *The Body and Society*, 160–177 (on Origen; Sakai)
- 4/27 Tues Augustine: Asceticism and Sexual Asceticism
Brown, *The Body and Society*, 387–427 (on Augustine; Sakai)
- 4/29 Thurs Augustine on Philosophers, Marriage, and Sex
Selections from *The City of God* and *On Marriage* (Sakai).