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Office Hours: Wed 3:00-5:00 and by appointment

Fall 2011
Rutgers University
MW 7:15-8:35
Loree 131, Douglas Campus

THE ORIGINS OF WESTERN MORALITY (REL 314)

The course treats the ways that early Christian groups used Jewish and Greek moral traditions and reshaped them according to their developing interests. These interests came to shape the moral language, laws, politics, and social codes 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 CE, 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 and participation must demonstrate knowledge of assigned readings. 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. 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.*
2. Weekly response papers, due at the beginning of each Wednesday class. Response papers are nothing to stress out about—they are short (1–2 pages double spaced, 1-inch margins, Times New Roman font), and should simply explore a topic which you found particularly interesting from the week's readings. Out of 13 Wednesdays, you are required to write 10 responses. This means you can skip three Wednesdays.
3. A mid-term and a final exam covering the second half of the course.
4. A 10–12 page research paper on a topic to be selected by the student and a 10 minute presentation and outline of the paper topic to the class at the end of the semester. A draft of the paper will be due the day before each presentation.

Assignments will be weighted roughly as follows

- a. Midterm 25%
- b. Final 25%
- c. Paper 30%
- d. Reading Responses and participation 20%

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

9/7 Wed Introduction to the Course: Ethics and Morals

Part 1: Traditional Values and Their Critics

9/12 Mon Ancient Cities, Families/Households, and Their Power
Mark 3:31–5; Matt 10:34–41; Luke 14:25–7, 8:19–21, 9:59–62, 18:28–30; 1 Cor 7; 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?

9/14 Wed 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?

9/19 Mon Cynic Critiques of Traditional Morality & 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 characterized as libertine amorality, radical individualists, or as developing only a negative philosophy. Do these characterizations have merit? Why or why not?

Part 2: The Structured Self: The Epicureans and the Stoics

- 9/21 Wed Epicureanism
Brennan, “The Ancient Philosophical Background,” in *The Stoic Life*, 21–34 (Sakai)
Long, 14–41
- 9/26 Mon Epicureanism
Long, 42–74
- 9/28 Wed Stoicism
Long, 107–175 (you may skim 121–147)
- 10/3 Mon Stoicism
Graver, *Stoicism and Emotion*, 15–84. Optional: Long, 175–209
- 10/5 Wed Stoicism
Graver, *Stoicism and Emotion*, 85–108; 133–171
- 10/10 Mon Plato on Eros and Social/Political Theory
Gaca, *Making of Fornication*, 1–11, 23–58
- 10/12 Wed Stoics on Eros and Social/Political Theory
Gaca, 59–93

Divine Command Ethics

- 10/17 Mon 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, *Rites and Rank: Hierarchy in Biblical Representations of Cult*, 3–14
- 10/19 Wed Judean Apocalyptic Traditions
Daniel 7:1–12:13; 1 Enoch 1–16
Mark 13:3–37; Matthew 24:3–44; 1 Thess 4:13–5:11; 1 Cor 15.
- 10/24 Mon Mid-Term Examination

Judaism, Christianity, and Greek Moral Traditions

- 10/26 Wed Philo: The Platonic and Pythagorean Revivals and Divine Law
Gaca, 94–116, 190–217
- 10/31 Mon Paul on God’s *Pneuma*
Galatians; Romans; Stowers, “What is Pauline Participation in Christ?” 1–14; *New Views of Jewish and Christian Self-Definition: Essays in Honor of E. P. Sanders*;
Stowers, “Paul,” *History of the Western Philosophy of Religion*, 1–10

- 11/2 Wed Paul on Self-Mastery
Stowers, "Self-Mastery" in *Paul in the Greco-Roman World* ed. Sampley, 524–50;
suggested, **Wasserman, "Paul Among the Philosophers? The Case of Sin in Romans
6–8," *JSNT* 30.4 (2008) 387–415s
1 Paragraph description of paper topic due
- 11/7 Mon Paul, Porneia and the LXX according to Gaca
Gaca, 119–189
- 11/9 Wed The Question of Paul and Hellenistic Philosophy
Stowers, "Does Pauline Christianity Resemble a Hellenistic Philosophy?" in *Paul
Beyond the Judaism/Hellenism Divide*, 81–102
- 11/14 Mon Jesus as Teacher of Ethics According to the Synoptic Gospels
Matthew 5:1–7:27; Luke 6:17–49; Compare Mark 4:10-12 and Matt 13:10-17; Stowers,
"The Gospel of Matthew and Stoic Ethics" 1–28.
- 11/16 Wed Jesus as Teacher of Ethics According to the Synoptic Gospels
The Gospel of Mark; Stowers, "Towards a Social Explanation for the Formation of
Christian Anti-Judaism."
- 11/21 Mon Tatian, Clement and Epiphanes
Gaca, 221–305
- 11/23 Wed Origen: Asceticism and Sexual Asceticism; From Sages to Saints
Selections from *On Martyrdom*; Peter Brown, *The Body and Society*, 160–177 (on
Origen)
- Mon. & Wed., 11/28 and 11/30—No Class, Thanksgiving Recess**
- 12/5 Mon Augustine: Asceticism and Sexual Asceticism
Peter Brown, *The Body and Society*, 387–427 (on Augustine)
- 12/7 Wed Augustine: Did He Understand the Stoics?
Selections from *The City of God* and *On Marriage*
- 12/12 Mon Augustine
Gilbert Meilaender "Sweet Necessities: Food, Sex, and Saint Augustine," *Journal of
Religious Ethics* 29 (2001) 3–18; Charles Mathewes, "Original Sin and the Hermeneutics
of Charity: a Response to Gilbert Meilaender," *Journal of Religious Ethics* 29 (2001)
35–42.
- 12/14 Wed Student Presentations (drafts due one day earlier)**

FINAL EXAM: Monday, December 19 from 8:00-11:00pm

Some examples of possible paper topic areas:

Usury
Homoeroticism
War/Violence and Peace
Gender Norms
Slavery
The Moralities of Social Orders
Utopian thought
Moral Psychology, e. g., Emotions, Appetites, Reason, Soul, Body
Moral Authority and Moral Specialists
Moral Heroes and Ordinary People
Law and Morals
Pollution/Purity, Holiness and Morals
Kinds of Households
Obedience and Freedom
Reciprocity
Solidarity
Egoism vs. Altruism
Happiness and Obedience
Autonomy?
Free Will
Concepts of self/personality