**Course Topic**

How should we live, and where should we look for guidance in answering this question: to tradition, to society, to religion, to the state, to nature, to feeling, to reason? Versions of these distinctively human questions were raised and addressed repeatedly and with urgency in both Antiquity and the Enlightenment. Many of the deepest, most systematic, and most influential attempts to address these and related questions were made by Mediterranean peoples (including the Hebrews, Greeks, and early Christians) of Antiquity (approximately 1000 BCE to 500 CE), and by Europeans of the Enlightenment (approximately 1600-1800 CE). This course will investigate some of their answers as they are expressed in a set of closely interrelated works of scripture, drama, dialogue, confessional writing, fiction, and philosophical argumentation from Antiquity and the Enlightenment.

**Course Goals**

This course is designed to offer students an opportunity to examine, compare, appreciate, and critically interrogate some of the most important and influential ideas about how human beings should live and how they should decide how to live—ideas from two distinct but critical historical periods that together account for an enormous share of the shared intellectual heritage of the West. The course should thus enable students to articulate, assess, and improve their own most fundamental practical beliefs while at the same time expanding and deepening their understanding of the historical development and contemporary application of important ideas in ethics, religion, psychology, and political theory. Throughout the course, students should hone the critical skills that will make them more careful readers, clearer writers, and more thoughtful interlocutors.

**Course Website**

The course Blackboard site, accessible through NYUHome, contains the syllabus, instructor contact information, announcements, class outlines, links to online readings, analytical paper assignments, examination study topics, individual grades, and the MAP statement on academic integrity.
Course Requirements

Students will have multiple opportunities to develop their own ideas, hone their intellectual skills, demonstrate their understanding, and receive timely feedback that will enable them to improve the quality of their work throughout the semester. The course requirements consist of recitation exercises, class discussion, two analytical papers, a midterm examination, and a final examination.

Recitation Exercises: Typically, a recitation section will begin with a fifteen-minute written exercise consisting of (i) two short-answer questions from the week’s reading, (ii) two short-answer questions from the week’s lectures, (iii) an essay question concerning an issue raised by the week’s reading and lecture, and (iv) a request to provide an original question for discussion by the group.

Class Discussion: Students are expected to contribute to class discussion in their own recitation section and as the opportunity arises in the main lecture section as well.

Analytical Papers: Two analytical papers will be assigned during the course of the semester. These are not primarily research papers; rather, they call for you to compare texts and to develop and defend your own insights about issues raised in the course. Each must be written on a topic to be selected from a list that will be provided at least two weeks in advance of the due date. The first paper should be approximately 1500 words in length and will be due on Friday, October 15. The second paper should be approximately 2000 words in length and will be due on Friday, December 3. Papers must be submitted via Blackboard by noon of the due date.

Midterm Examination: A midterm examination, consisting of three essay questions, will be held in class on Monday, October 25. A list of general study topics will be distributed one week in advance, on Monday, October 18.

Final Examination: A final examination, consisting of four essay questions, will be held from 8:00 AM to 9:50 AM on Monday, December 20. A list of general study topics will be distributed one week in advance, on Monday, December 13.

Grading

Course grades will be calculated as follows:

- Recitation exercises (graded √+, √, √-, 0; ten best only) 20%
- Class discussion 10%
- First analytical paper 15%
- Second analytical paper 20%
- Midterm examination 15%
- Final examination 20%

Conscientious attendance, reading, discussion, review, and writing are essential. Those who do all of these things should expect to be successful in the course; those who do not should expect to do poorly. Students experiencing difficulties in the course should consult with their recitation preceptor or the course instructor as soon as the difficulties become apparent.

Academic Integrity

All students are responsible for knowledge of the MAP statement on academic integrity, which includes a description of plagiarism, at [http://map.cas.nyu.edu/page/academicintegrity](http://map.cas.nyu.edu/page/academicintegrity). Out of fairness to other students, any violation of academic integrity will result in a failing grade for the course as well as a written report to the College Dean.
Required Texts

Sophocles, *Oedipus Tyrannus*, edited and translated by P. Meineck and P. Woodruff (Hackett)
Sophocles, *Antigone*, edited and translated by P. Woodruff (Hackett)
Plato, *The Trial and Death of Socrates*, 3rd edition, edited by G.M.A. Grube, revised by John M. Cooper (Hackett)
Plato, *The Republic*, edited and translated by C.D.C. Reeve (Hackett)
Aristotle, *On Poetry and Style*, edited and translated by G.M.A. Grube (Hackett)
Augustine, *Confessions*, edited and translated by E.J. Sheed (Hackett)
Blaise Pascal, *Pensées*, edited and translated by Roger Ariew (Hackett)
Benedict (Baruch) de Spinoza, *Theological-Political Treatise*, edited and translated by S. Shirley (Hackett)
Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Discourse on the Origin of Inequality*, translated by Donald A. Cress (Hackett)
David Hume, *An Enquiry concerning the Principles of Morals*, edited by J.B. Schneewind (Hackett)
David Hume, *Dialogues concerning Natural Religion*, edited by R. H. Popkin (Hackett)
Mary Wollstonecraft, *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman*, edited by M. Brody (Penguin)

Schedule of Topics and Required Primary Reading [with page numbers]

Introduction and Hebrew Scriptures
September 8 (W): Introduction to Texts and Ideas
[No Recitations]

Week 1: Hebrew Scriptures
September 13 (M): *Book of Genesis* [11-61]
September 15 (W): *Book of Exodus* [62-104], *Amos* [948-957]

Week 2: Sophocles
September 20 (M): *Oedipus Tyrannus* [1-63]
September 22 (W): *Antigone* [1-58]

Week 3: Socrates and Plato
September 27 (M): *Euthyphro* [1-19]
September 29 (W): *The Republic* Books I-II [1-65]

Week 4: Plato and Aristotle
October 4 (M): *The Republic* Books IV [103-135] and IX [270-296]
October 6 (W): *The Republic* Book X [297-326], and *The Poetics* I-XVI [3-33]
Week 5: The Christian Gospel
October 11 (M): Columbus Day—No Class Meeting
October 15 (F): FIRST ANALYTICAL PAPER DUE

Week 6: Paul and Augustine
October 18 (M): The Letter of Paul to the Romans [1431-1447]

Week 7: Pascal
October 25 (M): MIDTERM EXAMINATION
October 27 (W): Pensées Chapters X-XV [43-66], Series II-III [121-136]

Week 8: Spinoza
November 1 (M): Theological-Political Treatise Chapters 1-2 [1-34], 4-5 [48-70]
November 3 (W): Theological-Political Treatise Chapters 7 [86-104], 11 [138-144], 13-15 [153-172], and 18 [205-211]

Week 9: Locke

Week 10: Rousseau
November 15 (M): Discourse on the Origin of Inequality Part II [1-70]
November 17 (W): Profession of Faith of a Savoyard Vicar [245-321]

Week 11: Hume
November 22 (M): Dialogues concerning Natural Religion, Parts I-VIII [1-53]
November 24 (W): Dialogues concerning Natural Religion Parts IX-XII [54-89]
[Thanksgiving Recess—No Recitations]

Week 12: Hume
November 29 (M): An Enquiry concerning the Principles of Morals, Sections I-V [13-51]
December 1 (W): An Enquiry concerning the Principles of Morals, Sections VI-IX, Appendices I-IV, and “A Dialogue” [51-119]
December 3 (F): SECOND ANALYTICAL PAPER DUE

Week 13: Kant
December 6 (M): Grounding for the Metaphysics of Morals, Preface and Sections I-II [1-48]
December 8 (W): Grounding for the Metaphysics of Morals, Section III, Supplement [49-67]

Week 14: Wollstonecraft
December 15 (W): A Vindication of the Rights of Woman, Chapter 5 section 1 [99-117], Chapter 9 [175-186], and Chapter 13 [223-242]
[Classes End—No Recitations]

December 20 (M) 8:00-9:50 AM: FINAL EXAMINATION