

Fate and Virtue

HUM 2008 / André Lambelet
Semester 2, 2010-11
March Block
M-F 12:20-3:20 / A.315

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION	1
COURSE DESCRIPTION	2
LEARNING OBJECTIVES	2
METHODS OF INSTRUCTION	3
REQUIRED TEXTS	3
DOING WELL IN THIS COURSE	3
Reading	3
Writing	4
ASSESSMENT	6
ASSIGNMENTS	6
Portfolio	6
Short responses	6
Participation – 10%	7
COURSE AND UNIVERSITY POLICIES	9
General Expectations	9
Special needs	10
Absences	10
Academic Integrity	10

Instructor Information

Tutor: André Lambelet

Email: andre.lambelet@questu.ca. (Please note that I will check my email twice a day: once in the morning and once in the late afternoon. Please do not expect a reply over the weekend or after hours.)

Office hours: Mondays and Thursdays 10-11:30 a.m. and by appointment.

Telephone: 604 898 8026

Course Description

In this course — one of three in the Humanities foundation series — we study Homer, Herodotus, Thucydides, Plato, Aristotle, and Aristophanes. But why Greece? And why these authors? We do so in part because they are indispensable to our understanding of literature, history, and philosophy. We cannot make sense of Virgil, Dante, Milton, or Joyce — to name just a few — without having some understanding of Homer. We cannot understand the practice of history if we do not think about the questions first raised by Herodotus and Thucydides. And we cannot understand the development of philosophy (or, for that matter, politics) in the Western world if we have not at least grappled with Plato and Aristotle.

The questions our raised are still fundamental. Each, in his way, asked the question, “How should we lead our lives?” We will take up this question, and focus particularly on the themes of “fate” and “virtue.” We will read them for themselves, seeking to understand what their answers were. We will also compare them to each other, and see where they converge and diverge. In the process, we will seek to discover how and why our own views differ from theirs.

Learning Objectives

One aim of this course is to encourage you to engage directly with the works we are reading. At the end of the course, you should have a better understanding of the importance and meaning of Ancient Greece — for itself and for us. At a minimum, you will be able to discuss lucidly the major issues raised by the works we read and place them in their broader intellectual and historical contexts.

By closely studying and discussing the assigned texts, you will engage directly with the arguments raised by some of the most important thinkers of Ancient Greece. When you successfully complete the course, you should be able to:

- Understand and explain differences between poetic, historical, and philosophical approaches to the themes of fate and virtue
- Give a lucid and informed account of Homer’s *Iliad*
- Understand and explain differences in purpose, emphasis, and method between Herodotus and Thucydides
- Understand and explain Plato’s early dialogues, with emphasis on the Socratic method
- Understand and explain Aristotle’s method in the *Nicomachean Ethics*
- Explain some of the differences between Aristotle’s and Plato’s philosophical methods

More generally, students who successfully complete the course will develop their skills as critical readers, attentive listeners, persuasive writers, and effective contributors to classroom discussion.

Methods of Instruction

Large group discussion
Small group discussion
Lectures
Student presentations
Workshops

Required Texts

The following texts will be available in the University Bookstore:

Coursepack containing:

Homer. *The Odyssey*. Tr. Robert Fagles. New York: Viking, 1996. 249-270.
Herodotus. *Herodotus: The Histories*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998. Translated by Robin Waterfield. 3-45, 116-119, 188-193, 466-488.
Thucydides. *The Landmark Thucydides: A Comprehensive Guide to the Peloponnesian War*. New York: Free Press, 1996. 3-27, 80-85, 110-128, 175-193, 350-357.

Books:

Aristophanes. *Lysistrata and Other Plays*. Translated by Alan H. Sommerstein. Revised Edition. Penguin Classics, 2002.
Aristotle. *Nicomachean Ethics*. Translated by Terence Irwin. 2nd ed. Hackett Publishing Co., 2000.
Homer. *The Iliad*. Translated by Robert Fagles. Penguin Classics, 1990.
Plato. *Five Dialogues*. Translated by G. M. A. Grube. 2nd ed. Hackett Pub Co, 2002.

Doing well in this course

Reading

Reading is a vital part of your education. *It is not a passive activity*. You will be expected to understand and assimilate the assigned material. You will be asked to master the material in a comprehensive and sophisticated way.

Ask yourself the following questions when you read or study a work:

- Who wrote or created it? (If you don't know, look him or her up.)
- When was it written or produced? (Ditto.)
- What does the work say?
- How is the work structured?
- What is the form of the work?

- What kinds of imagery does the work use?
- What questions is it attempting to answer?
- What is the author's argument? What are the argument's strengths and weaknesses?
- What kinds of evidence does the author provide for her or his argument? What kinds of sources does the author use?
- To what kinds of arguments is the author responding?

Pay careful attention to the clues the author gives you:

- Read (and decipher) the title. What does it tell you about the piece you are reading?
- If the piece is a book, read the introduction and conclusion of the book; if the piece is an article or a chapter, read the first and last paragraphs. These should help you figure out what the piece's argument is. Ask yourself what the thesis of the piece is.
- Read the entire work (or all of the assigned portions). Try to decide which parts or passages are most important. If you own the work, make notes in the margins next to important or interesting parts. (Do not do this in library books!)
- Write down your responses to the work in a notebook. Think of note-taking as a way of organizing your thoughts. You need not write down everything; instead, jot down notes about interesting ideas, problems in the argument, or surprising aspects of the piece.
- Re-read the work. You will find that a second (and often, a third and fourth) reading greatly improve your understanding.
- Finally, summarize the author's argument in a few lines. If you can complete a sentence beginning "The author of this book/article argues...", you have read intelligently and productively.

If you do all this, you should be ready for *classroom discussion*.

Writing

The heart of literature, history and philosophy as intellectual disciplines is the written word. Successful students in these fields must be able not only to read carefully but write clearly. In other words, they must be able to understand and use words precisely. Sloppy expression — in writing and in discussion — is as big a problem in the humanities as getting formulae wrong is in chemistry; sloppy expression results in papers that fizzle out rather than illuminate.

You may consult your tutor if you have specific questions; we also urge all students to make use of the Learning Commons and Peer Tutors.

Writing well requires at least three things: *content*, *expression*, and *structure*.

Content: You need to have read carefully (and, it should go without saying, taken notes) before you begin to write. You must *think* about what you have read. You must *understand the question* you are asked to answer. And, of course, you must have something to say. All of this will give your paper *content*.

You must supply *evidence* in the form of (properly-cited) quotations. That evidence will, in the main, come from the assigned readings for this course. If you use evidence from elsewhere, you must be sure that the evidence is *reliable*. (Please do not think that Wikipedia, sources drawn haphazardly from the web, or other sketchy sources will help persuade your reader of the merits of your work!)

Expression: *How* you say things is crucial. If your writing obscures your meaning, then it is impossible for your reader to evaluate the content of your paper. Style matters: it makes your content accessible and your ideas intelligible.

Papers for this course must be written in formal, standard English. You must:

- punctuate properly;
- use proper grammar;
- make appropriate word choices.

If you are not certain of a word's precise meaning, look it up in a good dictionary before handing in your paper. (If you don't yet own a good dictionary, get one.)

Structure: Good papers will have a crisp **introduction**. This introduction will let readers know the topic or subject of the paper *and* will let readers what *problem* that the paper aims to discuss. (This is the *thesis statement*.) The introduction should let readers what the limits of the discussion will be.

Good papers will have a solid **conclusion**. A conclusion is not just a summary of what has been discussed before: it emphasizes the importance of the thesis statement, provides the essay with a sense of completeness (it *concludes* the thoughts of the essay), and leaves the reader with a final sense of what the paper is about. (The conclusion should answer the dreaded "so what?" question — it should give the reader a sense of why s/he read it.)

Good papers will be built around solidly-constructed **paragraphs**. Paragraphs are the building blocks of good writing: they are built around one thought or idea.

Moving from paragraph to paragraph also requires good **transitions**. Transitions connect the ideas in an essay, and allow the reader to understand the flow of your ideas.

Overall: It takes time and effort to write well. Good writing, you will scarcely need to be reminded, is *re-writing*. Plan to write at least two drafts before you submit an essay. And ask for help: ask your peers to read your drafts critically and unsparingly; get advice from the Learning Commons; and raise questions in class.

Assessment

Your grade for the course will be based on the following elements:

Category	Assignment	Weight (%)
Participation and presentation	Participation	15%
	Presentations	10% (5% each)
Writing	Short responses	40%
	Longer essay 1	15%
	Longer essay2	20%

A letter grade will be assigned for the course. See the *Quest University Calendar 2010-2011*, p. 19, for details on the grades awarded.

We will be using teaching and marking rubrics in this course. We will go over their use in the first session.

You may, if you wish, opt not to have grades appear on your individual assignment. If you choose this option, you will of course receive an evaluation of your work, and grades will still be recorded for your final grade.

Assignments

Portfolio

You will given a portfolio on the first day of class. This portfolio is hugely important: you will keep all of your written work in it, and hand in the complete portfolio *every time you turn in written work*. (This includes notes from your presentations.)

Short responses

Four times during the block, you will write a short (roughly 500 word) response to a series of questions. The purpose of these is to focus your attention on a particular question, get you to think concretely about the nature of the disciplines in the humanities, provide you with material for classroom discussion, and get you in the habit of writing. These are *not* research papers: they are to be the product of your own (informed) reflection.

In addition, you may also be called on in class to read portions of your essay, or to discuss it in small group discussions.

This is “formal” writing. Essays must be printed (not hand-written), double-spaced, proofread, and use full and correct citations. (Please study the section on writing, above.)

Thursday, March 10, 2011: Literature and the epic

In this short piece, you are to sketch the framework for a contemporary epic. Part of the point here is to think about the *function* of the epic. Think about the purpose of an epic – and think how you might devise a work that would fulfill the function of the epic.

What form would your “epic” take? (Don’t be constrained by the literal meaning of “epic” – again, think *function* and *purpose*.)

What would its major themes be? Why?

What kinds of characters would it have?

Who would its audience be?

Wednesday, 16 March 2011: History and the historian

In this short piece, you are to build the framework for a history of Ancient Greece. As in the previous exercise, the point here is to think about the *function* of a history. So – think about the purpose of your history.

What would be the subject of your history?

Who and what would you focus on?

What kinds of evidence would you seek to use?

Who would its audience be?

Wednesday, 23 March 2011: Philosophy to die for

In this short piece, you are to confront a monstrously large question: are there things worth dying for?

Monday, 28 March 2011: What is Happiness?

In this short piece, you are to confront another monstrously large question: what is happiness? Think about the synonyms for happiness: pleasure, contentment, satisfaction, and so on.

Participation – 10%

The tutor's role is to facilitate discussion and to act as a guide when necessary. Your responsibility is to be prepared to engage in serious discussion of the materials.

Participation is a crucial part of this course — not only because you can show what you know and how you think, but also because your participation helps other students learn.

You should come to class prepared to contribute to the discussion. This means that you must have read and reflected upon the assigned material; it also means that you should have formulated questions about the material. (It is good practice to write these questions down and bring them to tutorial.)

On the other hand (there is always an other hand, isn't there?), you should know that not every thought springs up full-grown like Athena from the brow of Zeus. Please do feel free

to try to articulate an idea that is still not fully formed; part of our task as a group is to develop and test these ideas. Our aim is to make discussions free and unfettered.

Remember, too, that the point of discussion is to gain a deeper or better understanding of the topic at hand. In that spirit, we understand that what you say about a topic may not necessarily reflect your own likes, dislikes, politics, preferences, or prejudices.

Because discussion and engagement is a central part of what we do, participation counts for 15% of your grade. So how do you demonstrate your engagement?

- By being there every day and on time. (Note that unexcused absences will have a serious, even devastating, effect on your grade.)
- By being fully prepared; in other words, having read and thought about the material assigned for this class. (See the section on reading below.)
- By raising pertinent questions. (“Pertinent” does not mean complex or obscure; sometimes, simple questions work very well.)
- By taking your classmates’ questions seriously, and taking the time to think about what they have said.
- By being willing to go out on a limb from time to time. (Not literally.)
- By treating your classmates and tutor with courtesy and respect.
- By volunteering to read passages for discussion.
- By having the courage to say (or ask) out loud what others may be thinking but are afraid to say (or ask): “I’ve lost the plot here.” “I don’t understand.” “What does eudemonia mean?” And so on.
- By playing the devil’s advocate.

A general note on participation: Some people are shy. Some people find themselves tongue-tied in class. Some people think that other people are better at articulating their questions or comments. Nevertheless, taking part in a discussion is a useful, even vital, skill. You can prepare questions ahead of time. You can jot down important points before class begins. And you can wait for your tutor to call on you — which he will do (gently) at some point if he does not hear from you.

Group Presentations - 10% (5% each)

You will be called upon to make two presentations in this course. You will be assigned a group with which you will provide a ten to twelve minute talk on a topic related to the day’s discussion. Topics will be assigned.

You should carefully prepare your presentation, rehearse it before you give it, and **respect the time limit**. You may find that your tutor or your classmates cut you off if you go beyond the allotted time.

At the end of the class in which you make a presentation, you must *turn in the notes for your presentation with your portfolio*. These notes need not be in essay form — an outline will do — but they *must* include the sources upon which you drew to construct your presentation. (Each member of the presenting group must provide his or her notes.)

Assignments will be made during the first meeting of the block; we will go over the details of the presentation in the first class.

Longer Essays – 15% and 20% each

You will be asked to write two longer essays (roughly 1500-1800) for this course. Topics will be distributed at least a week before the rough drafts are due.

Rough (but **complete**) drafts of these papers are due *at the beginning of class* on the days of the writing workshops (see schedule at end of syllabus); you will need to bring three copies to class. **You must turn in your commented-upon drafts in your portfolio with your final essay.**

Final drafts are due by 5 pm in both hardcopy and in electronic form on D2L.

Course and university policies

General Expectations

You are not on your own. You can expect your tutor to take an active interest in the course and in your work.

If you have questions about any aspect of the course, do not hesitate to ask your tutor.

Your tutor has consultation hours, which are posted on his door and on the D2L site for this course. (If you cannot meet with your tutor during consultation hours, you may make an appointment at a mutually convenient time.)

Your tutor expects you to:

- Read the syllabus and all handouts and therefore be aware of policies, homework, and due dates.
- Check D2L and your Quest e-mail account frequently; changes to the syllabus and to assignments will be posted there.
- Attend every class.
- Arrive on time.
- Be prepared.
- Make use of the tutor's office hours.
- Obtain notes and handouts in the event of an absence.
- Turn in assignments at the beginning of class on the due date given in the syllabus.

Please:

- Be courteous.
- Turn off your cell phone before class.
- Help keep the classroom neat and tidy.

Please do not:

- Bring food into the classroom. (Beverages are ok.)
- Use laptops, iPads, electronic tablets, netbooks, smart phones, stupid phones, Wii controllers, Gameboys, or other devices in class unless specifically authorized to do so by the tutor. (If you have a special need, please discuss this with the tutor.)

Special needs

If you have a disability for which you seek accommodation, please let the tutor know.

Absences

There are—infrequently—valid reasons to miss class: illness, family emergencies, war, famine, pestilence, and so forth. If you have a really good reason for missing class, your case will be stronger if you notify your tutor *before* you miss class. (Please be forewarned: unexcused absences may lead to a failing grade for the course.) You are in any event responsible for obtaining notes, handouts, and assignments.

Academic Integrity

As the Quest University Calendar notes, “Quest is committed to the principle of academic integrity, itself grounded in the fundamental values of honesty, trust, fairness, respect, and responsibility in all academic work.” (Quest University Calendar, p. 17.) We depend on the honesty and responsibility of all of our members — scholars and teachers alike.

In keeping with the Honour Principle, you will do your own work, and you will conscientiously and meticulously credit sources.

Citing sources is not optional in academic work — it is a fundamental principle. As you should know, plagiarism is, broadly speaking, passing off someone else work or ideas as your own, failing to properly identify and credit the source of material you submit, or using cited material improperly. Please be aware that failure to observe the rules of citation will result in charges of plagiarism or academic dishonesty.

Charges of plagiarism or of academic dishonesty are not taken lightly, and may have dire consequences: failure on the assignment, failure of the course, and expulsion from the university. To avoid this sort of unpleasantness, please be sure to read “University Policies: Quest Honour Principle and Protocol” on page 17 of the University Calendar.

If you have questions about citation, crediting sources, or anything else relating to academic integrity, please ask *before* you turn in the work. (Information about plagiarism can also be obtained from the Learning Commons.)

If the *principle* of citation is the same across academic disciplines, the *particular format* of citation varies from discipline to discipline, and even within disciplines. Your tutor will discuss citation formats and principles with you in class.

Course Schedule

Date	Reading / Topic	Topic	Assignment due	Presentation
Wednesday, 9 March 2011	Introduction	Syllabus, expectations, objectives		
Thursday, 10 March 2011	<i>Iliad</i> , I–VI. Read all, but pay especially close attention to Books I–III, VI.	Literature: epic and other	Short (500 word) written response to questions about the modern epic	
Friday, 11 March 2011	<i>Iliad</i> , VII–XII			War in Archaic Greece
Monday, 14 March 2011	<i>Iliad</i> , XIII–XVIII			
Tuesday, 15 March 2011	<i>Iliad</i> , XIX–XXIV			
Wednesday, 16 March 2011	Course reader: Herodotus. 3-45, 116-119, 188-193, 466-488.	History	Short (500 word) written response to questions about history	Herodotus: Biography
Thursday, 17 March 2011	Course reader: Thucydides. Selections TBA.			Thucydides: Biography
Friday, 18 March 2011	Course reader: Thucydides. Selections TBA.			Women in Ancient Greece
Monday, 21 March 2011		Writing workshop	Bring rough draft to class	
Tuesday, 22 March 2011	Course reader: Homer, chapter from <i>Odyssey</i> . Recapitulation session: heroism and death in Ancient Greece		First major essay due	Afterlives: what comes after death?

Date	Reading / Topic	Topic	Assignment due	Presentation
Wednesday, 23 March 2011	Plato - <i>Euthyphro</i>	Philosophy	Short (500 word) written response to questions about philosophy	Priests, priestesses, and the sacred in Ancient Greece
Thursday, 24 March 2011	Plato - <i>Apology</i> , <i>Crito</i>			
Friday, 25 March 2011	Plato - <i>Meno</i>			
		Philosophy	Short (500 word) response to questions about happiness	Aristotle: Biography
Monday, 28 March 2011	Aristotle - <i>Nichomachean Ethics</i> , Books I, II			
Tuesday, 29 March 2011	Aristotle - <i>Nichomachean Ethics</i> , Books III, VI			Slaves in the Ancient World
Wednesday, 30 March 2011	Aristotle - <i>Nichomachean Ethics</i> , Books VII, X			
Thursday, 31 March 2011	Aristotle - <i>Nichomachean Ethics</i> , Books VIII, IX		Writing workshop. Rough drafts due.	
Friday, 1 April 2011	Lysistrata (briefly skim; we will read the whole thing in class).	Drama in Ancient Greece	Second major essay due	