Committee on Social Thought - Courses, Autumn 2021

20677 Thucydides and Athenian Democracy at War. In this course we will closely read the entirety of Thucydides' *War of the Peloponnesians and the Athenians*. Alongside Thucydides we will read selections from Plutarch’s Lives as well as some of the tragedies and comedies of the war years. Our goal will be to read Thucydides' account in its political and cultural context in order to understand both the text and the event that have proved foundational to the western tradition of thinking on democracy, empire, and particularly international relations. Among the questions we will discuss: How did the Athenians’ democratic politics and culture influence the course of the war? How did the pursuit of empire influence their practice of democracy? And how can we draw general lessons about war and the conduct of nations from a source so far removed from our own time? The course will conclude with a discussion of the realist tradition of international relations which draws from Thucydides and his account of the war, and of the problems posed by such readings. Undergraduate seminar. xCLCV 23921, R. Stone (TR, 9:30a - 10:50a, Cobb 104)

20678 Narratives of the End of Faith. There seems to be a consensus around the notion that the loss of religious faith is one of the defining features of modern society. What does this mean for human life going forward, however? Is what Nietzsche called the "death of God" a catastrophe, or an opportunity? Or is it an event that only seems revolutionary, which in fact masks a deep social continuity? In this interdisciplinary course addressing social theory, philosophy, and theology, we will examine some of the various responses to these questions in the 19th and 20th century, from Karl Marx and Max Weber, through Nietzsche and Heidegger, to "death of God theology." A guiding thread throughout the course will be the relationship of secularization to freedom. Along the way, we will reflect on the meaning of "modernity" and "postmodernity." Undergraduate seminar. xRLST 25678 / xGRMN 20678, M. Messerschmidt (MW, 4:30p -5:50p, Wieboldt 206)

31719 Xenophon's Education of Cyrus. This seminar is intended as an introductory reading of one of the classic treatments of political leadership, Xenophon's *The Education of Cyrus*. Themes will include the qualities and motives of a successful leader or ruler, especially in acquiring and expanding rule, relations between rulers and ruled, Xenophon’s portrayals of Cyrus and other characters in the book, the relation between political and military leadership and more broadly between politics and war, the tension between empire and freedom, Cyrus’s bi-cultural education and multinational rule, the roles of morality, religion, and love in politics, and differences between constitutional or legitimate and tyrannical or despotic rule. We will consider Xenophon’s art of writing and the literary character of the book. Open to undergrads with consent. xFNDL 25103, PLSC 31719, N. Tarcov (MW, 1:30p - 2:50p, Foster 305)
31932 Social and Political Conflict in Classical Greece. The course will focus on five topics: The Athenian Empire, The Revolt of Mytilene, Revolutions at Athens, The Fall of Dionysius the Younger at Syracuse, and Revolution at Sparta. Required readings will be from primary sources: selections (read in English) from Thucydides, Xenophon, Lysias, Aristotle and Plutarch. Open to undergrads with consent. J. Redfield (MW, 11:30a - 1:20p, Foster 505)

35706 The Different Senses of Being. Aristotle states that "being is said in many ways." We shall seek to understand this statement and to study the history of its interpretations. Among the modern authors we shall discuss are Franz Brentano, Martin Heidegger, Ernst Tugendhat, Charles Kahn, Aryeh Kosman, G.E.L. Owen, Stephen Menn, and David Charles. PQ: Open to undergrads with consent. xPHIL 35707, I. Kimhi (W, 1:30p - 4:20p, F505 - class will meet in F 505 beginning Wednesday, 10/6)

36017 Literary Biography. Literary Biography: A Workshop. We will study four major literary biographies: Elizabeth Gaskell’s *The Life of Charlotte Brontë* (1857), Lytton Strachey’s *Eminent Victorians* (1918), Walter Jackson Bates’s *John Keats* (1964), and Hermione Lee’s *Virginia Woolf* (1996). While analyzing the arts of literary biography, students will compose a biographical sketch of their own (20 pages), using primary materials from the Special Collections in the Regenstein Library and elsewhere, as appropriate. The course combines literary criticism and creating writing. xENGL 26017/ENGL 36077, R. Warren (R, 12:30p - 3:20p, Foster 505)

36710 Eccentric Moderns. An examination of six idiosyncratic poets who invented new forms of language on the peripheries of High Modernism: David Jones, Laura Riding, Hart Crane, W.H. Auden, Geoffrey Hill, and Anne Carson. Close formal analysis of the poems in the wider social and political contexts of the 20th and early 21st centuries. PQ: Open to advanced undergraduates. xENGL 26710, 36710, R. Warren (T, 12:30p - 3:20p, Foster 505)

40129 The Socialist Calculation Debate. This course examines the so-called 'socialist calculation debate' and its legacy in economic thought. The debate began as a series of responses to the claim of Otto Neurath that socialist societies could abandon the price mechanism and embrace the economic principle of 'calculation in kind.' Critics such as Max Weber and Ludwig von Mises countered that calculation in kind was impossible, and that rational allocation of resources required the use of market prices. A second round of the debate took place during the 1930s, this time involving Oskar Lange, Abba Lerner, and Friedrich Hayek. We will study the key contributions to the debate, while paying special attention to Neurath’s now largely neglected theory of socialist planning. The course concludes with an examination of the climate crisis and the revival of the planning theories. Consent required. xHIST 66801, J. Isaac (T, 11:00a - 1:50p, Foster 305)
40130 John Rawls in Context. This course examines the early thought of the moral and political philosopher John Rawls. We will trace the development of Rawls's thought from his senior honors thesis at Princeton to the publication of his seminal treatise *A Theory of Justice* in 1971. Course readings will combine primary sources with the now burgeoning historical literature on Rawls’s life and thought. xHIST 66901, J. Isaac (F, 11:30a - 2:20p, Foster 305)

55701 (PHIL 55701) The Ethics and Poetics of Mimesis. In this seminar we will examine the concept of mimesis as a way of thinking about poetry and the arts and also as a way of thinking about human life more generally. Our focus will be on Plato’s *Republic* and Aristotle’s *Poetics*, though we will consider relevant passages from other dialogues and treatises. What should we make of the fact that Socrates figures both the unjust person and the philosopher-ruler as a mimetic artist? In what way is his critique of mimesis ontological, psychological, and political? Are there differing explanations of the influence of mimetic speech, sound, and sights? Why do Plato and Aristotle believe that poetic mimesis is a necessary element of moral education? How does Aristotle’s different, more dynamic account of poetic mimesis reflect a different understanding of the nature of poetry and its place in human life? If time permits, we will briefly consider Epictetus’s idea that we should think of ourselves as actors playing a role in the cosmic drama. This course is parented by Philosophy. PQ: Preference will be given to PhD students. MA students require permission of the instructor. x SCTH 55701. G. Lear and J. Lear (T, 2:00p - 4:50p, Harper 148)