LSHV 492: MALS Foundational: Legacy of Greece and Rome

This course will consider some of the enormous and varied influences of Greek and Roman antiquity on subsequent western civilization. The course will address this huge topic in various ways, but there will be a strong focus upon the basic idea of the gods. We will analyze the earliest Greek treatments of the gods (Homer and Hesiod), and then turn to consider how these divinities are reconceived in later periods by authors interested in philosophy and science (Plato and earlier philosophy). The course will then turn to St. Augustine, and examine his attempts to reconcile these earlier texts—and their treatment of a completely different divine system—with Christian thought. Finally, we will consider the ways in which this fusion of Christian and ancient thought survived through the middle ages, and then how Renaissance thinkers modify that tradition and rearticulate ancient ideas in a vastly different intellectual and political context.

The topic of the gods will also serve as a case study to introduce students to the methods and approaches necessary to consider other modes of Greek or Roman influence upon subsequent periods of western civilization. Students will choose research topics (e.g. architecture, art, mythology, law, engineering, science, sexuality, government, political theory, literature) and develop specific focal points within those larger topics; students will present both oral reports to the class and submit written essays, and will be expected to develop scholarly argumentation. Starting around the third week, part of each class session will be devoted to one of these topics, and thus the course will incorporate broader topics about the ancient world in a systematic fashion. The topics will be assigned in advance, but the date on which they will be discussed will depend upon student interest and other demands on time.

As a foundation class for the MALS program, this course will have a strong interdisciplinary focus and consider human values/ethics. Careful reading and writing will also be expected from students.

Schedule of Readings

Jan. 7: Introduction
   • Janko, “The gods in Homer…”
Jan. 26: Homer, *Iliad* 5-14
Feb. 9: Pre-Socratics; Plato, *Meno*;
Feb. 23: Plato, *Phaedo, Republic* (selections)
   • *Founders of Thought*, R. Hare on Plato
Mar. 2: Plato, *Republic* (selections)
Mar. 16: Aristotle (selections)
   • *Founders of Thought*, J. Barnes on Aristotle
Mar. 23: Augustine, *City of God* (selections)
   • *Founders of Thought*, H. Chadwick on Augustine
Mar. 30: End of Antiquity-Medieval Renaissances
- Rouse, The Transmission of the Texts, in *LoR*
- Davis, The Middle Ages, in *LoR*

Apr. 13:  Scholastics; Rise of the University
- Feenstra, Law, in *LoR*

Apr. 20:  Lucretius (selections), the Renaissance
- Grafton, The Renaissance, in *LoR*
- Greenblatt, *The Swerve: How the World Became Modern*

Apr. 27:  Greece and Rome
- Purcell, The City of Rome, in *LoR*
- Brown, “Venice and Antiquity”

Required Books

*The Legacy of Rome* (Oxford, 1992) (=*LoR*)
*The Iliad of Homer*, tr. R. Lattimore (Univ. of Chicago Press).

Grading

Class participation: 20%

Students will be expected to be active and fruitful contributors each session in order to earn an excellent grade. Inevitably, personal impressions will play a role in discussion, but as the semester proceeds and the vocabulary and methodological approaches become more familiar, students should demonstrate an ability to discuss the material with deeper insight and analysis. Attendance alone will not achieve an excellent grade; absence from class precludes participation and thus will result in a loss of credit for that class.

Class presentations: 25%

Each student will lead one discussion session for 25 mins. Of a topic chosen in advance. Students will be expected to have a control over the material responsible for that evening as well some additional materials; the discussion will be evaluated upon accuracy of facts, comprehension of the material, and the ability to explain the topic in clear and concise manner (presentations that abuse time constraints will not earn an excellent grade).

Blackboard Comments 25%

Students will be required to post an analytical 250-500 word essay on the class blackboard site eight times over the course of the semester. These paragraphs are meant to stimulate class discussion, so paragraphs that raise important questions are acceptable, but they must be based upon careful reading of the texts and assignments.
Final Paper: 30%

A 20-25 pg. research paper due at the end of term. This paper should emerge from your presentation, and should work within the methodological and analytical framework that has been worked on over the course of the semester.

Due May 1st.

Academic Standards: MALS and DLS students are responsible for upholding the Georgetown University Honor System and adhering to the academic standards included in the Honor Code Pledge stated below:

In the pursuit of the high ideals and rigorous standards of academic life, I commit myself to respect and uphold the Georgetown University Honor System: To be honest in any academic endeavor; and to conduct myself honorably, as a responsible member of the Georgetown community, as we live and work together.

Disability Notice: If you believe you have a disability, you should contact the Academic Resource Center—Suite 335, Leavey Center (arc@georgetown.edu) –for further information. This office is responsible for reviewing documentation provided by students with disabilities and for determining reasonable accommodations in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and University policies.