**CL2655/CL3655 The Good Life in Ancient Philosophy**

What is the best kind of life? Is moral virtue sufficient for happiness? Does morality require a special kind of knowledge or wisdom? Is a good life a pleasant life and are some pleasures better than others? This course examines the answers given by Greek philosophers to questions such as these. After initial consideration of early Greek views about the good life, the first term of the course will concentrate on relevant works of Plato (*Gorgias, Republic, Philebus*) and Aristotle (*Nicomachean Ethics*). In the second term, after completing our study of Aristotle, we will examine Epicurean and Stoic views about the good life, as found in texts such as Epicurus’ *Letter to Menoeceus* and Diogenes Laertius’ summary of Stoic doctrines in *Lives of the Philosophers* Book 7. There will be one lecture and one seminar per week.

Students will be expected to complete two essays of 2000-3000 words, one in the first term and one in the second term, the better of which will count for 20% of the assessment for the course. There will be a three-hour examination at the end of the course which will count for the remaining 80% of the assessment. The examination for third year students will include a compulsory question with passages for comment from specified set texts; a list of these texts will be provided at the start of the course.

The course is open to both second and third year students and does not require any knowledge of Greek or Latin.

Preliminary reading

The most useful thing you can do by way of preliminary reading is to read some of the relevant ancient texts. Plato, *Gorgias* and *Republic* and Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, in any translation, will be particularly useful.

You might also like to read some relevant secondary literature such as Julia Annas, *The Morality of Happiness* (OUP 1993) or J.M. Cooper, *Pursuits of Wisdom: six ways of life in ancient philosophy from Socrates to Plotinus* (Princeton University Press 2012).

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