

ARTS & SCIENCE 1A06: PRACTICES OF KNOWLEDGE

McMaster University, Term 3, 2017-18

Mondays & Wednesdays: 1:30pm-2:20pm, BSB 137

Instructor - Dr. Catherine Frost

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Teaching Assistants:

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"The Answer to the Great Question... Of Life, the Universe and Everything... Is... Forty-two," said Deep Thought, with infinite majesty and calm"....

..."Forty-two!" yelled Loonquawl. "Is that all you've got to show for seven and a half million years' work?"

"I checked it very thoroughly," said the computer, "and that quite definitely is the answer. I think the problem, to be quite honest with you, is that you've never actually known what the question is."

- Douglas Adams' *The Hitchhikers Guide to the Galaxy*

The goal of this course is to help students become "intellectual omnivores," individuals who can recognize and digest knowledge from a multitude of sources and in a range of forms. Recognizing the diversity of knowledge practices employed over human history helps students develop interpretational skills, which in turn closes the gap between ancient thinking and our own, and opens up a broader world of knowledge from around the globe. To that end, we will be reading major works in philosophy and literature as well as examining developments in how humans cultivate, organize and transmit knowledge. The course begins with the rise of symbolic thinking among early humans and continues until the arrival of modernity with its characteristic habits of thought.

In the first term, we kick off the term with an intellectual puzzle – Plato's seemingly petty decision to crown the Greek poets with laurels and march them outside the city gates. With this philosophic oddity in mind, we go on to examine the rise of the modern mind, and consider how the development of externalized memory and symbolic thinking triggered a change in how we engage with the world. We then go on to consider how issues such as representation, conflict and love, story-telling, wisdom and philosophy, help shape our understanding.

We begin our second term with Plato's most famous student, Aristotle, and consider how his work builds on structured habits of thought, including logic and analysis. The readings then examine concerns such as nature, law and strategic thinking, finally arriving at a level of introspection that is associated with modern individualism. Evolving ways of thinking about time, space and information are given specific consideration, and the course concludes with a selection of modern readings that combine aesthetic and emotive themes with analytic and scientific thinking in surprising ways.

At completion of this course students will be ready to:

- Identify and creatively draw upon multiple forms and sources of knowledge across the range of human experience;
- Supplement sharp analytic and critical skills with other forms of wisdom including emotional, social, introspective and aesthetic;
- Discuss the significance of formats, media, and organizational systems to the development of knowledge;
- Use knowledge systems wisely, conscious of each systems' strengths and limitations, and contextualise that knowledge within historical and social settings;
- Generate and communicate ideas effectively across a range of idioms; and
- Ask good questions.

Course Texts

- The majority of your course readings are available as links to online sources, or "pdf" files in the Avenue to Learn site for this course. Please remember that Avenue can sometimes be down, so access the readings well in advance.
- Remaining readings are from the following texts, which have been ordered into the bookstore (see reading list for full bibliographic details).
 - *The Epic of Gilgamesh*
 - Aristophanes, *The Clouds*
 - Sappho, *Stung with Love*
 - Plato, *The Phaedrus*
 - Marcus Aurelius, *The Meditations*
 - Thich Nhat Hahn, *The Heart of Understanding*

Please note that many of the above texts are available free online from the Guttenberg Project (<http://www.gutenberg.org/>) or other reputable databases. There are two things to keep in mind concerning the online/Gutenberg option. First, they are generally older versions, and better translations have appeared since. Second, they are sometimes unpaginated, making citations and your own review work more challenging. You can decide which better suits your needs, but research papers require full page citations so keep that in mind. You may also find some of them read aloud at librivox, <http://www.librivox.org>.

Background Reading & Sources (Optional)

- Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, available online at <http://plato.stanford.edu/> (a thoroughly-researched and well-written resource).
- Peter von Sivers, Charles A. Desnoyers & Goerge B. Stow (2012) *Patterns of World History* Volume 1. Oxford: Oxford University Press (a culturally comprehensive overview of world history)
- Strunk and White's *The Elements of Style* (a classic on how to streamline your writing and avoid glaring errors, a key to elegance and accomplished writing).
- Booth, Colomb & William's *The Craft of Research* (helpful in terms of building and communicating a sound argument, and research design).

Assignments

TERM 1

#1 Media Detox assignment: Spend twenty four hours without using ANY written, or digital communications then, guided by a series of supplied questions, write a 2-3pp reflection on the experience and any insights that resulted (5% of grade). Due: **Sept. 18**.

#2 Tutorial exercises: These activities are designed to improve relevant learning skills with the support of your TA. In addition:

1) Memorization exercise: Memorize and recite, error-free and with engaging delivery ten lines or more of a poem or speech from a pre-approved selection (2.5% of grade). Due: By arrangement with your TA, but no later than **Oct 4**.

2) Conversation exercise: Meet individually with your TA at least once during the term, and hold a 10-15 minute conversation where YOU pose the questions about readings or assignments in the course. The goal is to ask questions that genuinely puzzle you, or where you need clarification, not to try to outsmart your TA (2.5% of grade). Due: By arrangement with your TA, but no later than **Oct 4**.

#3 Midterm test: Short answer format. Please note that there will be 50 minutes of class time allowed for the test, beginning precisely on the half hour and ending at twenty after the hour. Students are advised to arrive on time, and students will not be excused until the time is up (15% of grade). In-class **Oct 30**.

#4 Tutorials: Attend tutorials consistently and engage productively with peers both in class and online (5% of grade).

#5 December exam: Essay-question format (20% of grade). To be scheduled during exam period.

TERM 2

#6 Research Design: Develop a research design for your paper based on a set of assigned questions (5% of grade). Due: **Feb 7**.

#7 Major paper: Write a 6-8pp (double-spaced) argument-based research paper focused on some relevant theme or issue drawn from the course topics, and referencing at least two course readings (20% of grade). Due: **Mar 19**. You also have the option of supplementing your paper with up to 2pp extra material that you think helps shed light on your project, but which takes a different form than a traditional research argument (i.e., artwork, a poem, story, satire, etc.). If the supplementary material is not of your own creation, appropriate citations should be provided.

#8 Tutorials: Attend tutorials consistently and engage productively with peers both in class and online (5% of grade).

#9 Final exam: Essay-question format (20% of grade). To be scheduled during exam period.

OTHER ACTIVITIES

Idea File: You are encouraged to keep a journal or “idea file” to collect ideas from this course, your first year experiences, thoughts on contemporary affairs, random insights, potential research ideas, etc. This is a practice followed by many great thinkers and innovators, and it’s an essential habit to develop, because “idea files” are a great place to turn to when developing paper topics. But here’s another reason to do it: Personal journals and reflections have proven invaluable as forms of history, yet less and less people keep them, meaning we are at risk of becoming one of the least documented civilizations ever. By committing your thoughts to paper or some other medium, you may become one of the few voices by which future generations learn about our era. How’s that for incentive? This will not be collected or graded but is nonetheless encouraged.

Online tutorial discussions: Each week students are invited to post a brief comment on a special section of Avenue to Learn’s discussion groups. It’s especially helpful if the post is a summary or reflection on the week’s readings and lectures, or includes key ideas, rich associations (like movies, pop culture, etc.). When students post on a topic they generally develop a better feel for the material, and better memory of that subject area. Done consistently, this can provide an incredible resource for midterms and exams, *and* it helps your instructor and TA’s get a feel for how material is being received, so we can better help you when tests come around. This is considered part of your tutorial participation.

Evaluation and Expectations

Evaluation

Participatory experiences, including the Media Detox, Memorization exercise, Conversation exercise and Tutorials should:

- Reflect an open, engaged, and attentive mind.
- Demonstrate resourcefulness in self-expression, as well as a willingness to listen or observe.
- Reflect a readiness to engage in creative and collaborative problem-solving as required.
- Reflect a willingness to share one’s own insights and learning process, however tentative.

Written assignments, including the Midterm and Exams should:

- Be legible and intelligible.
- Demonstrate engagement with, and mastery of the concepts covered in the course.
- Make rich connections between different issues raised in the course, and apply that learning to relevant problems including everyday experience
- Where appropriate, pose good questions.

The Major Paper should:

- Demonstrate an accomplished writing style, including grammar competency, clear organization and structure, and correct word-usage.
- Show that a student grasps the conceptual issues raised in the course, and that an effort is being made to address these issues constructively.
- Pose a good question and demonstrate knowledge of the material covered by the course.
- Reflect original thought and careful, thorough research and idea development.

- **Be properly documented** (Including a reference list) using a single, consistent well-recognized citation style. I recommend the Chicago in-text style as the best for an interdisciplinary approach. If you use any other citation system you must indicate which one you are using at the end of the paper. I recommend caution using software or online programs to autofill your citations, these programs are all too often wrong. **Note:** All direct citations and all references to specific or characteristic ideas from a thinker or source must be supported with a page citation.
- Conform to standard academic paper format (i.e., paper should be double-spaced, letter-size paper, using a 12-point Times New Roman font, with standard margins, indicating course title, instructor and TA, due date of assignment, student name and student number on cover page, stapled not paperclips or folder, etc. If in doubt, ask your TA).
- Any supplementary materials should be clearly identified, and do not need to follow the standard format, beyond full citations.

Expectations

- Attend lecture, prepared to discuss the readings. An environment of mutual respect among students is to be maintained. Repeated absences will be reflected in the grade.
- Complete assignments on schedule, except in cases of illness or immediate personal emergency (see MSAF requirements). Coinciding assignments in other courses is not grounds for an extension, so prepare accordingly.
- Provide legible copies of the assignments. Submission by e-mail is not acceptable unless specifically requested by the instructor or TA.
- Assignments are due by 4pm on the day indicated in the syllabus, if they are not handed in during class time. Late penalties of 10% per day (weekends count as one day) applies to work that arrives after the assignment deadline.
- Grade appeals can be made no sooner than 24 hours after the work is returned. Grade appeals must be accompanied by a one-page statement setting out the grounds for re-evaluation. If sufficient grounds exist, an assignment will be re-evaluated. Please note, that re-evaluation may result in a grade being lowered.

E-mail guidelines

- Course email should be sent to me via Avenue to Learn (frostc@avenue.cllmcmaster.ca). I will check this e-mail regularly, although you should always allow several days for a response.
- Note that the Avenue software does not work with outside email systems. Meaning if you write to "frostc@mcmaster.ca" from inside the Avenue I might get your message in my regular email system days later but I cannot reply.
- If you are thinking of e-mailing myself or the TAs, please take the following steps:
 1. First, check the syllabus and reading list – is the answer there?
 2. If the answer is not clear from the syllabus or website, ask yourself whether it can wait until your next tutorial or class meeting, so everyone can benefit from the answer.
 3. If it just can't wait or is not something of general interest, then feel free to e-mail me through Avenue or your TA (by their preferred email method).
 4. If I feel your question could also help other students, I may post the question (withholding your name) on the discussion portion of the Avenue website.
 5. Please note that only email sent from a McMaster email address will receive a response.

McMaster University & Arts & Science Program Notices (2017-18)

McMaster Policy on Academic Integrity

You are expected to exhibit honesty and use ethical behaviour in all aspects of the learning process. Academic credentials you earn are rooted in principles of honesty and academic integrity. Academic dishonesty is to knowingly act or fail to act in a way that results or could result in unearned academic credit or advantage. This behaviour can result in serious consequences—e.g., the grade of zero on an assignment, loss of credit with a notation on the transcript (notation reads: “Grade of F assigned for academic dishonesty”), and/or suspension or expulsion from the university. It is your responsibility to understand what constitutes academic dishonesty. For information on the various types of academic dishonesty, please refer to the Academic Integrity Policy, located at: <http://www.mcmaster.ca/academicintegrity>. The following illustrates only three forms of academic dishonesty: 1) Plagiarism—e.g., the submission of work that is not one’s own or for which other credit has been obtained. 2) Improper collaboration in group work. 3) Copying or using unauthorized aids in tests and examinations.

McMaster Student Absence Form (MSAF)

In the event of an absence, students should review and follow the Academic Regulations in the Undergraduate Calendar “Requests for Relief for Missed Academic Term Work.” Please consult the MSAF statement on our website (<https://artsci.mcmaster.ca/forms-requests/>) and direct any questions or concerns to Shelley Anderson or Rebecca Bishop in the Arts & Science Program Office as appropriate.

Academic Accommodation of Students with Disabilities Statement

Academic Accommodation of Students with Disabilities:

Students who require academic accommodation must contact Student Accessibility Services (SAS) to make arrangements with a Program Coordinator. Academic accommodations must be arranged for each term of study. Student Accessibility Services can be contacted by phone 905-525-9140 ext. 28652 or email sas@mcmaster.ca. For further information, consult McMaster University’s Policy for Academic Accommodation of Students with Disabilities.

Email Contact and Student Responsibility Statement

Please Note: The instructor and university reserve the right to modify elements of the course during the term. The university may change the dates and deadlines for any or all courses in extreme circumstances. If either type of modification becomes necessary, reasonable notice and communication with the students will be given with explanation and the opportunity to comment on changes. It is the responsibility of students to check **their McMaster email** and course websites weekly during the term and to note any changes. Announcements will be made in class and by using the course email distribution list.

ARTS & SCIENCE 1A06: PRACTICES OF KNOWLEDGE
Reading List 2017/18

Sept 6: Introduction, course overview & how to succeed at POK.

"THE OLD QUARREL" (26x2)

Sept 11: Plato (1991) Book X. In *The Republic of Plato*. (A. Bloom, Trans.). New York: Basic Books. Pp. 277-303.

Sept 13: Plato (1991) Book X. In *The Republic of Plato*. (A. Bloom, Trans.). New York: Basic Books. Pp. 277-303.

THE RISE OF SYMBOLIC THINKING (38)

Sept 18: Merlin Donald (1993). Précis of *Origins of the modern mind*: Three stages in the evolution of culture and cognition. *Behavioral and Brain Sciences* 16, 737-48.

- **DETOX DUE**

Sept 20: Harold Innis (1995). The Bias of Communication. In *The Bias of Communication*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press. Pp. 33-60.

ICON/SYMBOL/SIGN (30)

Sept 25: J. David Lewis-Williams and Thomas A. Dowson (1990, Jun.). Through the Veil: San Rock Paintings and the Rock Face. *The South African Archaeological Bulletin* 45(151), 5-16.

- Also please consult the San Rock Art of South Africa image gallery available online through The Bradshaw Foundation at:
http://www.bradshawfoundation.com/south_africa/south_africa_gallery.php.

Sept 27: Sven Ouzman (2001). Seeing is deceiving: rock art and the non-visual. *World Archaeology* 33 (2): 237-56.

AGONISM (100)

Oct 2: *The Epic of Gilgamesh* (2003) A. George (Trans.) New York, Penguin Books. Pp. 1-54.

Oct 4: *The Epic of Gilgamesh* (2003) A. George (Trans.) New York, Penguin Books. Pp. 54-100.

RITUAL (29)

Oct 16: Penelope Wilson (2003) 'I Know You, I Know Your Names' Coffin Texts, Spell 407. *Sacred Signs*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. Pp. 68-83.

Oct 18: (1997) The Dialogue of Man and his Soul. In *The Tale of Sinuhe and Other Ancient Egyptian Poems 1940-1640*, R.B. Parkinson (Trans.). Oxford: Clarendon Press. Pp. 151-65.

MASK (115)

Oct 23: Aristophanes (2012) *The Clouds*. J. Cloughton and J. Affleck (Trans.) Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Pp. 1-67.

Oct 25: Aristophanes (2012) *The Clouds*. J. Cloughton and J. Affleck (Trans.) Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Pp. 68- 115.

MIDTERM & MEME (13)

Oct 30: MIDTERM

Nov 1: Walter Benjamin (1968) The Task of the Translator. In *Illuminations*, H. Arendt (Ed.) New York: Schocken Books. Pp. 69-82.

STORY (74)

Nov 6: David Unaipon (2001) The Mischevious Crow and the Good he Did. In *Legendary Tales of the Australian Aborigines*, S. Muecke and A. Shoemaker (Eds.). Melbourne: Melbourne University Press. Pp. 85-119.

Nov 8: Horodotus (1954) *The Histories*, A. de Sélincourt (Trans.) New York: Penguin Books. Pp. 1-39.

POETRY (88)

Nov 13: Sappho (2009). *Stung with Love*, A. Poochigan (Trans.). New York: Penguin. Pp. 1-54.

Nov 15: Sappho (2009). *Stung with Love*, A. Poochigan (Trans.). New York: Penguin. Pp. 55-88.

WISDOM (40)

Nov 20: Selections from H. Odera Oruka (1990), *Sage Philosophy*. New York: E.J. Brill. Pp. 117-27, 135-48, 158-62.

Nov 22: Selections from Confucius, *The Analects*, A. Charles Muller (Trans.). Chapters 1, 4, 5, 7, 15 & 17. <http://www.acmuller.net/con-dao/analects.html>.

PHILOSOPHY (103)

Nov 27: Plato (1973), Phaedrus. In *Phaedrus and Letters VII and VIII*. New York: Penguin Books. Pp. 21-66.

Nov 29: Plato (1973), Phaedrus. In *Phaedrus and Letters VII and VIII*. New York: Penguin Books. Pp. 66-103.

END OF TERM REVIEW

Dec 4: Summary lecture

Dec 6: Exam review.

TERM 2

ANALYSIS (38)

Jan 8: Aristotle (2000) Book IIIV. In *Nicomachean Ethics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Pp. 143-63.

Jan 10: Aristotle (2000) Book IX *Nicomachean Ethics* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Pp. 164-82.

NATURE (31)

Jan 15: Selections from Lucretius (2001). Book III. *On The Nature of Things*. M. F. Smith (Trans.) Indianapolis, IN: Hackett Publishing Company. Pp. 76-98.

Jan 17: Epicurus (1926) Letter to Meneoceus & Principal Doctrines. In *Epicurus: The Extant Remains*. C. Bailey (Trans.) Oxford: Clarendon Press. Pp. 83-93, 95-105.

ORDER (45)

Jan 22: Marcus Aurelius Books 2, 3 & 4 *Meditations* M. Hammond (Trans.). New York: Penguin Books. Pp. 10-34.

Jan 24: Marcus Aurelius Books 8, 10 *Meditations* M. Hammond (Trans.). New York: Penguin Books. Pp. 71-82, 94-104.

LAW (46)

Jan 29: Selections from (1913) *The Institutes of Justinian*. J. B. Moyle (Trans.) Oxford: Clarendon Press. Pp. 3-9, 35-45, 159-73.

Jan 31: James Boyd White (1985) "The Invisible Discourse of the Law" in *Heracles' Bow: Essays on the Rhetori and Poetics of the Law*. Madison, WI: The University of Wisconsin Press, pp. 60-76.

MID-TERM REVIEW & RESEARCH/WRITING (16)

Feb 5: Midterm review lecture & paper discussion

Feb 7: Dorothea Brande (1934). The Advantages of Duplicity. In *Becoming a Writer*. New York: Putnam Books. Pp. 45-61.

- RESEARCH DESIGN DUE

STRATEGY (65)

Feb 12: Sun Tzu [1910]. *The Art of War*. T.L. Giles (Trans.). <http://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/17405>. Pp., 1-34.

Feb 14: Sun Tzu [1910]. *The Art of War*. T.L. Giles (Trans.). <http://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/17405>. Pp. 34-65.

INTROSPECTION (44)

Feb 26: Selections from Saint Augustine (1997). *The Confessions*. New York: Vintage Books. Pp. 30-6, 58-74.

Feb 28: Selections from Saint Augustine (1997). *The Confessions*. New York: Vintage Books. Pp. 252-72, 301-3.

ORIENTATION (49)

Mar 5: Denis Cosgrove (2001). Christian Globe. In *Apollo's Eye*. Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press. Pp. 54-78.

Mar 7: Gerhard Dohrn-van Rossum (1996). The Medieval Hours. In *History of the Hour* T. Dunlap (Trans.). Chicago: The University of Chicago Press. Pp. 19-44.

INFORMATION (47)

Mar 12: Tom McArthur (1986). The Ancient World. In *Worlds of Reference*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Pp. 19-46.

Mar 14: Walter Ong (1982). Print, Space and Closure. In *Orality & Literacy*. New York: Routledge. Pp. 115-35.

SCIENCE (35)

Mar 19: Thomas Kuhns (1996). The Nature and Necessity of Scientific Revolutions. In *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press. Pp. 92-110.

- **MAJOR PAPER DUE**

Mar 21: Selections from Nicholas Rescher (1999). *The Limits of Science*. Pittsburg, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press. Pp. 46-54, 241-50.

NOTHINGNESS (54)

Mar 26: Thich Nhat Hahn (1988). *The Heart of Understanding: Reflections on the Prañāparamita Heart Sutra*. Berkeley, CA: Parallax Press. Pp. 1-29.

Mar 28: Thich Nhat Hahn (1988). *The Heart of Understanding: Reflections on the Prañāparamita Heart Sutra*. Berkeley, CA: Parallax Press. Pp. 31-54.

CITIZEN-SCIENTIST

Apr 2: John Muir (1894) The Glacier Meadows. In *The Mountains of California*. New York: The New Century Co.
(http://vault.sierraclub.org/john_muir_exhibit/writings/the_mountains_of_california/chapter_7.aspx)

Apr 4: Course conclusion.

Apr 9: Exam Review.