

Symposion seminar
Plato's *Phaedo*
 Fall 2021

Welcome to the first seminar of the Leiden philosophy study association Symposion, a free voluntary course run by students for students! Dr Bert van den Berg's and Dr Ömer Aygün's introductory courses provide great historical overviews of the birth of "philosophy" in the Ancient Greek tradition, centering around Plato. Here we complement this by actually philosophizing one of Plato's most enchanting dialogues: the *Phaedo*, in which the eponymous Phaedo of Elis, on his way home from Athens, meets the Pythagorean philosopher Echechrates of Phlius. Phaedo recounts the last moments of the earthly life of Socrates, which the man apparently spent demonstrating (with elaborate arguments and bizarre stories) that his true life is only just beginning. Like countless thinkers from pagan, Christian, Islamic, and modern worlds before us, we may also take this scene as a beginning for philosophical life

This seminar is thus an open space for *doing* philosophy, beyond just *learning about* philosophy. That has at least two ingredients: 1) meeting an entire text, on its own terms, paying close attention to both style and content, responding to it critically, and seeing where the reading experience takes us; 2) meeting other philosophers in person, on their own terms, listening intently to what they have to say, responding to them critically, and seeing where the discussion takes us. Like the *Phaedo* itself, this process should be simultaneously very serious and very fun. Indeed, engaging intimately with classics need not be drudgery, but one of the most transformative activities one can partake in.

To make this activity available to all, the seminar is highly accessible, requiring no preparation for the first session and an average of 12 pages for subsequent ones. There are no penalties, and the only reward is the experience itself, so it is completely fine to drop out at any time. Participants are divided into small groups of 10+, each taught by 2 student volunteers in English or Dutch. But we are passionate thinkers rather than expert scholars. Our only role as teachers is to provide a focused and stimulating, but also equal and light-hearted, philosophical encounter.

Schedule

Each group meets every other week for a 1.5-hour session, at their own set time and location.

we ek	dates	seminar	preparation	notes
37	September 13.–17.			seminar announced at first Greek & Roman Philosophy lecture on Tuesday September 14.
38	September 20.–24.	1 Why and How to Read Plato	none	
39	September 27.– October 1.			

40	October 4.–8.	2 Art and Death	<i>Phaedo</i> 57–69 (in Stephanus pagination)	holiday on Monday October 4.
41	October 11.–15.			
42	October 18.–22.	3 Immortal Soul A	<i>Phaedo</i> 70–76	
43	October 25.–29.			midterms week
44	November 1.–5.	4 Immortal Soul B	<i>Phaedo</i> 77–84	
45	November 8.–12.			
46	November 15.–19.	5 <i>Logos</i>	<i>Phaedo</i> 84–106	
47	November 22.–26.			
48	November 29.– December 3.	6 <i>Mythos</i>	<i>Phaedo</i> 107–118	
49	December 6.–10.			
50	December 13.–17.	7 Mysterious bonus session	Creative assignment, TBA	last Greek & Roman Philosophy lecture on Tuesday December 14.

Teachers

name	(philosophy) Leiden study	languages	email	WhatsApp p number	student number
Albert Ferkl (organizer)	MA Global & Comparative	English			
Bart van der Werf (substitute)	BA Global & Comparative	English/Dutch			
Bo van den Bosch	BA Filosofie + BA History	Dutch/English			
Cosima Stierman	MA Modern European	English/Dutch			
Fotis Diplaris	BA Global &	English(+			

	Comparative	Ancient Greek)			
Franciscus Mulders	BA Filosofie + BA Linguistics	English/Dutch(+ Ancient Greek)			
Giorgos Fragkos	MA Modern European	English			
Hamdin Sula	MA ...of Psychology	English/German			
Kian Shah (coorganizer)	graduated BA Global & Comparative	English			
Lydia Markidis (substitute)	graduated BA Global & Comparative	English/Dutch(+ Ancient Greek)			
Oskar Wendrich	MA Modern European	English/Dutch/ German			
Samuel Abrahám	MA Modern European	English			
Sharron Winkelhorst	MA ...of Culture and Anthropology	English/Dutch			
Sven Eichholtz	BA Global & Comparative	English/Dutch			
William Scheydecker	MA Modern European	English/French			

The post-human: Mad and Queer perspectives

Reading Group

Fabius & Sofia

Keywords: Posthumanism, Intersectional Queer studies, Disability studies, Critical theory, Audre Lorde

Short description:

This reading group tries to introduce students into small corner of queer, mad, and posthumanist studies. The focus will be on troubling the abstract notions of the normative rational agent proposed by enlightenment philosophers, using the experience of bodies and minds who themselves do not fit the vitruvian man.

This is posthumanism.

We will attempt to emotionally and philosophically develop the vocabulary to discuss the intersection of gender, neurodivergence and more. Finally, we will draw from experiential and emotive sources, disrupting traditional modes of knowing and meeting each other at the intersections.

Week I

Kant- Was ist aufklärung.

Braidotti- Posthumanism 1-4, 13-15

Week II

Fielding-Habit body

Week III

Bartky- Foucault, femininity and the modernisation of patriarchal power

Week IV

Lorde- Age, race, class and sex

Week V

Wittig- What is a women

Butler- Phenomenology

Week VI

Kafer- Introduction

Week VII

Friedan- The problem that has no name

Epistemic injustice- summary

Week VIII

Audre Lorde- power of the erotic

Nietzsche- what is truth

Masters of Suspicion Syllabus

Week One: Introduction

Readings: “Freud & Philosophy” by Paul Ricoeur, pg. 32-36

Week Two: Nietzsche I

Readings: Preface and sections 10 & 11 of *Genealogy of Morality*

Week Three: Nietzsche II

Readings: Second Essay of *Genealogy of Morality*

Week Four: Nietzsche III

Readings: “Reason in Philosophy” from *Twilight of the Idols*;
Sections 11, 58, & 276 from *The Gay Science*

Week Five: Marx I

Readings: *Communist Manifesto*

Week Six: Marx II

Readings: “Class Consciousness” by György Lukács

Week Seven: Freud I

Readings: “Conscious and Unconscious” and “Ego and Id” from *The Ego and the Id*

Week Eight: Freud II

Readings: “Ego and Super-Ego” and “Two Classes of Instincts” from *The Ego and the Id*

Week Nine: Symposium of Suspicion

Readings: none. We will discuss the theme of suspicion in a large symposium with the other reading groups

Active Reading: Nietzsche

A Symposium Reading Group Project, 2022 Spring

Tutors: Li-fan, Aisha, and Hamdin

Course Description

How do we begin to enter a philosopher's world when we know very little of them? How do we orient ourselves to ask meaningful questions while reading them? In these weekly sessions (1h~1.5h), we will practice intensive *active reading*, a most essential activity in philosophy. We practice this with Nietzsche, who places significant responsibility on the sensibilities of his readers. By briefly surveying *The Birth of Tragedy* and *Ecce Homo* to get an insight into Nietzsche's overall project, we will then read short aphorisms from *Human, All Too Human*, where we focus on exploring layers of approaches from historical-biographical, linguistic, formal, to philosophical analysis, as well as critical reflections on our understanding. With these, we hope to encourage active, independent, and critical engagement in our own reading in Nietzsche and beyond.

Objectives

By the end of this reading group, we should have practices or at least experienced:

- A sense of Nietzsche's philosophical position in context and contrast to his interlocutors;
- A sense of Nietzsche's unique writing style and philosophical inclination;
- Basic sensitivity to the multiplicity of layers concerning a text (e.g. language, style, content, and extra-textual contexts);
- Basic content-oriented reading skills (descriptive, analytic and evaluative);
- Basic sensitivity to style and extra-logical argumentative/rhetoric devices;
- Critical thinking and reflection;
- Identifying or conceiving meaning theme(s) to approach a text from active reading.

Readings (Provided by Tutors)

- *Human, All Too Human (Menschliches, Allzumenschliches, HH/MA)*. Translated by R. J. Hollingdale. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996.
- *Ecce Homo (EH)*. Translated by Judith Norman, in *The Anti-Christ, Ecce Homo, Twilight of the Idols, and Other Writings*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005. Or: translated by Duncan Large, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007.
- *The Birth of Tragedy (Die Geburt der Tragödie, BT/GT)*. Translated by Ronald Speirs, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999.
- German edition: *Kritische Studienausgabe (KSA)* in 15 Bänden. Edited by Giorgio Colli and Mazzino Montinari, Berlin: De Gruyter, 1967-1988.

We will start with an observation of *Human, All too Human* by observing its title, subtitle, the “30. Mai 1878” condition, the Descartes quote (“*An Stelle einer Vorrede*”), the structure and contents of the main body, and the epilogue (“*Undert Freunden. Ein Nachspiel*”).

Then, we will turn to BT (10-19) and EC (Preface, Wise, Clever) to help students gain a basic frame of reference.

Following that, we will begin from the first aphorism (HH 1) and continue by order (or interests!), aiming for one or a few aphorisms per week. Selections from Nietzsche’s other works may also be considered, depending on our discussions throughout the seminar.

Schedule

March 07? Session 01

March 14? Session 02

March 21? No session, midterm week

March 28? Session 03

April 04? Session 04

April 11? Session 05

April 18? Session 06

April 25? Session 07

May 02? Session 08

May 09? Session 09

May 16? Session 10