

LART602: The Rational Eye

Section 001 (CRN12253; 3 credit hours)

Tuesdays, 5:00-7:45pm, OWENS 206A

Winthrop University

Fall, 2013

Prof. M. Gregory Oakes, Ph.D.

Office: Kinard 323

Office Hours: M-R 10-11am, T 4-5, *and by appointment*

Office telephone: 803/323-4720

Email: oakesm@winthrop.edu

Website: <http://faculty.winthrop.edu/oakesm/>

Course Description

This course “[i]nvestigates how we search for order through reason, logic, and other mental processes exemplified in such disciplines as philosophy and mathematics.”¹

What is reason? What is human rationality? What is it to see the world through the “rational eye”? What role does reason play in the human search for order? These are questions that this course seeks to address.

Reason is a fundamental and pervasive feature of human life. It is basic to our approach to the world around us; its terms are primary to our understanding and knowledge. A study of reason is essential to the liberal arts, then, since the liberal arts seek to provide a general understanding of our world and our intellectual relation to it. That is, since reason itself is fundamental to the acquisition of knowledge, to the nature of knowledge itself, therefore in the general pursuit of knowledge, we must examine this primary element of knowledge itself.

The course considers rational order as understood by the Ancient Greeks and by Modern philosophers and includes attention to the notion of a divine rational order and to problem of evil as a particular issue. Students enrolled in the course will compose a term paper in addition to other exercises.

Course Goals

Program Statement:

“The theme of the program is ‘The Search for Order.’ This search is undertaken through core colloquia which explore how humans have searched and continue to search for order in their world through empirical, rational, and intuitive means. Students expand their search through courses in history, literature, political science, psychology, sociology, art history, and other disciplines in the arts and humanities. The central feature of the program is that students must be given, and they must seize, the opportunity to think about and reflect on issues basic to our humanity; they must explore how we bring order to a chaotic world...”² LART601 addresses the role of experience and perception in human knowledge; LART603 addresses the role of intuition. LART602 addresses the role of reason.

The successful student in this course:

- Will understand important accounts of reason as fundamental to human being;

- Will understand important accounts of reason as fundamental to human knowledge;
- Will understand important accounts of reason as related to reality itself;
- Will appreciate the problem of evil in the context of a rational world order.

Texts

Note: All of the texts of the course listed below are *required* for this course. However, there are available other editions of some of these, some in print and some online. The print texts available at the WU Bookstore are ideal for our purposes, being quality editions/translations and employing pagination standardized by scholars. Where possible, I have identified alternative editions available online (see the reading schedule).

In WU Bookstore:

Hesiod, *Works and Days and Theogony*. S. Lombardo, trans. Hackett, 1993
 Cohen, S. et al. *Readings in Ancient Greek Philosophy*, 4th ed. Hackett, 2011
 Sophocles, *The Oedipus Cycle*, Fitts and Fitzgerald, trans., Mariner Books/Barnes & Noble, 2002
 Descartes, *Meditations on First Philosophy*, Cambridge, Cottingham, ed., 1996
 Hume, *Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion*, Prometheus, 1989
 Nietzsche, *The Gay Science*, Kaufmann, Vintage Books, 1974
 Voltaire, *Candide*, Norton Critical Edition, 1991

Available on e-Reserve [e]:

Burkert, W., "Zeus", *Greek Religion*. Blackwell, 1985 (125-131)
 Burkert, W., "Philosophical Religion," *Greek Religion*. Blackwell, 1985 (305-337)
 Aristotle, *Physics*, Cohen et al, *Readings in Ancient Greek Philosophy*, 4th ed. Hackett, 2011 (694-700, 732-739, 745-757, 785-786)
 Burkert, W., "Greek Tragedy and Sacrificial Ritual," *Savage Energies: Lessons of Myth and Ritual in Ancient Greece*. Bing, trans. University of Chicago Press, 2001 (1-36)
 Spinoza, *Treatise on the Emendation of the Intellect* §§1-30. *Ethics, Treatise on the Emendation of the Intellect and Selected Letters*. Shirley, trans., Feldman, ed. Hackett, 1992 (233-239)
 Leibniz, *Discourse on Metaphysics*. *Philosophical Essays*. Ariew and Garber, eds. Hackett, 1989 (35-68)
 Nietzsche, *On the Genealogy of Morals* I.4-17. Clark and Swensen, trans. Hackett, 1998 (12-33)

Available online:

(See notes to schedule, below)

Course Requirements

Preparation for class: Students should prepare for class by reading carefully and thoughtfully the assigned readings. Students should take notes on all readings. Students are expected to bring to class at least one significant comment or question about each reading to share with the group.

Presentations: Each student will present to the class a summary of his/her research project. The intent, here, is to help the student to define clearly his/her project and to

receive useful feedback on the project from the rest of the class. Presentations will be scheduled in consultation with the student.

Term Paper: The student will prepare a substantial essay on the topic of reason and the rational order. This is the primary productive task of the course.

Grading

Class participation:	40%
Term Paper	60%

Classroom Conduct and Policies

Breaks: We'll ordinarily take a break about midway through our session. Please avoid eating dinner during class.

Cell phones: Please avoid using cell phones in class.

Lap-tops: Please avoid surfing the net, checking email, etc., in class.

Electronic dissemination of course information: I will generally distribute information to the class either orally in class or by email. Please ensure that I have a reliable email address for you.

Disabilities: Students with medical or other recognized disability must contact Gena Smith, Coordinator, Services for Students with Disabilities, at 323-2233, as soon as possible. Once you have your professor notification letter, please notify me immediately (and prior to the first test or assignment) so that I am aware of your accommodation requirements. If your accommodations affect every test/assignment, please remind me prior to each one.

Schedule (subject to change)³

Date	Topics	Readings
I. Course Introduction Course Introduction; study guides and habits; rational order		
8/19	Introductions Chaos, Cosmos, <i>Logos</i> Logic and Reason	
II. The Greeks To what extent is the world around us a rational order (cosmos)? How might we come to know any such order?		
8/26	a. Pre-Historic Rational Order: myth; pre-philosophical thought; supernaturalism and anthropomorphism	Hesiod: <i>Theogony</i> ⁴ (entire) [pp. 61-90, plus notes] Homer: <i>Iliad</i> , Book I ⁵ Burkert: "Zeus" [e = e-reserve] Stravinsky, <i>Rite of Spring</i> (view) ⁶

9/2	b. The Pre-Socratics: the emergence of philosophy, rationalism; naturalism; idealism	Pre-Socratics texts: Thales - Philolaus [RAGP = <i>Readings in Ancient Greek Philosophy</i> pp. 1-99] ⁷ Burkert: "Philosophical Religion" pp. 305-321 [e] Images: Kouroi ⁸ (view)
9/9	c. Socrates: Moral Order and Human Wisdom	Plato: <i>Euthyphro</i> ⁹ [RAGP 135-152] Plato: <i>Apology</i> ¹⁰ [RAGP 153-178] Plato: <i>Republic</i> , Book I ¹¹ [RAGP 369-397]
9/16	d. Plato: Idealism and Dualism	Plato: <i>Republic</i> Books II-IX ¹¹ Burkert: "Philosophical Religion" pp. 321-329, 332-337 Classical Greek Sculpture ¹² (view) Plato: <i>Parmenides</i> , 130a-132b ¹³ [RAGP 645-647] – recommended
9/23	e. Aristotle: Naturalism and Empiricism	Aristotle: <i>Nicomachean Ethics</i> Book I.1.1094a1-9.1100a9, 13.1102a5-1103a10, Book II.1.1102b14-6.1107a27 ¹⁴ [RAGP 870-890] Burkert: "Philosophical Religion" pp. 329-332 [e]
9/30	f. Sophocles: Cosmos and Chaos	Sophocles: <i>Oedipus Rex</i> ¹⁵ Sophocles: <i>Oedipus Rex</i> (view) ¹⁶ Burkert: "Greek Tragedy and Sacrificial Ritual" [e]
10/7	Catch-up Term Paper Proposals Due	
10/14	Fall Break	
III. The Moderns How are reason and rationalism understood in the Modern era? To what extent is our world a rational place, for Modern (and post-Modern) thinkers? What is the status of good and evil, with respect to a rational world order?		
10/21	a. Modern Rationalism	Descartes: <i>Meditations on First Philosophy</i> (entire) ¹⁷ Spinoza: <i>Treatise on the Emendation of the Intellect</i> §§1-30 [e] Bach: Brandenburg Concerto No. 6, 1 st Movement ¹⁸
10/28	b. Limits of Reason; Modern empiricism	Hume: <i>Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion</i> (entire) ¹⁹

11/4	c. Animal order and animal knowledge	Nietzsche, <i>The Gay Science</i> , Book One: §§1-4, 11-14, 19, 21, 26, 28, 39, 54; Book Two: §§57-59, 75; Book Three: §§108-145; Book Four: §§276, 277, 283, 285, 289, 290, 326, 327, 333, 335, 340-342; Book V: §§343-349, 355, 371-374, 377, 383
11/11	d. The Problem of Evil	<i>Genesis</i> 1-3 ²⁰ Leibniz: <i>Discourse on Metaphysics</i> [e] ²¹ Hume: <i>Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion</i> Parts 10-11 ²⁰ Milton: <i>Paradise Lost</i> Book V.561-802 ²²
11/18	e. The Problem of Evil, cont.	<i>Job</i> (entire) ²¹ Voltaire: <i>Candide</i> (entire) ²³ Nietzsche: <i>GM</i> I.4-17 [e]
11/25	Catch-up	
12/2	Term Papers Due	

¹ Master of Liberal Arts. <http://www2.winthrop.edu/mla/programrequirements.htm>

² Master of Liberal Arts – Home Page for the Master of Liberal Arts.

<http://www.winthrop.edu/mla/>

³ Minor changes to this syllabus will be announced in class and are the student's responsibility. More significant changes will be announced in class and furnished in writing.

⁴ Hesiod's *Theogony* may be found here:

<http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus%3atext%3a1999.01.0130>

⁵ Homer's *Iliad* may be found here:

<http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus:text:1999.01.0217>

⁶ Stravinsky's *Rite of Spring* may be viewed here:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jF1OQkHybEQ>.

⁷ An alternative source is P. Curd, *A Presocratics Reader* 2nd ed. (Hackett, 2011), 1-137; there are other worthy print collections as well. I have not found a well-edited online source for these materials.

⁸ For information on the Greek *Kouros*, see here: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kouros>

⁹ Plato's *Euthyphro* may be found here:

<http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus%3Atext%3A1999.01.0170%3Atext%3DEuthyphr>.

¹⁰ Plato's *Apology* may be found here:

<http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus%3Atext%3A1999.01.0170%3Atext%3DApol>.

¹¹ Plato's *Republic* may be found here:

<http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus:text:1999.01.0168>

¹² For some representative images, see here:

http://faculty.winthrop.edu/oakesm/LART602/Classical_Sculpture.html

¹³ Plato's *Parmenides* may be found here:

<http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus%3Atext%3A1999.01.0174%3Atext%3DParm.%3Apage%3D130>

¹⁴ Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics* may be found here:

<http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus:text:1999.01.0054>

¹⁵ Sophocles' *Oedipus Rex* may be found here:

<http://classics.mit.edu/Sophocles/oedipus.html>

¹⁶ Two outstanding film versions of *Oedipus Rex* are the film by Pier Pasolini and Seiji Ozawa's production of the Stravinsky opera, *Oedipus Rex*. Both are available from Netflix; the Stravinsky may be viewed here:

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FyeR8lY7A_8

¹⁷ Descartes's *Meditations in First Philosophy* may be found here:

<http://www.classicallibrary.org/descartes/meditations/>. See here for a simplified text:

<http://www.earlymoderntexts.com/de.html>

¹⁸ An interesting and useful visual and audio version may be found here:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mR8LrZBg02k>

¹⁹ Hume's *Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion* may be found here:

<http://www.gutenberg.org/files/4583/4583-h/4583-h.htm>. See the following link for a somewhat simplified text: <http://www.earlymoderntexts.com/hd.html>

²⁰ Biblical passages may be found here: <http://www.biblegateway.com/>

²¹ A more reader-friendly version of the Leibniz may be found here:

http://www.earlymoderntexts.com/f_leibniz.html

²² You will find a copy of Milton here:

http://www.dartmouth.edu/~milton/reading_room/pl/book_5/index.shtml

²³ Voltaire's *Candide* may be found here: <http://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/19942>. Also recommended is the Broadview Press edition, 2009, ISBN 978-1-55111-746-1.