

**Hesiod Study Guide**  
PHIL301  
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Reading: Hesiod, Introduction (pp. 1-8, 12-16) and *Theogony*, (pp. 61-103\*)

Note, too, *the helpful Glossary*, found on pages 105-128 (at the end of the text).  
And see also the ancillary materials related to Hesiod on the course web-page (Baudelaire, Stravinsky, etc.)

Our goal is to understand the significance of Ancient Greek philosophy. More specifically, what *logoi* (ideas, concepts, accounts) did the Ancient Greeks use to develop *cosmos* out of *chaos*? What do we learn of their world-view from the particular terms used to elaborate it?

Please arrive in class prepared to respond to the following questions.

Hesiod:

(Introduction)

1. Who was Hesiod? What do we know about him and the authorship of *Theogony*? Why are there questions about the identity of Hesiod?
2. Who, if anyone, believed the tales that Hesiod tells in *Theogony*? What do these tales tell us of the religious beliefs of the Ancient Greeks?
3. What is the difference between a “cosmogony” and a “theogony”? Which is provided by Hesiod?
4. In what respect/s, if any, is Hesiod’s *Theogony* a philosophical work?

(*Theogony*)

5. By means of what concepts (*logoi*) and principles (*archia*) does Hesiod attempt to bring order to our universe? I.e., how does he attempt to explain (a) the existence of the world; (b) the physical make-up of the world; (c) the on-going events of the world?
6. To what extent, if any, are Hesiod’s explanations *logical* as opposed to *arbitrary*?<sup>†</sup>
  - a. Find an example of both a logical and an arbitrary explanation.
7. What does the *Theogony* tell us about the Ancient Greeks’ pre-philosophical understanding of the world around them, if anything?

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\* Be sure to read the notes to the poem’s text; these are a helpful commentary on the text, with explanations of place-names, events and personalities from the Greek pantheon, etc.

<sup>†</sup> An explanation is logical to the extent that some conceptual (*logos*-grounded) relation is made between the explaining account (*explanans*) and the item explained (*explanandum*); an explanation is arbitrary to the extent that *explanans* and *explanandum* are thus unrelated.

