

FIL2700 - Advanced – History of philosophy till 1600

Fall 2011

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We shall study ancient texts about happiness and the good life from Herodotus to Plotinus. The following themes will be central: What are the main characteristics and the main differences between the various ancient thinkers? Are these ancient ideas relevantly different from our own? Is there something we can learn from them?

Most of the texts we read are available on the internet and are in general easily obtainable. See:

1. Herodotus, Croesus and Solon.  
<http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/ancient/herodotus-creususandsolon.html>
2. Plato, *Republic*, II, 357 A-368 A; IV, 336 A-445 E; IX, 571 A-592 B  
<http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/collection> (Go to Greek and Roman materials)
3. Aristotelle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, books I. og X. Available at:  
<http://classics.mit.edu/Aristotle/nicomachaen.html>
4. Epicureans. <http://www.pitt.edu/~kis23/EPICURUS-LUCRETIUS.pdf> Epikuros (*Hovedlæresetninger*) and Lucretius (*De rerum natura*, selection). See <http://www.epicurus.net/> and <http://www.pitt.edu/~kis23/EPICURUS-LUCRETIUS.pdf>
5. Cicero, *On Ends* (*De finibus bonorum et malorum*)
6. Epictetus, *Enchiridion* (*Handbook*)  
<http://classics.mit.edu/Epictetus/epicench.html>
7. Seneca, Letter 32  
[http://www.stoics.com/seneca\\_epistles\\_book\\_1.html#XXXII1](http://www.stoics.com/seneca_epistles_book_1.html#XXXII1)
8. Plotinus. *Ennead* I.5 og I.4 (copies will be distributed)

Lectures/seminars

1. Introduction. Croesus and Solon
2. Plato: A conflict between the quest for happiness and morality?
3. Plato (cont.)
4. Aristotle's definition of happiness and his account of this in *N.E.* I

5. Happiness, pleasure and activity
6. Happiness, pleasure and activity (cont.)
7. *Vita activa* or *vita contemplativa*? *N.E. X*
8. Epicurus og Lucretius pleasure, life and death
9. Epicurus og Lucretius pleasure, life and death (cont.)
10. The Stoic outlook on life: life without emotion.
11. The Stoic outlook on life. Happiness and time.
12. Plotinus. Happiness and the self.
13. General discussion
14. General discussion