Ancient Philosophical Theology (BA Seminar/Lektürekurs)
SoSe 2018 (Apr.–Jul.) — Fridays, 12–14h — Room E210
Dr.-des. Jonathan Greig (jonathan.greig@lrz.uni-muenchen.de)

Course Description
In this course we will conduct a survey of philosophical views in antiquity about the nature of God, or the gods, as divine and (often) metaphysical causes of all things—both immaterial and even material (e.g. Stoics). Whereas a contemporary approach to 'philosophical theology' tends to separate this branch from metaphysics, ancient philosophers viewed a study of 'theology' as synonymous to doing metaphysics—or the 'science of being', ala Thomas Aquinas/Avicenna—an approach one also sees up until late Scholasticism. Our wide-ranging survey will primarily focus on metaphysical conceptions of God/the gods as causes, especially in the context of proofs for their existence as principles.

We begin with classical antiquity philosophers (Pre-Socratics, Plato, Aristotle) to Roman Imperial philosophy (Stoics and Epicureans), then the continuation of the Platonic Tradition in middle/late antiquity (Middle Platonists and the early and late Neoplatonist, Plotinus and Proclus [respectively]) up to the early Christian reception (Augustine, early Byzantines) and transformation of the pagan ancients.

Schedule

Apr. 20 Introduction
Syllabus overview + general discussion of topic

Apr. 27 Pre-Socratics: Physicalist and immaterial conceptions of divine causes

Primary Readings
* Thales: Texts 15–20 ('Principles', 'Physical Theory'); 34–37 ('Psychology and Theology')
* Anaxagoras: Texts 8, 11–13, 28–40 (general principles); 30–34 ('Mind and Motion')
* Empedocles: Texts 26–33, 40 ('Principles and Elements')
* Philolaus: Texts 7–14, 19–25 ('Cosmology'); 41–45 ('Number and science')
* Democritus: Texts 182–190 ('Theology')

For these readings/fragments, see: Graham, Daniel W (ed.) (2010), *The Texts of Early Greek Philosophy: The Complete Fragments and Selected Testimonies of the Major Presocratics. Part 1.* 2 vols. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Secondary Readings
* Primavesi, Oliver (2008), 'Empedocles: Physical Divinity and Allegorical Myth', in Curd, P. and D. H. Graham (eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of Presocratic Philosophy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press), 250–283.
* Hankinson, R.J. (2008), 'Reason, Cause, and Explanation in Presocratic Philosophy', in Curd, P. and D. H. Graham (eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of Presocratic Philosophy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press), 434–57.
* [*optional*] Menn, Stephen (1995), *Plato on God as Nous* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press), 25–33 (Ch. 5).

May 4 Plato, Pt. 1: Divine causes in the *Timaeus/Phaedo* as a response to Pre-Socratics

Primary Readings
* Plato, *Phaedo* 96a–102a
* Plato, *Timaeus* 27a–31b

Secondary Readings
* Menn, Stephen (1995), *Plato on God as Nous* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press), 1–18, 43–59.
  * [*Optional*] *See also Ch. 5 (25–33), cited above.*
* Johansen, T. K. (2014), 'Why the Cosmos Needs a Craftsman: Plato, *Timaeus* 27d5–29b1', *Phronesis*, 59: 297–320.

May 11 Plato, Pt. 2: Proofs for the existence of the Good/gods in *Republic* VI/*Laws* X

Primary Readings

* Plato, *Republic* VI, 505d–509c
* Plato, *Laws* X, 884a–899d (focusing on 894d–899d)

Secondary Readings

* Shields, Christopher (2008), 'Surpassing in Dignity and Power: The Metaphysics of Goodness in Plato's *Republic*', *Philosophical Inquiry*, 30: 1–17.
* Mayhew, Robert (2010), 'The Theology of the *Laws*', in Bobonich, Christopher (ed.), *Plato's Laws: a Critical Guide* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), 197–216.

May 18 Aristotle: Refined conceptions from Plato, proofs for the unmoved mover

Primary Readings

* Aristotle, *Metaphysics* XII (Book Λ), ch's. 6–7
* Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* X, ch's. 7–8

Secondary Readings

* Menn, Stephen (1992), 'Aristotle and Plato on God as Nous and as the Good', *Review of Metaphysics*, 45 (3):543–573.
* Olson R.M. (2013), 'Aristotle on God: Divine Nous as Unmoved Mover', in: Diller J., Kasher A. (eds.), *Models of God and Alternative Ultimate Realities* (Dordrecht: Springer), 101–109.

May 25 Stoics: Return to materialist conceptions of divine causality, gods as immanent principles

Primary Readings

* Long and Sedley 268–277 ('Principles', 'Body', 'God, Fire, Cosmic Cycle')
* *Ibid.,* 323–331 ('Theology')

For these and the Epicurean (*below*) *readings/fragments, see:* Long, A.A. and D.N. Sedley (eds.) (1987), *The Hellenistic Philosophers* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press).

Secondary Readings

* Bénatouïl, Thomas (2009), 'How Industrious can Zeus be? The Extant and Objects of Divine Activity in Stoicism', in Salles, Ricardo (ed.), *God and Cosmos in Stoicism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press), 23–45.
* Algra, Keimpe (2009), 'Stoic Philosophical Theology and Graeco-Roman Religion', in Salles, Ricardo (ed.), *God and Cosmos in Stoicism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press), 224–251.

Jun. 1 Epicureans: Gods as separate material paradigms

Primary Readings

* Long and Sedley 139–144 ('God' under 'Epicureanism')
* *Ibid.,* 25–28 ('Principles of Conservation' and 'Basic Division')
* *Ibid.,* 57–62 ('Cosmology without Teleology')
* *Ibid.,* 37–38 ('Atoms')

Secondary Readings

* Konstan, David (2011), 'Epicurus on the Gods', in Fish, Jeffrey and Kirk Sanders (eds.), *Epicurus and the Epicurean Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), 53–71.
* Sedley, David, 2011. 'Epicurus' Theological Innatism', in Fish, Jeffrey and Kirk Sanders (eds.), *Epicurus and the Epicurean Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), 29–52.

Jun. 8 **NO CLASS**

Jun. 15 Middle Platonists: Reconciling Plato and Aristotle on divine causality

Primary Readings

* 'Texts' in Ch. 6, 'The Creator God' (169–183) in Boys-Stones, George (2018), *Platonist Philosophy 80 BC to AD 250: An Introduction and Collection of Sources in Translation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press).

Secondary Readings

* Commentary to Ch. 6, 'The Creator God' (147–160) in Boys-Stones (above).
* Bos, A.P., 2003, "God as 'Father' and 'Maker' in Philo of Alexandria and its background in Aristotelian Thought", Elenchos, 24: 311–32.

Jun. 22 Plotinus, Pt. 1: The 'One' as the divine first cause 'beyond being'

Primary Readings

* Plotinus, *Ennead* VI.9, ch's. 1–3

Secondary Readings

* Ch. 3 (70–103) in Emilsson, Eyjólfur K. (2017), *Plotinus* (London: Routledge).
  * [*Optional*] For background to Plotinus' general view of reality, see the prev. Ch. 2 (37–69).
* Bussanich, John R. (1996), 'Plotinus's Metaphysics of the One', in *The Cambridge Companion to Plotinus* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), 38–65.

Jun. 29 Plotinus, Pt. 2: The One and epistemology—how we come to know the One

Primary Readings

* Plotinus, *Ennead* VI.9, ch's. 4–11

Secondary Readings

* Cohoe, Caleb (2017), 'Why the One Cannot Have Parts: Plotinus on Divine Simplicity, Ontological Independence, and Perfect Being Theology', in *The Philosophical Quarterly*, 67 (269): 751–771.

Jul. 6 Early, Late Antique Christians: Reception and transformation of the pagan Ancients

Primary Readings

* Texts from 'Christianity and monotheism' [c] in Ch. 14 ('The Three Hypostases: Soul, Intellect, One') in Sorabji, Richard (2005), *The Philosophy of the Commentators 200–600 AD: A Sourcebook* (*Volume 3: Logic and Metaphysics*) (Ithaca: Cornell University Press), 312–316.
* **TBD**

Secondary Readings

* Frede, Michael (1999), 'Monotheism and pagan philosophy in later antiquity' in Athanassiadi, Polymnia and Michael Frede (eds.), *Pagan Monotheism in Late Antiquity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press), 41–67.
* Dillon, John (2000), 'Logos and Trinity: Patterns of Platonist Influence on Early Christianity', in Vesey, G. (ed.), *The Philosophy in Christianity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press[**?**]), 1–13.
* Karamanolis, George E. (2013), *The Philosophy of Early Christianity* (London: Routledge) [**TBD**].

Jul. 13 Conclusion
General recap and Q&A.

Requirements

1. Class participation
   - Although attendance is not kept/marked (per university regulations), your participation in the classes is essential for this course—so you are strongly encouraged to come!
2. Readings
   - Primary readings are required for class participation. Secondary readings are not required, but help significantly.
   - We will refer occasionally to secondary readings in class (esp. in presentations), but discussions focus on the texts.
3. Presentations
   - Students will give a 5–10 min. presentation from one of the secondary readings for the class (with some time for questions/discussions)—but optionally also on a primary reading in addition to, or in place of, the secondary reading.
   - Essentially you should present one paragraph's worth that sums up the reading, and then a second paragraph with your thoughts or judgment on the argument. (Printed versions not required.)
4. Term Paper
   - Students will be marked for this course with a paper due at the end of this semester (8–10 pages).
   - Final deadline: Sept. 17, 2018 (Monday)
   - Pre-submission requirements (not marked):
     - July 4: Title (and abstract, if possible) for your paper—**IF** you choose your own topic(!).
     - July 12: Chosen topic, with title and rough outline (either from pre-chosen topics or your own topic).
   - Optionally—make an appointment with me to discuss your paper topic or draft for further guidance.
     - Speaking hours:
       - Thursdays, 2–4pm — Fridays, 2:30pm–3:30pm

Paper Topics/Questions

Below are the topics/questions about which you may write your paper. If you want to craft your own topic, it should be made along the lines of the topics below. Please send me a title and abstract by July 4 if you wish to do a different topic/question than what is below. In general, keep your paper mainly focused around the primary texts (although you're free to reference comparisons to contemporary science or philosophy, for example, in relation to Presocratics).

1. Does Plato give a good argument against physicalism (esp. with Presocratics) with his proofs for the existence of immaterial causes? Or not?
   - (E.g. *Phaedo* 96–100, or *Laws X*'s proof for the soul's priority.)
2. Is Plato's methodology for accounting for causes an improvement on the Presocratics' approach?
   - *Alternatively:* compare ancient philosophical methodology (e.g. in Plato (e.g. *Phaedo* 96–100), Aristotle (e.g. *Met.* XII.7)) with contemporary scientific methodology: are we accounting for causes
3. Analyze the Epicureans' and/or Stoics' argument for a physicalist view of first causes (or gods): does either one (or both) address Plato's critique of the Presocratics/physicalists in the *Phaedo*?
4. Compare Aristotle and Plotinus on their arguments for intellect (Aristotle)—or against intellect, and for a principle beyond intellect (Plotinus)—as the first principle.
   - E.g.: Does Plotinus have a good critique of Aristotle with his critique that intellect (*nous*) is not simple?
5. Plotinus argues that the first cause must be beyond *nous*/intellect (esp. *Enn.* VI.9)—often he even claims that Plato says this. Yet in the *Timaeus,* as well as *Republic* and *Laws X,* Plato seems to hold the first cause *must* be *nous*/intellect (cf. Menn 1995, above). Compare the two.
   - *Alternatively:* does Plotinus give a good interpretation of Plato in his argument for the One *above* intellect?
6. The Epicureans are the rare exception among ancient philosophers in that they argue for gods that are *not* divine first causes. Does their approach make sense? (Compare especially with Plato's critique of Presocratics.)

Further Secondary Sources
Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy: https://plato.stanford.edu
See also the bibliography to entries in Prof. Peter Adamson's podcast, 'The History of Philosophy without Any Gaps': https://historyofphilosophy.net

For your papers, please DO NOT reference Wikipedia. (*In general take everything there with a grain of salt—esp. for philosophy!*) *Instead, please use print-published sources or online resources with academic authors like the SEP* (*above*).

Guides for Philosophical Writing
Prof. Martin Lenz's guide: https://www.academia.edu/12008688/How_to_plan_an_abstract_essay_or_thesis
U. of Cambridge Philosophy's guide (*detailed*): https://www.phil.cam.ac.uk/curr-students/writing-skils/phil-essay-guide

For further reading: *highly* recommended book on improving style of (English) academic writing:
Williams, Joseph M. (1990), *Style: Toward Clarity and Grace* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press).