

**Jon Stewart**  
**BISLA**

**Fall Semester 2018**  
**Tuesday and Thursday**  
**14:40-16:10**

**Syllabus**  
**Western Civilization: The Ancient World**

This course will provide an overview of Western culture from ancient times. Through an examination of key texts of literature, drama, religion, history and philosophy, it will examine the cultures of Mesopotamia, Israel, Greece, Rome, and the rise of Christianity. We will explore some of the fundamental questions that have confronted human beings since the beginning of time: What is the good life? What is it to be human? What is the value of knowledge? What is the meaning of life? What happens after death? What is justice? What is the best form of government? We will explore how the different cultures had different views of what a human being is and how these views developed over time.

**Instructor: Jon Stewart**

M.A. (Philosophy, 1986), Ph.D. (Philosophy, 1992), Dr. habil. (Theology, 2003), Dr. habil. (Philosophy, 2007). Research fellow at the Institute for Philosophy at the Slovak Academy of Sciences.

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**Office Hours**

By appointment.

**Course Requirements and Evaluation**

The course is worth 5 ECTS credits. The course assessment will consist of series of the following.

30% One in-class written midterm examination.

30% One in-class written final examination at the end of the semester.

30% A series of unannounced quizzes throughout the course of the semester.

7% Class participation.

3% Attendance.

**Participation**

The course consists primarily of readings and in-class discussion. The readings build on one another, and so it is imperative to keep up with them. The class discussion will be dedicated to coming to a better understanding of the texts. For this reason attendance is mandatory. Only two unexcused absences per term will be accepted.

**Computer and Cell Phone Policy**

You may use your computers and tablets in class to take notes or to read the text, but during the class period it is not permitted to use WiFi or to access the internet. Please turn off your cell phones during class. No surfing or texting during class is permitted.

**Plagiarism Policy**

In accordance with BISLA's rules for academic ethics, there will be a no tolerance policy towards cheating and plagiarism. The submission of any paper which is not your own work and that does not honestly state the sources used will be regarded as plagiarized. Plagiarism is a serious offense and will result in a failing grade for the course.

## Texts

*The Epic of Gilgamesh*, trans. by N.K. Sanders, Harmondsworth: Penguin 1960.

*The Bible*, New Revised Standard Version, Oxford: Oxford University Press 2003.

Homer: *The Odyssey of Homer*, trans. by Richmond Lattimore, New York: Harper Collins 1965, 1975.

Herodotus: *The Histories*, trans. by Tom Holland, New York and London: W.W. Norton 2013.

Sophocles: *Sophocles I*, ed. by David Grene and Richmond Lattimore, New York: Random House 1960.

Thucydides: *The Complete Writings of Thucydides: The Peloponnesian War*, trans. by John H. Findley Jr., New York: Random House 1951.

Virgil: *The Aeneid*, trans. by David West, London: Penguin 1990.

Seneca: *Letters from a Stoic*, trans. by Robin Campbell, Harmondsworth: Penguin 1969.

## Course Schedule

Date	Topic	Reading
<b>Week 1</b>		
Sept 18	<b>Course Introduction and Ancient Mesopotamia</b> <i>The Epic of Gilgamesh</i> , Prologue, Chapter 1: The Coming of Enkidu	pp. 61-69
Sept 20	<i>The Epic of Gilgamesh</i> , Chapter 3: “Ishtar and Gilgamesh, and the Death of Enkidu”	pp. 85-96
Sept 21	<i>The Epic of Gilgamesh</i> , Chapter 4: “The Search for Everlasting Life” (Nb. Extra make-up class)	pp. 97-107
<b>Week 2</b>		
Sept 25	<i>The Epic of Gilgamesh</i> , Chapter 5: “The Story of the Flood” Chapter 6: “The Return” and Chapter 7: “The Death of Gilgamesh”	pp. 108-119
Sept 27	<b>Israel and Judea</b> Genesis 1:1-2:24, The Creation Genesis 3:1-3:24, The Fall	pp. 3-4 pp. 4-5
Sept 28	Genesis 6:1-9:17, The Flood Genesis 11:1-9, The Tower of Babel (Nb. Extra make-up class)	pp. 7-10 p. 11
<b>Week 3</b>		
Oct 2	<b>The Greek World: The Bronze Age</b> Homer: <i>The Odyssey</i> , Book V: Odysseus and Kalypso Homer: <i>The Odyssey</i> , Book IX: Odysseus and the Lotus-Eaters	pp. 88-95 pp. 137-141
Oct 4	Homer: <i>The Odyssey</i> , Book IX: Odysseus and the Cyclops	pp. 141-151
<b>Week 4</b>		
Oct 9	Homer: <i>The Odyssey</i> , Book X: Odysseus and Circe	pp. 155-167

Oct 11 Homer: *The Odyssey*, Book XI: Odysseus and the Underworld pp. 168-184

### Week 5

Oct 16 **The Greek World: The Archaic Period**

Herodotus: *The Histories*, Book I, 1-13: The Story of Gyges pp. 3-8

Herodotus: *The Histories*, Book I, 28-45: Solon and Croesus pp. 14-21

Herodotus: *The Histories*, Book III, 38-43: The Relativity of Custom, Nemesis pp. 207-210

Oct 18 Herodotus: *The Histories*, Book VII, 8-19: Xerxes' Plan to Invade Greece pp. 448-457

Herodotus: *The Histories*, Book VII, 33-35: Xerxes and the Hellespont p. 462

Herodotus: *The Histories*, Book VII, 44-46: Xerxes and the Human Lot pp. 466-467

### Week 6

Oct 23 No class: Class rescheduled.

Oct 25 No class: Class rescheduled.

### Week 7

Oct 30 No class: Reading week.

Nov 1 No class: All Saints Day

### Week 8

Nov 6 **The Greek World: The Classical Period**

Sophocles: *Oedipus the King* pp. 15-40

Nov 8 Sophocles: *Oedipus the King* pp. 40-65

### Week 9

Nov 13 Sophocles: *Oedipus the King* pp. 65-90

Nov 15 **The Greek World: The Classical Period**

Thucydides: *The Peloponnesian War*, Book I, 1, 20-24: Thucydides' Method p. 3, pp. 13-15

Thucydides: *The Peloponnesian War*, Book II, 34-46: Pericles' Funeral Oration pp. 102-109

### Week 10

Nov 20 **In class midterm examination**

Nov 22 Thucydides: *The Peloponnesian War*, Book II, 47-65: The Plague in Athens pp. 109-121

Thucydides: *The Peloponnesian War*, Book V, 84-116: The Melian Dialogue pp. 330-337  
(NB BISLA Liberal Arts Conference, November 22-23)

### Week 11

Nov 27 **The Rise of Christianity**

	Matthew 1:18-1:25: The Birth of Jesus	pp. 3-4
	Matthew 3:1-4:24: Jesus' Ministry	pp. 5-6
	Matthew 5:1-7:29: The Sermon on the Mount	pp. 6-10
	Matthew 8:1-9:38: Jesus' Miracles	pp. 10-12
Nov 29	Matthew 10:1-10:42: The Apostles	pp. 12-14
	Matthew 13:1-13:58: Jesus' Parables	pp. 16-18
	Matthew 21:1-22:22: Jesus in Jerusalem	pp. 26-28
	Matthew 26:1-27:31: The Arrest and Trial of Jesus	pp. 33-36
	Matthew 26:1-28:20: The Crucifixion of Jesus and his Resurrection	pp. 36-38
<b>Week 12</b>		
Dec 4	<b>The Roman World</b>	
	Virgil: <i>The Aeneid</i> , Book II: The Fall of Troy	pp. 25-47
Dec 6	Virgil: <i>The Aeneid</i> , Book IV: Dido	pp. 69-89
<b>Week 13</b>		
Dec 11	Virgil: <i>The Aeneid</i> , Book VI: The Underworld	pp. 122-140
Dec 13	Virgil: <i>The Aeneid</i> , Book VIII: Aeneas in Rome	pp. 182-186
<b>Week 14</b>		
Dec 18	Seneca: <i>Letters from a Stoic</i> , Letters 5, 7, 8, 15, 28	pp. 36-38, pp. 41-47, pp. 60-63, pp. 75-78
Dec 20	Seneca: <i>Letters from a Stoic</i> , Letters 41, 47, 56, 86	pp. 86-89, pp. 90-95, pp. 109-113
<b>Week 15</b>		
Jan 8	Seneca: <i>Letters from a Stoic</i> , Letter 88	pp. 144-161
Jan 10	<b>In class final examination</b>	