This interdisciplinary course explores various, often conflicting ways of shaping reality in the ancient world—religious, scientific, and philosophical. The course is organized around a series of case studies: (1) the formation and makeup of the cosmos; (2) the origin of mankind and its sexual differentiation; (3) the invention of the ‘self’; (4) the origin and nature of dreams; (5) foundations of law, justice, and culture. Short papers, in-class discussions, and oral presentations will be used to reconstruct the complex intellectual world of natural scientists, philosophers, oral story-tellers, ethnographers, and cultural historians throughout the ancient Mediterranean world. Readings include Near Eastern mythical narratives and Homeric poems and hymns; selections from the earliest Greek philosophers and from Plato’s dialogues; works from the famous Hippocratic corpus and Galen’s medical treatises; and a number of religious texts from ancient Greece and Rome, early Christianity, and late antiquity.

1. This is an introductory course: no previous knowledge of the subject is required. Regular attendance is mandatory. The course will be conducted as a discussion-oriented seminar. Each participant is expected to come to class fully prepared in order to respond critically to the assigned reading and relate it to broader theoretical issues discussed in this course (myth vs. philosophy, nature vs. culture, ‘primitive’ vs. rational way of thinking, scientific innovation vs. religious traditionalism).

2. Each student will be asked to choose one class session and introduce us into its subject matter (for example, by reading her/his reading response statement; see below, no. 3). In addition, each student should prepare an oral report on the term paper topic (ca. 20 minutes), to be delivered in any format deemed most appropriate (traditional lecture, informal question-and-answer discussion, etc.). Most of our time in each class will be dedicated to an in-depth and, hopefully, lively discussion of the week’s readings. To spark discussion, I will identify the focus reading and provide study questions to be addressed while reading and preparing for the class. Various forms of collaboration between students will be strongly encouraged.

3. The course also hopes to improve students’ writing skills. Each student will be required to record her or his reflections on the assigned reading in a daily reading response journal. Other requirements include one short paper (3 pages), due before Spring break, and a longer term paper (6-7 pages), to be delivered electronically no later than April 19.

**BREAKDOWN OF THE COURSE GRADE:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Class participation (in-class discussions, class facilitation, oral presentations)</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One short paper (2-3 pages), daily reading response diary (ca. 250 words)</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Term paper (7-8 pages)</td>
<td>25%</td>
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**TEXTS:**

- *The Epic of Gilgamesh*, trans. A. George
- *Hesiod, Theogony, Works and Days*, trans. M.L. West
- *Early Greek Philosophy*, ed. trans. J. Barnes
- *Hippocratic Writings*, ed. G.E.R. Lloyd
- *Sophocles, Three Theban Plays: Oedipus the King, Oedipus at Colonus, Antigone*, transl. R. Fagles
- *Plato, Timaeus and Critias*, trans. H. D. Lee
- *Plato, Symposium*
- *Plato, Trial and Death of Socrates (Apology and Phaedo)*, trans. B. Jowett
- *Marcus Aurelius, Meditations*, trans. R.B. Rutherford
- A. Gregory, *Eureka! The Birth of Science* (OPTIONAL)

In addition, you will find a number of various primary sources and modern scholarly articles on Sakai.
COURSE SCHEDULE

I. COURSE INTRODUCTION

Weeks One: Preliminary Remarks

Jan 10  Defining Terms: Myth, Science, and Reason in the Ancient World and Today

II. CASE STUDY ONE: THE UNIVERSE—ITS CREATION AND STRUCTURE

Week Two: “Metaphors We Live By”

Jan 15  Mesopotamian and Egyptian Creation Stories
Read: The Babylonian Poem ‘Enuma Elish’ (“When on High”) 31-39 (Sakai); Akkadian Myths and Epics: The Creation Epic (Sakai); J. Assman, “Cosmotheism as a Form of Knowledge,” 204-213 (Sakai); “The Memphite Theology of Creation,” 1-5 (Sakai)

Jan 17  Biblical Accounts of Creation: From God’s Creative Word to Dame Wisdom
Read: Genesis 1-6; Wisdom of Solomon 7-9; Sirach 24; Proverbs 1-8; Gospel of John 1:1-18; E. Leach, “Genesis as Myth,” 7-23 (Sakai)

Week Three: From Myth to Philosophy?

Jan 22  Earliest Greek Cosmogonies, from Hesiod to the Presocratics
Read: Hesiod, Theogony, trans. M.L. West; J. Barnes, Early Greek Philosophers 9-17, 48-73, 111-50 (this last section is optional), 185-200; Gregory, Eureka, pp. 1-28 (optional)

Jan 24  Plato’s Universe: The Craftsman and His Model
Read: Plato, Timaeus, trans. H. D. Lee, 29-82; Gregory, Eureka, pp. 47-73 (optional)

Week Four: Chance vs. Providence, Freedom vs. Necessity

Jan 29  Atoms, Void, and the Swerve: Democritus and Epicurus
Read: J. Barnes, Early Greek Philosophers 203-253; “Epicurus: Atomic Motion” 46-52 (Sakai)

Jan 31  Providential Universe of the Stoics: Marcus Aurelius
Read: Marcus Aurelius, Meditations, trans. R. B. Rutherford; Gregory, Eureka, pp. 98-114 (optional)

III. CASE STUDY TWO: THE ORIGIN AND NATURE OF HUMAN BEINGS

Week Five: “Male and Female He Created Them (It?)”

Feb 5  The Story of Adam and Eve and Its Near Eastern Parallels
Read: Genesis 1-3; Atrahasis (excerpt) in: J. O’Brien and W. Major, In the Beginning: Creation Myths from Ancient Mesopotamia, Israel and Greece, 70-86 (Sakai); Apollodorus, The Library 1.7 (“The Deucalionids”), pp. 36-37 (Sakai)

Feb 7  Jewish and Christian Views on Sex and Gender: Philo and Paul
Read: Paul, 1 Corinthians; Philo, A Treatise on the Account of the Creation of the World as Given by Moses (abridged, with an interview with Peder Borgen) (Sakai)
Weeks Six: Sexual Differentiation

Feb 12 Pandora’s Jar and the Myth of the Original Androgyny

Feb 14 “Females Created from Thinner Seeds”—Ancient Greek Science and Sex-Determination
Read: Presocratic Philosophers on the origins of male and female (Sakai); Aristotle, Generation of Animals 1.1-3, 17-23; 2.1-6 (Sakai); Hippocratic Writings, ed. G.E.R. Lloyd, 317-45 (The Seed and The Nature of the Child); Gregory, Eureka, pp. 115-135 (optional)

IV. CASE STUDY THREE: “KNOW THYSELF”

Week Seven: What to Make of Oneself: Gilgamesh and Achilles

Feb 19 Gilgamesh and the Human Search for Immortality
Read: The Epics of Gilgamesh, trans. A. George, 1-100

Feb 21 Achilles, the Mortal Hero—“He Whom the God Loves Dies Young”
Read: Iliad, excerpts from books 9, 18, 22, 24; S. Schein, “War, Death, and Heroism,” 67-88 (Sakai); R. Janko, “The gods in Homer,” 1-7 (Sakai)

Week Eight: ‘Know Thyself’ in Greek Tragedy and Philosophy

Feb 26 Human Condition: “Know Thy Limits”
Read: Sophocles, The Three Theban Plays, trans. R. Fagles (Antigone and Oedipus the King)

Feb 28 Discussing Term Papers

Week Nine: Care of the Self in Medicine, Philosophy and Religion

Mar 5 Socrates and His “Demon” — Immortality of the Soul
Read: Plato, The Trial and Death of Socrates, trans. Jowett, 55-115 (Phaedo)

Read: Hippocratic Writings, ed. G.E.R. Lloyd, 237-71 (The Sacred Disease and The Nature of Man)

Mar 8-17 Spring Break (Short Papers Due by March 8)

V. CASE STUDY FOUR: THE ORIGIN AND NATURE OF DREAMS

Week Ten: The ‘Self’ in Philosophy and Christianity; Freud and Jung on Dreams

Mar 19 Philosophy (“Every Day We Die”) vs. Christianity (“How Do the Dead Rise Again?”)
Read: Epicurus on Death, selections (Sakai); Seneca, Letter 24 (Sakai); Paul, 1 Corinthians 15

Mar 21 Modern (Non-Falsifiable) Theories of Dreams and Dreaming
S. Freud, The Interpretation of Dreams, 255-267 (Sakai); C. G. Jung, “On the Nature of Dreams,” 67-83 (Sakai)
Week Eleven: Dreams, Memory and Desires

Mar 26  ‘Liminal’ Status of Dreams in Greek Mythology, Literature, and Religion
Read: Homer, Odyssey, Books 19-20, selections (Sakai); “The cult of Asclepius,” ed. E. and L. Edelstein (Sakai); M. Foucault, “Dreaming of One’s Pleasure,” 1-36 (Sakai)

Mar 28  Philosophical Interpretations of Dreams
Read: Aristotle, On Dreams, On Divination in Sleep (Sakai)

VI. CASE STUDY FIVE: NATURE vs. CULTURE

Week Twelve: Utopian Imagination

Apr 2  Myths of the Golden Age
Read: Hesiod, Works and Days, verses 109-201; Seneca, Letter XC (Sakai); Dicaearchus of Messana, “Cultural History” (Sakai); L. T. Sargent, “Utopian Traditions: Themes and Variations,” pp. 8-17 (Sakai) T. J. Saunders, “Dicaearchus’ Historical Anthropology,” pp. 237-254 (Sakai, OPTIONAL)

Apr 4  History of Mankind: Progress, Regress, or Reiteration?
Read: “Epicurus on Society,” eds. Long-Sedley, 125-39 (Sakai); “Stoic Ethics: Political Theory,” eds. Long-Sedley, 429-437 (Sakai)

Week Thirteen: Beginnings of Political Life

Apr 9  In Search of the Perfect Constitution—Plato’s Laws
Read: Plato, The Laws, trans. B. Jowett, Books 1, 3-5 (Sakai); T. Cole, “Cultural Development in Antiquity,” 1-9 (Sakai, OPTIONAL)

Apr 11  Between Natural Law and Social Contract
Read: Cicero, The Laws, trans. N. Rudd, xxiii-xxxi, 97-149 (Sakai)

VII. COURSE SYNTHESIS

Week Fourteen: Ancient Debates on Myth, Science, and Philosophy

Apr 16  Myth, Science, and Philosophy on Prophetic Inspiration

Apr 18  Myth, Science, and Philosophy on the Nature of Love (1)
Read: Plato’s Symposium (part 1)

Apr 19  TERM PAPERS DUE

Week Fifteen: Epilogue

Apr 23  Myth, Science, and Philosophy on the Nature of Love (2)
Read: Plato’s Symposium (part 2)

Apr 25  Back to the Beginning: Myth, Science and Philosophy, Then and Now
Read: Plato, Symposium (continued); G. Fauconnier and M. Turner, The Way We Think, 3-38 (Sakai, OPTIONAL)