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Course Description

Pyrrhonian scepticism, as represented in the works of Sextus Empiricus, presents both a culmination and critique of the whole achievement of Greek philosophy, and was a major influence on the renaissance and the scientific revolutions of the seventeenth century, and continues to influence contemporary epistemology. In this seminar, we will get a general overview of Pyrrhonian scepticism beginning with the doxographies in Book IX of Diogenes Laertius, *Lives of the Famous Philosophers* (including Heraclitus, Xenophanes, Parmenides, Zeno of Elea, Leucippus, Democritus, Protagoras, Diogenes of Apollonia, Anaxarchus, Pyrrho, and Timon). The core part of the course will consist of a close reading and discussion of the three books of the *Outlines of Pyrrhonian Scepticism* by Sextus Empiricus, along with a more detailed examination of the treatment of logic, physics, and ethics in his *Against the Dogmatists* VII-XI. The last three weeks of the seminar will be devoted to student presentations relating Pyrrhonian scepticism to their own interests in philosophy (whether topical or historical).

Goals

- Learn techniques of interpreting and criticizing works of ancient philosophy in translation, including fragmentary works.
- Obtain an overview of ancient scepticism, especially Pyrrhonian scepticism, its textual basis, predecessors, and influence upon later philosophy and science.
- Conduct original research relating ancient skepticism to your own philosophical interests; compile an annotated bibliography and craft a substantial research paper.
- Develop skills in discussing and presenting philosophical ideas and research, including producing handouts, leading discussions, and fielding questions.

Evaluation

10% Participation and discussion. (Any absence will have to be made up by a one-page report and discussion piece on the missed material posted to the ted.ucsd.edu discussion board.)

20% Annotated bibliography (ten items) and two-page research proposal (electronic copy due November 12—week 6).

30% Presentation and handout (to be scheduled during weeks 8, 9, and 10).

40% Final research paper (electronic copy due December 17—finals week).

Grades: 90-100 = A; 80-90 = B; 70-80 = C.

Textbook

Sextus Empiricus: *Outlines of Scepticism*. Translated by J. Annas and J. Barnes, Cambridge 1994. Cambridge Texts in the History of Philosophy. Second edition 2000.

For other books on the reading list: @ = on electronic reserve at ted.ucsd.edu; * = on physical reserve at Geisel Library.

Schedule of Readings

0. Background.

Recommended:

- J. Brunschwig, "Introduction: the beginnings of Hellenistic epistemology", 229-259 of *The Cambridge History of Hellenistic Philosophy* (CHHP). @
A. A. Long, *Hellenistic Philosophy* (2nd ed., London and Berkeley 1996), chapters 2 (Epicureanism), 3 (Scepticism), 4 (Stoicism). *
E. Asmis, "Epicurean epistemology", 260-294 of CHHP. @
M. Frede, "Stoic epistemology", 295-322 of CHHP. @
M. Schofield, "Academic epistemology", 323-354 of CHHP. @
R. Popkin, *The History of Scepticism from Savonarola to Bayle*. Revised and Expanded Edition. Oxford 2003. *

1. (October 8) Pyrrho of Elis.

Primary: Diogenes Laertius, *Lives of the Famous Philosophers* (DL) book IX (especially 11.61-108 on Pyrrho; and IX.12.109-116 on Timon). @

Secondary:

- R. Bett, "Pyrrho". *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, ed. E. Zalta (online).
S. H. Svavarsson, "Pyrrho and early Pyrrhonism". *The Cambridge Companion to Ancient Scepticism*, ed. by R. Bett. Cambridge 2010, 36-57. @
R. J. Hankinson, "Aenesidemus and the Rebirth of Pyrrhonism". *The Cambridge Companion to Ancient Scepticism*, ed. by R. Bett. Cambridge 2010, 105-119. @

Recommended:

- R. Bett, *Pyrrho, His Antecedents, and His Legacy*. Oxford 2000. *
R. J. Hankinson, *The Sceptics*. London 1995, 3-66. @
G. Striker, "Academics Versus Pyrrhonists, Reconsidered". *The Cambridge Companion to Ancient Scepticism*, ed. by R. Bett. Cambridge 2010, 195-207. @
H. Thorsrud, *Ancient Scepticism*. Berkeley and Los Angeles 2009. *

2. (October 15) Overview of Pyrrhonian scepticism and the modes of scepticism.

Primary: Sextus Empiricus (S. E.), *Outlines of Pyrrhonian Scepticism* (PH) I.1-17.

Secondary:

- M. Lammenranta, "The Pyrrhonian Problematic". *The Oxford Handbook of Scepticism*. Oxford 2008, 9-33. @
P. Woodruff, "The Pyrrhonian Modes" *The Cambridge Companion to Ancient Scepticism*, ed. by R. Bett. Cambridge 2010, 208-231.

Recommended:

- J. Annas and J. Barnes, *The Modes of Scepticism*. Cambridge 1985. @
J. Barnes, *The Toils of Scepticism*. Cambridge 1990. *
P. D. Klein, "Contemporary Responses to Agrippa's Trilemma". *The Oxford Handbook of Scepticism*. Oxford 2008, 484-503. ?

3. (October 22) Sceptical slogans and beliefs.

Primary: S. E., *PH* I.18-34.

Secondary:

Bett, R. (Forthcoming). "On Pyrrhonism, Stances, and Believing What you Want". *International Journal for the Study of Skepticism*, forthcoming. @

C. Perin, "Scepticism and Belief". *The Cambridge Companion to Ancient Scepticism*. Ed. by R. Bett. Cambridge: Cambridge 2010, 145–164. @

Recommended:

M. Frede, "The Sceptic's Beliefs". *The Original Sceptics*, ed. M. Burnyeat and M. Frede. Indianapolis 1997, 1-24. Originally published 1979.

M. Burnyeat, "Can the Sceptic live his skepticism?" *The Original Sceptics*, ed. M. Burnyeat and M. Frede. Indianapolis 1997, 25-57. @ Original publication: *Doubt and Dogmatism: studies in Hellenistic epistemology*, ed. M. Schofield, M. Burnyeat, and J. Barnes. Oxford 1980, 20-53. @

J. Barnes, "The Beliefs of a Pyrrhonist". *The Original Sceptics*, ed. M. Burnyeat and M. Frede. Indianapolis 1997, 58-91. Originally published 1982. @

F. Grčić, "Skepticism and Everyday Life". *New Essays on Ancient Pyrrhonism*. Ed. by D. E. Machuca. Leiden, Boston 2011, 69–90. ?

4. (October 29) Pyrrhonian scepticism and logic.

Primary: S. E., *PH* II.1-22; *Against the Dogmatists (M)* VII-VIII

Secondary:

J. Annas, "Truth and Knowledge". *Doubt and Dogmatism: studies in Hellenistic epistemology*, ed. M. Schofield, M. Burnyeat, and J. Barnes. Oxford 1980, 84-104. @

J. Barnes, "Proof Destroyed". *Doubt and Dogmatism: studies in Hellenistic epistemology*, ed. M. Schofield, M. Burnyeat, and J. Barnes. Oxford 1980, 161-181. @

Recommended:

Sextus Empiricus: Against the Logicians. Translated and Edited by Richard Bett. Cambridge 2005. @

J. Brunschwig, "Proof Defined". *Doubt and Dogmatism: studies in Hellenistic epistemology*, ed. M. Schofield, M. Burnyeat, and J. Barnes. Oxford 1980, 125-160. @

O. Bueno, "Is the Pyrrhonist an Internalist?" *New Essays on Ancient Pyrrhonism*. Ed. by D. E. Machuca. Leiden, Boston 2010, 179–192. @

5. (November 5) Pyrrhonian scepticism and physics.

Primary: S. E., *PH* III.1-20; *M* IX-X

Secondary:

R. Bett, "Against the Physicists on Gods (M IX.13-194)". *Proceedings of the 2007 Symposium Hellenisticum*. Forthcoming. @

M. Frede, "The Original Notion of Cause," in J. Barnes, *Doubt and Dogmatism: Studies in Hellenistic Epistemology*, ed. M. F. Burnyeat, M. Schofield, Oxford 1980, 217–249. @

Recommended:

Sextus Empiricus: Against the Physicists. Translated and Edited by Richard Bett. Cambridge 2012. {Electronic edition available through the UCSD Library.}

6. (November 12) No meeting (Professor will be at a conference in Durham, UK).

Due: Electronic copy of research paper proposal and bibliography due by 5pm.

7. (November 19) Pyrrhonian scepticism and ethics.

Primary: S. E., *PH* III.21-32; *M* XI

Secondary:

R. Bett, "Scepticism and Ethics". *The Cambridge Companion to Ancient Scepticism*. Ed. by R. Bett. Cambridge 2010, 181–194. @

D. E. Machuca, "Moderate Ethical Realism in Sextus' Against the Ethicists?" *New Essays on Ancient Pyrrhonism*, ed. D. E. Machuca. Leiden, Boston 2011, 143–178. ?

K. M. Vogt, "Scepticism and Action", *The Cambridge Companion to Ancient Scepticism*. Ed. by R. Bett. Cambridge 2010, 165-180. @

Recommended:

Sextus Empiricus: Against the Ethicists. Translated with an Introduction and Commentary by Richard Bett. Oxford 1997. *

R. Bett, "Can an ancient Greek sceptic be eudaimôn (or happy)? And what difference does the answer make to us?" *J. of Ancient Philosophy* 6 (2012). @

8. (November 26) Student presentations.

Slot 1. (signup available) Primary: TBD; Secondary: TBD.

Slot 2. (signup available) Primary: TBD; Secondary: TBD.

Slot 3. (signup available) Primary: TBD; Secondary: TBD.

9. (December 3) Student presentations.

Slot 1. (signup available) Primary: TBD; Secondary: TBD.

Slot 2. (signup available) Primary: TBD; Secondary: TBD.

Slot 3. (signup available) Primary: TBD; Secondary: TBD.

10. (December 10) Student presentations.

Slot 1. (signup available) Primary: TBD; Secondary: TBD.

Slot 2. (signup available) Primary: TBD; Secondary: TBD.

Slot 3. (signup available) Primary: TBD; Secondary: TBD.

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