

Welcome Peter Konstans!

Post by "Cassius" of September 29, 2023 at 2:50 PM

Welcome [Peter Konstans](#) !

There is one last step to complete your registration:

All new registrants must post a response to this message here in this welcome thread (we do this in order to minimize spam registrations).

You must post your response within 72 hours, or your account will be subject to deletion. All that is required is a "Hello!" but of course we hope you will introduce yourself -- tell us a little about yourself and what prompted your interest in Epicureanism -- and/or post a question.

This forum is the place for students of Epicurus to coordinate their studies and work together to promote the philosophy of Epicurus. Please remember that all posting here is subject to our [Community Standards / Rules of the Forum](#) our [Not Neo-Epicurean, But Epicurean](#) and our [Posting Policy](#) statements and [associated posts](#).

Please understand that the leaders of this forum are well aware that many fans of Epicurus may have sincerely-held views of what Epicurus taught that are incompatible with the purposes and standards of this forum. This forum is dedicated exclusively to the study and support of people who are committed to classical Epicurean views. As a result, this forum is not for people who seek to mix and match some Epicurean views with positions that are inherently inconsistent with the core teachings of Epicurus.

All of us who are here have arrived at our respect for Epicurus after long journeys through other philosophies, and we do not demand of others what we were not able to do ourselves. Epicurean philosophy is very different from other viewpoints, and it takes time to understand how deep those differences really are. That's why we have membership levels here at the forum which allow for new participants to discuss and develop their own learning, but it's also why we have standards that will lead in some cases to arguments being limited, and even participants being removed, when the purposes of the community require it. Epicurean philosophy is not inherently democratic, or committed to unlimited free speech, or devoted to any other form of organization other than the pursuit by our community of happy living through the principles of Epicurean philosophy.

One way you can be most assured of your time here being productive is to tell us a little about yourself and personal your background in reading Epicurean texts. It would also be helpful if you could tell us how you found this forum, and any particular areas of interest that you have which would help us make sure that your questions and thoughts are addressed.

In that regard we have found over the years that there are a number of key texts and references which most all serious students of Epicurus will want to read and evaluate for themselves. Those include the following.

1. ["Epicurus and His Philosophy"](#) by Norman DeWitt
2. ["The Biography of Epicurus by Diogenes Laertius."](#) This includes the surviving letters of Epicurus, including those to [Herodotus](#), [Pythocles](#), and [Menoceus](#).
3. ["On The Nature of Things"](#) - by Lucretius (a poetic abridgement of Epicurus' "On Nature")
4. ["Epicurus on Pleasure"](#) - By Boris [Nikolsky](#)
5. The chapters on Epicurus in [Gosling and Taylor's "The Greeks On Pleasure."](#)
6. [Cicero's "On Ends" - Torquatus Section](#)
7. [Cicero's "On The Nature of the Gods" - Velleius Section](#)
8. The Inscription of Diogenes of Oinoanda - [Martin Ferguson Smith translation](#)
9. [A Few Days In Athens" - Frances Wright](#)
10. Lucian Core Texts on Epicurus: (1) [Alexander the Oracle-Monger](#), (2) [Hermotimus](#)
11. [Philodemus "On Methods of Inference"](#) (De Lacy version, including his appendix on relationship of Epicurean canon to Aristotle and other Greeks)
12. "The Greeks on Pleasure" -Gosling & Taylor Sections on Epicurus, especially the [section on katastematic and kinetic pleasure](#) which explains why ultimately this distinction was not of great significance to Epicurus.

It is by no means essential or required that you have read these texts before participating in the forum, but your understanding of Epicurus will be much enhanced the more of these you have read. Feel free to join in on one or more of our conversation threads under various topics found throughout the forum, where you can to ask questions or to add in any of your insights as you study the Epicurean philosophy.

And time has also indicated to us that if you can find the time to read one book which will best explain [classical Epicurean philosophy](#), as opposed to most modern "eclectic" interpretations of Epicurus, that book is Norman DeWitt's ***Epicurus And His Philosophy***.

(If you have any questions regarding the usage of the forum or finding info, please post any questions in this thread).

Welcome to the forum!

Not Neo-Epicurean, But Epicurean

1. Not "flourishing," "human potential," "self-actualization," or "meaningfulness," but happiness grounded in the feeling of pleasure.
2. Not "absence of pain" as a full statement of the goal of life, but "the Feelings are two, pleasure and pain" and "Pleasure is the beginning and the end of a happy life."
3. Not virtue for the sake of virtue, but virtue as instrumental for the attainment of pleasure.
4. Not "the greatest good for the greatest number," but "Every desire must be confronted with this question: What will happen to me if the object of my desire is accomplished and what if it is not?"
5. Not "humanism," "transhumanism," "individualism," "collectivism," "egoism," "altruism," "social progress," "Marxism," "democracy," "tyranny," or any "one size fits all" political ideal of any kind, but social structure based on friendship which "is formed and maintained by means of a community of life among those who have reached the fullness of pleasure."
6. Not "hard determinism," but "some things happen from necessity, some from chance, and others through our own choice."
7. Not "supernaturalism," but "materialism."
8. Not "supernatural gods," or "life after death," but confidence in a fully material universe and "for those men for whom wisdom is possible, and who do seek it, such men may truly live as gods."
9. Not only "short term hedonism," but "it is to continuous pleasures that I invite you."
10. Not "rationalism," but "all reason is dependent upon sensations."
11. Not fearful of death nor careless of losing life, but valuing life for the opportunity of pleasure it brings.

Our Posting Policy At EpicureanFriends.com:

"No Partisan Politics," "No Supernatural Religion," and "No Absolute Virtue"

This forum is dedicated to promoting the philosophy of Epicurus, and not to any partisan political positions whether "left", "right", or "center". The task of rediscovering Epicurean philosophy requires that such discussions be held elsewhere. Posts violating this rule are subject to removal.



Epicurean philosophy firmly rejects the viewpoint that there are any supernatural forces or absolute virtues or Platonic ideals of any kind. Argument which is based on supernatural claims, or "absolute" virtues or ideals of any kind, are in violation of this rule and subject to removal.

**There are no
supernatural
gods**



**There is
no life
after death**

**All good
and evil exists
in sensation**

**Pleasure is
the beginning
and the end of
the blessed life**

Post by “Peter Konstans” of September 29, 2023 at 4:26 PM

Hello! Glad to be here. In dealing with myself and pondering my place in the world I strive to be a supremely modest person; in dealing with others I strive to be a highly courteous person. I believe Epicureans have the potential to be the most modest and the most courteous people on earth. That's why I came here: to find them and rejoice in their spiritual company.

Post by “Cassius” of September 29, 2023 at 5:00 PM

Welcome! I think you will find our group to be both modest and courteous. I'm not sure those are the generally regarded as the two most distinguishing aspects of Epicurean philosophy, but we'll be very courteous and modest as we talk about the absence of supernatural gods, the end of life at death, the role of pleasure as guide to life rather than virtue or idealism or piety, and the primacy of nature over logical abstractions! 😊

Post by “Kalosyni” of September 29, 2023 at 5:12 PM

[Peter Konstans](#) Welcome to the forum! From your post I am guessing that likely you see yourself as an Epicurean? I do. Though others here on the forum may not. But it does seem that we can only truly take that label when we are around other Epicureans. You might like this subforum (which may need to be re-organized at some point)

[Am I An Epicurean?](#)

Post by “Peter Konstans” of September 29, 2023 at 6:08 PM

Hi there Cassius 😊 Yes, the central aspect of epicurean philosophy is of course pleasure and I reckon modesty and courtesy to be simply among the several tried and tested means leading faithfully to that end. The notions that there is only one livable life, that the nourishment of that life with pleasure is the only dignified form of human existence and that magic forces in whatever shape or form are fictions are actually expressions of profound modesty even though moralists have always sought to present them as capricious, selfish and arrogant. The notion that there is only one life forces us to accept death with a sense of modesty since no rewards can be expected. The notion that pleasure dignifies human beings above all else forces us to stop trying to make others more virtuous through criticism and moralism and thus makes us more modest and less presumptuous and the notion that magic forces don't exist deprives us of that sense of imaginary power and security that attracts superstitious people to those illusions and places us instead in the actual universe where we occupy a modest and precarious existence.

Hi Kalosyni 😊 Yes I see myself as an Epicurean. Your username is modern Greek for goodness. Since you use modern Greek I suspect you're Greek, right? Same here. Greetings from Laconia 👍

Post by “Kalosyni” of September 29, 2023 at 6:34 PM

[Quote from Peter Konstans](#)

Hi Kalosyni 😊 Yes I see myself as an Epicurean. Your username is modern Greek for goodness. Since you use modern Greek I suspect you're Greek, right? Same here. Greetings from Laconia

Thank you, no I'm not Greek, but I admire aspects of Greek culture (both modern and ancient). Born in the USA and now living in South Carolina USA. I chose my forum name because I wanted to reflect on how kindness is a joy that leads to pleasure (it appeared to me that it meant "kindness", but I don't speak Greek so I was relying on the internet for the word meaning).

Post by “Elli” of October 1, 2023 at 2:43 AM

Hello from Greece to all epicurean friends 😊

Based on greek historical facts, if we say in newgreek, that this man is a "modest Laconian" i.e. a "modest Spartan" this could be called as a schema oxymoron, but anyway... 😄

Modesty and Lathe Viosas... is a candy that - throughout the ages- is given with happiness by stoics to all epicureans all over. However, the genuine epicurean does not like the stoics and stoicism at all.

Both in greek and english language the word "modest" has a synonym word of "humble" and next to both these words always follows the "despised". For the modest, humble and despised, there is neither freedom nor pride and nor parrhesia i.e frankness of speech. Actually "modesty" is an aristotelean term, since Aristotle wanted modest, humble and despised little men in front of Kings. And of course Christianity took whatever was convenient from the philosophy (with the many logical fallacies) by Plato and Aristotle who both of them used the methodology of dialectics that is against the clear thinking of the people to have freedom, pride and dignity that leads to the genuine Democracy.

Epicurus does not use anywhere the word "modest" and "modesty", since in his VS 45, he speaks for serious, self-sufficient, high spirited and proud persons, as well as in VS 29 Epicurus does not look "modest" at all, as he is speaking and announcing openly his philosophy, in front of many people without expecting and any applause from the masses of course.

This is the genuine Epicurean, not modest but [μέγας φρονών] "megas phronon" i.e. proud for the pleasant/beneficial things that he has been achieved and still achieves with his high-sharp mind. 😊

Post by “Martin” of October 1, 2023 at 4:27 AM

Welcome Peter Konstans!

Post by “Peter Konstans” of October 1, 2023 at 4:16 PM

Nice to meet you Elli! I insist on modesty and courtesy as highly useful tools in procuring and maintaining harmonious interactions and relationships and just like a chef's knife I insist that these tools be kept always sharp. Courtesy means that you never deliver words and gestures that directly disparage someone's appearance, intelligence, competence or character except if you deliberately intend to hurt that person. Epicurus was known to be frank and yet highly courteous. Myriads of problems that diminish the pleasure in life could be avoided or diminished in intensity if people had better courtesy skills. Less pleasure in life translates not only to a diminished quality of life but also diminished quantity. It's no accident that people in the blue zones live so long even as their material circumstances fail to impress. They live so long in quantity not least because they cultivate high quality friendships and this high quality in friendships is simply not possible without excellent courtesy skills. Modesty is also crucial when it comes to developing courtesy. If courtesy were a robust and vibrant plant, modesty would be the nutrient-rich soil it grows upon. Remember Caesar. He won the civil wars and was now effectively a king but since he lacked the modesty of an Augustus he made it a point to insult the senatorial class (these were fiercely proud people) in various grave ways including cuckolding them. These offensive behaviors and gestures got him butchered and this act led in turn to a new civil war in which large sections of the Roman upper class perished. It is clear that Caesar was one of those persons that you could either love or hate so either you were his stooge or you despised him. That's what Epicurean modesty means to me and it doesn't have anything to do with austerity in consumption patterns or submissive humility. It means not being the kind of person who would rather have lackies than friends and who enjoys making himself hated. It means trying to be the kind of person that Epicurus was, who was said to have been a spring of continuous blessings to all those who consorted with him. It means being the kind of person whose gravestone could justify carrying those beautiful Roman words from Martial: 'nec illi terra, gravis fueris: non fuit illa tibi'.

Post by “Cassius” of October 1, 2023 at 5:00 PM

Peter your reference to modern politics in Greece is again skirting against our "no partisan politics" rule and probably is over it. The references to Caesar are entirely appropriate given the

time lapse, but when we talk contemporary politics we are endangering the purpose of the board to promote Epicurean philosophy rather than to take sides on modern issues. Rather than my delete that from your post I would appreciate your editing to remove from "to take a modern example" up to "That's the person Caesar was too."

I regret asking you to do this because I don't want to sour what appears to me to be promising commentary you are offering on other issues, but if we lower the bridge an inch on modern politics then we are going to have an inequitable situation. I hope you understand that if we play favorites then the purpose of the rule and the objectives of the board are jeopardized.

I'd have to look back to see if we ever stated a specific rule as to where "modern" off limits begins and "historical" ok commentary starts, but pretty much up to 1900 the wounds are so deep and recent that it is best to stay away from them.

Thanks for your understanding in this request.

Post by “Elli” of October 1, 2023 at 11:23 PM

Nice to meet you too Mr. Peter!

Sorry, dear compatriot, but your example is not relevant with the conversation for the Aristotelian term on "modesty". And when we try to confuse the study of Philosophy - giving examples - with political ideologies the result is always a mess. Plato did that in Syracuse as he had the desire to make in practice his philosophy and tried to educate "a wise King Philosopher". As it is very known he had failed three times on this, and in the end he has been sold as a slave !!! Poor Plato!

Moreover, those people that have the irresistible desire to make a career in politics in 99,999% are idealists - platonists - stoics as they also speaking to the people with empty words without meaning (see kenos doxes).

You said: "They (in the golden Dawn) were so highly popular for a time that nobody in Greece doubts that they could have climbed to stellar political heights".

I answer to your argument and on that failed example of yours :

Nobody have doubted... EXCEPT THE EPICUREANS, since they smell the platonists/stoics like the dog smells a hidden bone. HA ! 😊

So, my "modest" - friendly exhortation to you is that if you want to study properly the epicurean philosophy you have to clear your mind from political ideologies that always confuse the reality

with the worlds that do not exist.

Finally, Epicurus says something remarkable to us in the following PD7. Thus, and in this PD we realize that Epicurus does not speak for "modesty", but he speaks just for "safety". 😊

Doctrine 7. Some men wished to become famous and conspicuous, thinking that they would thus win for themselves safety from other men. Wherefore if the life of such men is safe, they have obtained the good which nature craves; but if it is not safe, they do not possess that for which they strove at first by the instinct of (their) nature.

Post by “Peter Konstans” of October 2, 2023 at 2:09 PM

[Quote from Cassius](#)

Peter your reference to modern politics in Greece is again skirting against our "no partisan politics" rule and probably is over it. The references to Caesar are entirely appropriate given the time lapse, but when we talk contemporary politics we are endangering the purpose of the board to promote Epicurean philosophy rather than to take sides on modern issues. Rather than my delete that from your post I would appreciate your editing to remove from "to take a modern example" up to "That's the person Caesar was too."

I regret asking you to do this because I don't want to sour what appears to me to be promising commentary you are offering on other issues, but if we lower the bridge an inch on modern politics then we are going to have an inequitable situation. I hope you understand that if we play favorites then the purpose of the rule and the objectives of the board are jeopardized.

I'd have to look back to see if we ever stated a specific rule as to where "modern" off limits begins and "historical" ok commentary starts, but pretty much up to 1900 the wounds are so deep and recent that it is best to stay away from them.

Thanks for your understanding in this request.

No problem, I will remove that section as requested.

Post by “Cassius” of October 2, 2023 at 2:19 PM

Thank you Peter!

Post by “Peter Konstans” of October 2, 2023 at 2:51 PM

[Quote from Elli](#)

Nice to meet you too Mr. Peter!

Sorry, dear compatriot, but your example is not relevant with the conversation for the Aristotelian term on "modesty". And when we try to confuse the study of Philosophy - giving examples - with political ideologies the result is always a mess. Plato did that in Syracuse as he had the desire to make in practice his philosophy and tried to educate "a wise King Philosopher". As it is very known he had failed three times on this, and in the end he has been sold as a slave !!! Poor Plato!

Moreover, those people that have the irresistible desire to make a career in politics in 99,999% are idealists - platonists - stoics as they also speaking to the people with empty words without meaning (see kenos doxes).

You said: "They (in the golden Dawn) were so highly popular for a time that nobody in Greece doubts that they could have climbed to stellar political heights".

I answer to your argument and on that failed example of yours :

Nobody have doubted... EXCEPT THE EPICUREANS, since they smell the platonists/stoics like the dog smells a hidden bone. HA ! 😊

So, my "modest" - friendly exhortation to you is that if you want to study properly the epicurean philosophy you have to clear your mind from political ideologies that always confuse the reality with the worlds that do not exist.

Finally, Epicurus says something remarkable to us in the following PD7. Thus, and in this PD we realize that Epicurus does not speak for "modesty", but he speaks just for "safety". 😊

Doctrine 7. Some men wished to become famous and conspicuous, thinking that they would thus win for themselves safety from other men. Wherefore if the life of such men is safe, they have obtained the good which nature craves; but if it is not safe, they do not possess that for which they strove at first by the instinct of (their) nature.

Display More

Just to be clear I'm not personally interested in pursuing politics though I do like studying history. I have my political preferences but I do not believe that any politics however noble could change some fundamental realities about the human condition. Misery will always exist, war will always exist. No politics could change that. Still, I do believe that there are good governors and bad governors. There are policies that make a political entity flourish and there are policies that make it fail. I don't think Epicureans want to live in a society that is not well-governed. So it's impossible not to think about politics on some level. It doesn't make one a bad Epicurean to have political thoughts. And I don't think it is accurate to say that all politicians are 'idealists'. They are just people with a career and they usually tend to propagate conformist views because that's the path of least resistance. True 'idealism' requires some sort of vision or originality. Most politicians (of all ages) are obviously very removed from that. I would rather call them a race of pragmatists. They mostly care about stuff like their re-election, their physical survival, their popularity, their material privileges and simply repeat platitudes or whatever they think their power base wants to hear. That's pragmatism. Idealists have usually been intellectuals and philosophers like Plato, not politicians.

Post by “Cassius” of October 2, 2023 at 3:02 PM

Peter: I realize that this is going to be in the middle of the night for you but I hope at some point you can join us in one of our new member zooms like we are having tonight (eastern US time). Hopefully at some point we can get enough people in Europe to schedule something for that time zone.

Post by “Peter Konstans” of October 2, 2023 at 3:11 PM

[Quote from Cassius](#)

Peter: I realize that this is going to be in the middle of the night for you but I hope at some point you can join us in one of our new member zooms like we are having tonight (eastern US time). Hopefully at some point we can get enough people in Europe to schedule something for that time zone.

I will definitely join you at some point when my schedule allows it. Thanks for the heads up!