

Welcome Novem!

Post by "Cassius" of November 3, 2023 at 6:38 AM

Welcome [Novem](#) !

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 “Novem” of November 3, 2023 at 9:39 PM

Hello, Cassius et al.,

Thank you for allowing me to register and join this community. I first became interested in Epicureanism this year as I was looking for a classical philosophy to help me understand and figure out how to deal with daily life better and enhance and integrate my current philosophical views, after some rough patches in graduate school and my early professional life. I became a utilitarian as an undergrad by studying economics and learning about animal welfare through Peter Singer. I just became a more committed vegetarian after moving to a whole new place in my city with a roommate who is also vegetarian. This also led me to explore philosophy more, such as the mind-body problem and free will. I read more about utilitarianism on Substack and read more about Mill, Bentham, Singer, and other utilitarians' ideas and works. Then I began looking at the ancient philosophies that dealt with consequentialism, and I discovered Epicureanism on Wikipedia and also looked for pop-philosophy books to familiarize myself, such as Emily Austin's book "Living for Pleasure" which I enjoyed a lot. I also bought Catherine Wilson's 2019 book which I am currently reading and I recently bought John Sellars' "The Pocket Epicurean" to get more historical background and explanations of key Epicurean teachings for the modern world. Now I am interested in looking at the original texts of historical Epicureans and joining online communities such as here to build that community of like-minded individuals. Perhaps this starting point is too distant from classical Epicureanism or I am coming from a "Neo-Epicurean" standpoint somewhat by reading the pop-philosophy books first. I'm curious as

to collective opinion on these modern Epicurean books. I did see that the Lucretius podcast did do an interview with Emily Austin that I will listen to.

I was drawn to Epicureanism by its contrast with Stoicism, which I am also not too familiar with but I know it has become rather popular as a therapeutic philosophy--my mother began to read the modern Stoics at the same time I became interested in Epicureanism--but I also started seeing some first-level naive commonalities with Stoicism, like with embracing and understanding the inevitability of death, or the control of desires and emotion. I also like how very close Epicureanism's scientific theories and conjectures are to modern atomic physics and evolutionary theory, and its overall materialism. Its approach to religion is also not what I expected--I thought it would lean into deism or pantheism with its idea of disinterested gods or an indifferent universe that we are all a part of with the constant reorganization of atoms at life and death, but the gods are real (made of matter) and are the embodiments of Epicurean ideals who live far away from the conglomerations of matter, not hurt or pleased from human vice or virtue, and religion makes us think otherwise.

I am interested in learning more about classical Epicureanism, and I hope to develop a deep understanding of this philosophy and apply it to daily modern life. Thank you for this opportunity. Please let me know if you have any questions.

Post by “Don” of November 3, 2023 at 10:06 PM

Welcome aboard! What a great introductory post. I wanted to respond to a couple of your points.

Personally, I think Emily Austin's book is the best introduction to Epicurus's philosophy available right now. I hope you enjoy the podcast episodes. She was great fun to talk to! While Emily's book is a little light on the physics and epistemology of the philosophy, she does include enough, and she provides a solid, balanced approach and backs it all up with a conversational and approachable style. I also highly recommend her article:

Are the Modern Stoics Really Epicureans?

[Are the Modern Stoics Really Epicureans? | History News Network](#)

[Quote from Novem](#)

I also like how very close Epicureanism's scientific theories and conjectures are to modern atomic physics and evolutionary theory, and its overall materialism.

That was one of the facets that attracted me as well.

[Quote from Novem](#)

the gods are real (made of matter) and are the embodiments of Epicurean ideals who live far away from the conglomerations of matter, not hurt or pleased from human vice or virtue, and religion makes us think otherwise.

If you stick around (and I hope you will) you'll find I'm one of the one's who take a more metaphorical approach to the gods (like that espoused by Dr. David Sedley and others), not necessarily the majority view but I think there are texts to back it up. LOL! But that's probably a little far into the weeds for an introductory post.

So, feel free to ask questions, post your thoughts, and engage with the others on this path through the Garden.

Post by “Joshua” of November 3, 2023 at 10:21 PM

Welcome, [Novem](#)!

That was a really interesting and informative introduction!

The fact is that we all took different roads that led to our interest in Epicurean Philosophy, and your grounding in utilitarianism is probably an advantage that a lot of us don't have.

I'm glad to see that you enjoyed Emily Austin's book, our interview with her was a lot of fun.

As for Epicurus' views on the gods and other controversial issues, we don't hold people to much of a litmus test (other than the no-politics rule, and no proselytizing). We have frequent discussions about all of these things, and nobody is asked to leave their brain at the door-- people are more than capable of arguing in good faith!

Welcome to the forum!

Post by “Cassius” of November 3, 2023 at 10:42 PM

Don and Joshua have done a great job with the initial welcome so thanks to them and for your introduction.

I personally think Emily Austin and Catherine Wilson are the best of the contemporary writers, so those are a great place to start. Maybe it's technically appropriate to call those two pop-philosophy books, since they are geared at the lay reader, but those two writers are in my view head and shoulders above most of the rest in that category.

Sounds like you're pretty well into the "hard" philosophy and now that you're almost past those two books you will not be surprised to see me recommend the DeWitt book for the rest of the sweeping overview, then of course there are reams of technical articles on more detailed issues.

Given that utilitarian background I feel sure you will be interesting in reading about Bentham's friend Frances Wright and her "A Few Days In Athens" which is mostly very sound in its Epicureanism.

Let us know what you're interested in and I am sure there will be lots of people interested in helping your reading or just discussing your interests.

Thanks again for introducing yourself.

Post by “Novem” of November 3, 2023 at 11:03 PM

Thank you all!

Post by “Martin” of November 4, 2023 at 4:11 AM

Welcome Novem!

Post by “Kalosyni” of November 4, 2023 at 4:49 PM

[Novem](#) welcome to the forum! 😊

Post by “Pacatus” of November 4, 2023 at 5:59 PM

Welcome!