

# Overview & Syllabus: "Introduction to the Philosophy of Epicurus" (Self-paced Course)

Post by "Kalosyni" of March 24, 2025 at 9:11 AM

## The Philosophy of Epicurus: A Self-paced 7-week Course (work-in-progress)

- **Overview:** Join us for a self-paced seven week study course on the philosophy of Epicurus. This program will introduce you to the basics of the [classical Epicurean philosophy](#) and provide opportunities for contemplation and guidance for practical applications of the philosophy to modern life. Epicurus presents a worldview which answers existential questions such as: What is the nature of the world? What is the nature of the soul? How do we make choices in our lives when a creator god is not involved in the world?

The philosophy of Epicurus shows how [pleasure is the guide of life](#) and gives guidance for living the most complete life possible. By understanding the limits of both pleasure and pain, and how to overcome the fear of death, the mind becomes clear and open to living fully. Through the understanding of what is natural and necessary, what is natural and but not necessarily needed, and what is merely empty opinion, the proper prudence to make wise choices and avoidances result in more pleasure and less pain. The philosophy of Epicurus leads us to live the best life - a healthy mind in a health body - surrounded by friends and supported by sufficiency.

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The following topics will be presented in the "**Introduction to Epicurean Philosophy**" 7-Week Self-paced Course:

**Week 1: Epicurus, the Garden, and the Extant Texts** - The biography of Epicurus, the history and location of the school of Epicurus, and an overview of the extant texts.

**Week 2: The Nature of Things and How We Can Have Knowledge of Them** - A brief overview of Epicurean physics and canonics, as the basis of Epicurean philosophy.

**Week 3: The Non-involvement of God(s), No Afterlife, & the Nature of the Soul and Death** - An overview of the Epicurean beliefs about the nature of the gods, the soul, and death,

as well as philosophical exercises to become accustomed to seeing that the fear of death and dying is unnecessary.

**Week 4: Pleasure and Eudaemonia** - Pleasure is the starting point of the motivation that nature gave to humans and every animal at birth. Pleasure is the goal to which we aim, but not every pleasure is chosen. By coming to understand the full nature of both pleasure and pain, we can learn to make choices and avoidances which lead to our long-term eudaemonia.

**Week 5: The Role of Virtue Which Leads to Pleasure** - We choose our actions wisely because of the goal of pleasure, and not because we are holding to abstract ideas of "right and wrong", or duty toward religion or cultural norms. Virtue is chosen according to Epicurean principles, and as a means for the health and happiness of the body and soul. This week will also cover the Epicurean understanding of justice.

**Week 6: Free Will and Self-Sufficiency** - There is no other world more important than this world, and we need to determine what pleasures are worth the pain. We have free will, and yet we must attend to our livelihood and household while continuing to practice the philosophy.

**Week 7: Friendship and the Twentieth** - this final week will cover friendship as a great good, and the importance of maintaining the Epicurean community. The Letter to Menoecus says: "So practice these and similar things day and night, by yourself and with a like-minded friend, and you will never be disturbed whether waking or sleeping, and you will live as a god among men: for a man who lives in the midst of immortal goods is unlike a merely mortal being."

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[Go to Week 1](#)