

Welcome Rolf!

Post by "Cassius" of April 9, 2025 at 8:12 AM

Welcome [Rolf](#)

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.

Please say "Hello" by introducing yourself, tell us what prompted your interest in Epicureanism and which particular aspects of Epicureanism most interest you, 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 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.

Please check out our [Getting Started](#) page.

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.

["Epicurus and His Philosophy"](#) by Norman DeWitt

[The Biography of Epicurus by Diogenes Laertius](#). This includes the surviving letters of Epicurus, including those to [Herodotus](#), [Pythocles](#), and [Menoceus](#).

["On The Nature of Things"](#) - by Lucretius (a poetic abridgement of Epicurus' "On Nature"

["Epicurus on Pleasure"](#) - By Boris [Nikolsky](#)

The chapters on Epicurus in [Gosling and Taylor's "The Greeks On Pleasure."](#)

[Cicero's "On Ends" - Torquatus Section](#)

[Cicero's "On The Nature of the Gods" - Velleius Section](#)

The Inscription of Diogenes of Oinoanda - [Martin Ferguson Smith translation](#)

[A Few Days In Athens" - Frances Wright](#)

Lucian Core Texts on Epicurus: (1) [Alexander the Oracle-Monger](#), (2) [Hermodotus](#)

[Philodemus "On Methods of Inference"](#) (De Lacy version, including his appendix on relationship of Epicurean canon to Aristotle and other Greeks)

"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.

**Nothing can be created
from nothing.**

**Nature has no gods over
her.**

**Do not assign to the
gods anything that is
inconsistent with
incorruption and
blessedness.**

Death is nothing to us.

**There is no necessity to
live under the control of
necessity.**



**He who says “Nothing
can be known” knows
nothing.**

All sensations are “true.”

**Virtue is not absolute or
an end in itself - all good
and evil consists in
sensation.**

**Pleasure is the guide of
life.**

**By “Pleasure” we mean
all experience that is not
painful.**

**Life is desirable, but unlimited time contains no greater
pleasure than limited time.**

Post by “Rolf” of April 9, 2025 at 8:18 AM

Hello all!

I'm Rolf and I'm a student living in Scandinavia. I have long been searching for a philosophy of life that makes sense for me, with nothing seeming to click. I came across epicureanism a couple of months ago, and it all just feels so... Reasonable. That is to say, it fits like a glove. As per the recommendation on this site, I have been reading through Emily Austin's lovely introduction to the philosophy. I'm not quite sure what else to write here, but feel free to ask me anything if you're (epi)curious.

Thanks for having me!

Post by “Kalosyni” of April 9, 2025 at 9:00 AM

Welcome to the forum [Rolf](#) 😊

You may enjoy listening to the Lucretius Today podcast interview of Emily Austin (if you haven't already done so)...

Post

[Episode 156 - Lucretius Today Interviews Dr. Emily Austin - Part One](#)

Welcome to episode 156, a special two-part Episode of Lucretius Today. This is a podcast dedicated to the poet Lucretius, who wrote "On The Nature of Things," the only complete presentation of Epicurean philosophy left to us from the ancient world. Each week we walk you through the Epicurean texts, and we discuss how Epicurean philosophy can apply to you today. If you too find the Epicurean worldview attractive, we invite you to join us in the study of Epicurus at EpicureanFriends.com, where...



Cassius

January 10, 2023 at 12:58 AM

Post

[Episode 157 - Lucretius Today Interviews Dr. Emily Austin - Part Two](#)

Welcome to episode 157, part two of a special two part Episode of Lucretius Today. This is a podcast dedicated to the poet Lucretius, who wrote "On The Nature of Things," the only complete presentation of Epicurean philosophy left to us from the ancient world. Each week we walk you through the Epicurean texts, and we discuss how Epicurean philosophy can apply to you today. If you too find the Epicurean worldview attractive, we invite you to join us in the study of Epicurus at...



Cassius

January 19, 2023 at 10:13 AM

Post by “Martin” of April 9, 2025 at 12:25 PM

Welcome Rolf!

Post by “Don” of April 9, 2025 at 4:21 PM

Welcome aboard

Post by “Cassius” of April 15, 2025 at 9:40 AM

Rolfe thanks for your input so far. Don't share any personally-identifying information but it would be interesting to hear more about your background and reading history and other interests. Also, how did you find this forum?

We have an upcoming "first monday" meeting at which you're invited, and as you are in Europe we occasionally set up meetings at times that aren't in the middle of the night for Europeans, and we can work toward another one.

Post by “Rolf” of April 15, 2025 at 12:06 PM

Sure thing! I'm a student in my mid-20s, currently taking a painting course -- not because I'm some great artist, but simply for the joy of it. As an avid fan of Wikipedia, my interests are pretty wide-ranging, but I'm happiest when watching a good film, listening to music, or hanging out with animals - ideally sheep, goats, or cats, though dogs aren't too bad either.

For the better part of the past decade I've been (somewhat obsessively) chasing down an answer to the question, "How should I live?". I'm admittedly not the most academic person, but over the years I've dipped my toes into Buddhism, Taoist, Christianity, Absurdism, and Stoicism, among other ideas. And yet, nothing has ever felt quite right, at least not for extended periods of time. With every philosophy of life I've tried on for size, there has been some small (or large) thing nagging away at me, telling me that "this doesn't quite fit".

Somehow, Epicureanism had completely flown under my radar. I stumbled across it a couple months ago, and right away it just made sense. Perhaps it's not the flashiest or most dramatic philosophy -- it's not that of the action heroes I watch in the movies or the tortured musicians I listen to -- but it feels like a practical philosophy for *actual humans*, one that doesn't ask us to *deny our nature*, as so many other ideologies seem to do. That alone was a breath of fresh air.

I'm hesitant to throw myself headfirst into any single worldview (past experiences have made me cautious), but Epicureanism has felt more grounded and relatable than anything else I've found. Currently I'm reading Austin's book *Living for pleasure* as recommended here, alongside various articles and forum posts. I'm trying to understand the ideas of Epicurus and his fellow philosophers as they originally intended -- not through the filter of modern self-help trends, as has happened with Stoicism. At the same time, I don't want to turn Epicurus into some kind of divine and enlightened secular saint. It's important to me that I see him as a fellow human who, impressively, got a lot of things right.

Honestly, I wasn't planning to post at all—I find the idea a bit intimidating. Not because I'm asocial (I do love meeting new people), but something about the permanence of a forum post gives me pause. Still, I found myself stuck on a few Epicurean questions, and figured that solo study only gets you so far. So here I am. 😊

Post by “Don” of April 16, 2025 at 6:48 AM

[Quote from Rolf](#)

As an avid fan of Wikipedia

Agreed. WP is a wonderful tool, and I highly encourage anyone - especially librarians and educators - interested in it to edit the online encyclopedia to understand how it works in practice.

[Quote from Rolf](#)

I've dipped my toes into Buddhism, Taoist, Christianity, Absurdism, and Stoicism, among other ideas. And yet, nothing has ever felt quite right, at least not for extended periods of time.

You're in good company. Many who found their way here have "dipped their toes" in all those streams, especially Buddhism and Stoicism.

[Quote from Rolf](#)

Currently I'm reading Austin's book Living for pleasure as recommended here

Great introduction. Austin's book, in my opinion, is the most approachable and practical introduction to the philosophy in print right now.

[Quote from Rolf](#)

Honestly, I wasn't planning to post at all



That's how I started out here, too. It didn't take long until I started taking part in the forum and asking questions and offering my perspective. We all try to be welcoming, and I continue to see this forum as a unique place online where open, frank, thoughtful discussion of Epicurus and his philosophy is taken seriously.

As I said above, welcome aboard!

Post by "Cassius" of April 16, 2025 at 7:16 AM

Here's something else about the benefit of looking for and participating in a "community" of like minded people who are interested in Epicurus.

It's very important to be willing and dedicated to thinking for yourself, and not allowing anyone to tell you to take what they say on faith and authority. I fully agree with that.

BUT -

The truth of the world is that there are highly organized forces that have spent thousands of years perfecting methods of philosophical and religious intimidation and oppression. A single individual stands no chance against those forces on his or her own. Most people are not going to be able to make a dent against those forces collectively, or even to the extent of freeing their own minds personally from that influence, without a lot of reading and information and communication from outside themselves.

Again speaking from my recent "Nature's God..." reading, I'll give everyone from 500 AD on up to now the benefit of the doubt and accept that it was absolutely impossible - under penalty of death - for them to escape from the influence of Judeo-Christianity. So I can understand why they would tread lightly around Epicurus and try to cover him over with theism. So my point is not to criticize them, even though of course I do question whether it was absolutely impossible

to reproduce an intellectual environment that was widespread in the Roman world only a few hundred years before.

But no one should underestimate the power that has accumulated in established institutions of the world. The various isms that run it, including "humanism," might look like they are all over the board, and they do often agree on very little, except they do agree that Epicurean philosophy is unacceptable.

Our little discussion forum here is not going to make a dent in that power either, but over time, if there is ever to be any re-emergence for truly Epicurean ideas, (in other words to ever get back to the intellectual freedom of 50 BC) people who agree with Epicurean views will have to find ways to work together to get a foothold. That's the only way to hope to stand up against the combined efforts of the rest of the world that keep Epicurean views chained up only to the world of food and other immediate bodily indulgence.

Post by "Rolf" of April 16, 2025 at 9:06 AM

Well said, [Cassius](#).

Out of interest, what's the conflict between humanism and Epicureanism?

Post by "Cassius" of April 16, 2025 at 9:54 AM

Rolf -

In summary form, it's "good without God" but in the sense of an absolute good that is not related to pleasure. Nietzsche wrote against it for similar reasons. It's an ambiguous term that is more akin to politics than philosophy. There is no recognized definition of what humanism really means - yes there are various groups with their own definitions but there is no systematized statement or formal school where anyone has the right to say is what it really means. And in the sense of implying that there is an absolute good, rather than defining good in relation to pleasure, it's really closer to platonism or stoicism, but without specifying a source for its claims.

EDIT:

In other words, "Good without god" is incomplete, and fails to define what good really means, and equates to "Good without giving a reason"

Check out more details here:

Thread

[Epicurean Philosophy Vs. Humanism](#)

I have never considered Epicurean philosophy to be a form of "Humanist" philosophy any more than it is a form of Stoicism or Platonism. I haven't written extensively on this, in part because many Humanists are allies on certain important points, such as rejection of Supernatural Religion.

But I was reminded of this point today and I think it is time to start a thread on it. My position is that "Humanism" is just another "-ism" that has a goal at its center which is very different from...



Cassius

May 27, 2019 at 3:48 PM

Post by "Martin" of April 16, 2025 at 12:26 PM

I mostly agree with Cassius' take on humanism. However, the definition of humanism by the American Humanist Association appears to be compatible with Epicurus' philosophy:

[Humanism and Its Aspirations: Humanist Manifesto III, a Successor to the Humanist Manifesto of 1933 - American Humanist Association](#)

Post by "Joshua" of April 16, 2025 at 12:35 PM

I should also add that the original meaning of humanist is 'one who studies or teaches the humanities'. Literature, language, history, etc.