

Welcome Ontologix!

Post by "Cassius" of September 1, 2025 at 9:37 AM

Welcome [ontologix](#)

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 24 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 and associated Terms of Use](#). Please be sure to read that document to understand our ground rules.

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 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 most other philosophies, 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 of truth and happy living through pleasure as explained in the principles of Epicurean philosophy.

One way you can be assured of your time here will be 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 already have.

You can also check out our [Getting Started](#) page for ideas on how to use this website.

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) [Hermotimus](#)

[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 “Cassius” of September 1, 2025 at 9:42 AM

Quote

Care Cassi

i have been an admirer of Epicure for over 60 years. His teachings changed my life.

I am a retired teacher of Latin and am familiar with Titus Lucretius Carus.

Years ago I attended a seminar on Epikuros at the university of Munich. Petrarca's essay on Epikuros was unknown to the organisers.

I had found it somewhere in the internet. It is in Latin and about a page long. Petrarca correctly outlines some principles of Epicure's teachings. At the end however he felt obliged to state that all this was wrong. Well, he obviously had to.

The essay is in Latin and i translated it into German. But this was long ago.

It seems to me that Petrarca was the first rediscoverer of Epikuros after the dark ages.

Thank you for running this admirable page.

Display More

Post by “ontologix” of September 1, 2025 at 11:00 AM

I am very happy to have found this valuable forum and will certainly contribute within my possibilities. One of my aims will be to rectify outside this forum the millenium old defamation of Epikuros as a hedonist. I will also try to analyse how Epikuros and Immanuel Kant thought along similar lines methodically.

Thank you for admitting me. Valeatis.

P.S.: I had a few T shirts printed reading: EPICVRI DE GREGE PORCVS which I proudly wear occasionally, also one with Greek letters *lathe biosas*.

Post by “Don” of September 1, 2025 at 12:02 PM

Welcome aboard!

Post by “Kalosyni” of September 1, 2025 at 1:00 PM

Welcome to the forum [ontologix](#)

[Quote from ontologix](#)

One of my aims will be to rectify outside this forum the millenium old defamation of Epikuros as a hedonist.

Perhaps more specifically...Epicurus was a hedonist, but he was not a profligate.

Post by “Cassius” of September 1, 2025 at 1:01 PM

Ontologix I take it your first language is German so this question may not apply, but as you are a Latin teacher, do you have a favorite English translation of Lucretius?

Post by “Martin” of September 1, 2025 at 4:23 PM

Welcome Ontologix!

Post by “Cassius” of September 3, 2025 at 8:53 AM

[ontologix](#)

I took the liberty of pasting here your response to my post 6 above (which you wrote on my wall). Unfortunately the forum software does not do a good job of searching walls when someone is looking for something, and I want your very interesting post to be findable. Thanks for the reply!

Quote from Ontologix on Cassius' Wall

Yes, my first language is German. No, I do not have a favourite English translation of Lucretius. I read Lucretius either in German or in the Latin original which is not als

difficult to read as e.g. Livius or Tacitus.

There are two translations of Lucretius into German. Both are by a publisher called Reclam, one in West Germany and the other in former East Germany.

I do not like the older West German translation. The title "Die Welt aus Atomen" (The World Made of Atoms") is misleading because Epicure was an atomist but not only an atomist, by far not. Also the translation is not so easy to read stylistically.

The East German translation in the Aufbau-Verlag is much more readable and also the title is much more appropriate "Vom Wesen des Weltalls" (On the Nature of the Universe) This is suprising since Latin was practically not taught in East German secondary schools.

Epicure was a favourite with East German ideologues since he was rightly seen by Marxists as one of the precursors of Marx whose doctoral thesis was on The Difference Between the Democritean and Epicurean Philosophy of Nature.

After the fall of the Berlin wall everything East German was sold off at ridiculously low prices and I bought a heap of their Lucretius edition and gave them to my students.

So, I am afraid, I do not know any English translations of Lucretius.

What I may add is my gratitude to Cicero whom we owe the edition of Lucretius' poem although Cicero, a devotee to the Academy, was anything but a follower of Epicure. Materialist thinking was definitely not Cicero's cup of tea. Without Cicero's edition however Lucretius' whole poem might have been lost.

Display More

Post by "Cassius" of September 3, 2025 at 9:06 AM

[ontologix](#)

Also, I find it interesting that we have what is probably a disproportionately large number of native Germans here on the forum, and that prompts me to ask something else:

By no means all, but a significant number, of people I have run into who are fans of Epicurus are also fans of Nietzsche. I know Nietzsche had some negative things to say about Epicurus, but especially in "AntiChrist" he also spoke positively. Given that you are German I am curious about your views of the intersection (or lack thereof) between Epicurus and Nietzsche. And do

not be concerned that you will offend anyone regardless of your views because we have people on all sides of how to appraise Nietzsche.

I know this is a deep subject so of course feel free to respond as fully or as briefly as you like.

Post by “ontologix” of September 3, 2025 at 9:12 AM

[Quote from Kalosyni](#)

Welcome to the forum [ontologix](#)

[Quote from ontologix](#)

One of my aims will be to rectify outside this forum the millenium old defamation of Epikuros as a hedonist.

Perhaps more specifically...Epicurus was a hedonist, but he was not a profligate.

Well, I am not so sure that Epicure was a hedonist. For him pleasure was not an aim in itself. It was rather a motivation how to go about things. If you do not like your work you will not succeed in it.

Pleasure is perhaps not the right term. It should be enjoyment. i.e. to derive a pleasant motivation for doing something. If you like your work you will engage in it.

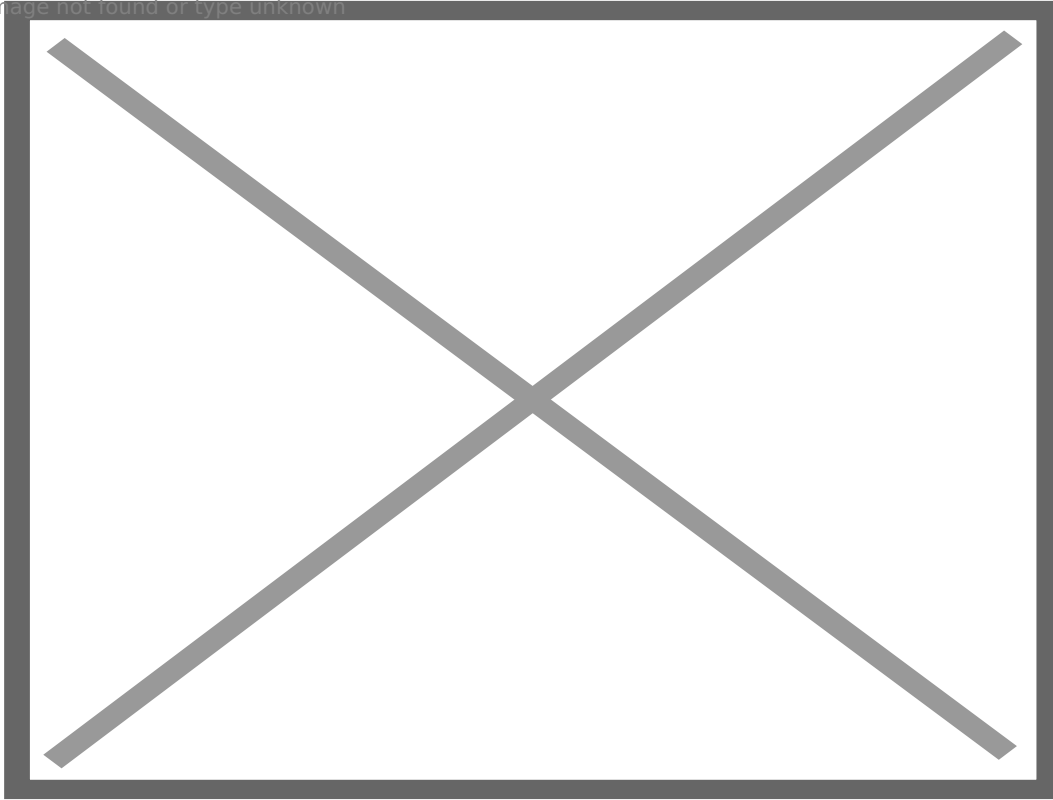
I find it ridiculous that in practically every small town in France there is a restaurant called L'Epicure or L'Epicurien. These establishments have absolutely nothing to do with Epicure's philosophy. His diet was simple and vegetarian. Epicure would be furious to see his name abused in this manner.

Just look at this shop in Berlin: <https://lesepicuriens.de/pages/ueber-uns>

Next time I come to Berlin i shall ask them if they have ever read a line on Epicure.

Or this in Munich, a fish restaurant, run by Greeks.

Image not found or type unknown



[Epikur, München - Speisekarte, Preise und Bewertungen](#)

Ich schlage vor, dass ihr das Restaurant Epikur besucht. Erfahrt mehr über diesen Ort mit der Restaurant Guru App.
de.restaurantguru.com

Post by “Cassius” of September 3, 2025 at 9:47 AM

On the hedonism question, we've recently gone over what Cicero reports Zeno the Epiurean was teaching about Epicurus in his time (Tusculan Disputations, Part 3 Section XVII):

Quote

Do I explain your opinion rightly? for your disciples are used to deny that we understand at all what Epicurus means. This is what he says, and what that subtle fellow, old Zeno, who is one of the sharpest of them, used, when I was attending lectures at Athens, to enforce and talk so loudly of; saying that *he alone was happy who could enjoy present pleasure, and who was at the same time persuaded that he*

should enjoy it without pain, either during the whole or the greatest part of his life; or if, should any pain interfere, if it was very sharp, then it must be short; should it be of longer continuance, it would have more of what was sweet than bitter in it; that whosoever reflected on these things would be happy, especially if satisfied with the good things which he had already enjoyed, and if he were without fear of death, or of the Gods. You have here a representation of a happy life according to Epicurus, in the words of Zeno, so that there is no room for contradiction in any point.

We talk frequently here about the issue of how Epicurus advised the fine-tuning of luxuries, but as in your earlier comments Ontologix I would say that the standard label of Epicurus as "atomist" is far to restrictive, as are the standard views that he was either a pursuer of food that was either primarily luxurious or primarily simple.

The way that Zeno characterizes the main point seems to me to be authoritative and focuses properly on the most important issues. Zeno doesn't fine-tune our tastes as ends in themselves, but seems to focus on enjoying a life in which we have a general level of confidence about core goals. Those goals that Zeno lists are that physical and mental pleasures will predominate over pains, that we appreciate what we have without obsessing over the shortness of life, and that there are neither any supernatural gods to threaten us nor life after death in which we are punished or rewarded.

I personally don't like the term "hedonist" either. As best I can tell the ancient Epicureans identified themselves as "Epicureans," not "hedonists," because Epicurean philosophy is much more subtle and wide-ranging than what the term "hedonist" evokes.

Post by “Rolf” of September 3, 2025 at 9:51 AM

[Quote from ontologix](#)

For him pleasure was not an aim in itself. It was rather a motivation how to go about things. If you do not like your work you will not succeed in it.

From everything I've read, pleasure is very much the aim and the end, according to Epicurus. If pleasure wasn't the aim for him, what was?

Post by “Rolf” of September 3, 2025 at 9:54 AM

Quote

And for this cause we call pleasure the beginning and end of the blessed life. For we recognize pleasure as the first good innate in us, and from pleasure we begin every act of choice and avoidance, and to pleasure we return again, using the feeling as the standard by which we judge every good.

Letter to Menoecus 129

Post by “Rolf” of September 3, 2025 at 9:57 AM

Quote

When we say, then, that pleasure is the end and aim, we do not mean the pleasures of the prodigal or the pleasures of sensuality, as we are understood to do by some through ignorance, prejudice, or wilful misrepresentation. By pleasure we mean the absence of pain in the body and of trouble in the soul.

Letter to Menoecus 131 (emphasis mine)

Post by “ontologix” of September 3, 2025 at 10:56 AM

[Quote from Cassius](#)

[ontologix](#)

Also, I find it interesting that we have what is probably a disproportionately large number of native Germans here on the forum, and that prompts me to ask something else:

By no means all, but a significant number, of people I have run into who are fans of Epicurus are also fans of Nietzsche. I know Nietzsche had some negative things to say about Epicurus, but especially in "AntiChrist" he also spoke positively. Given that you are German I am curious about your views of the intersection (or lack thereof) between

Epicurus and Nietzsche. And do not be concerned that you will offend anyone regardless of your views because we have people on all sides of how to appraise Nietzsche.

I know this is a deep subject so of course feel free to respond as fully or as briefly as you like.

Interesting to read that so many native Germans are members in this forum since philosophy is hardly taught in German secondary education. The nation of Immanuel Kant wantonly ignores its treasure of philosophers.

Well, I am not sufficiently familiar with Nietzsche to answer your question. I have read some, but missed his absence of a proper philosophical system. But since Nietzsche wrote on many different issues the answer will be difficult. Epicure however had a clearly structured materialistic system to which he adhered.

One thing however I would like to point out: Nietzsche was abused by the Nazis.

Nietzsche's younger sister Elisabeth Förster-Nietzsche bent her brother's writings in such a way that he could be adapted to the Nazi ideology. Hitler visited the Nietzsche Archive in Weimar several times. I doubt if the uneducated Hitler understood a word of Nietzsche's writings. Nietzsche's concept of the Übermensch may have been attractive to the Nazis but is easily misunderstood.

But Nietzsche was anything but an antisemite and broke with Richard Wagner when the latter's antisemitism became more and more obvious.

I will ask a knowledgeable philosopher if he has an answer to your question.

.....

My expert has replied.

Epicure and Nietzsche have little in common except their naturalism and their absence of metaphysical speculation. Both were more or less atheists. "God is dead" and "gods can't be bothered with the daily wear and tear of us humans". There is no eternal and immortal soul.

Both see human existence as based on physical matter and nature, and both are sceptical towards metaphysical speculation. Life is a continuous becoming and decaying. Reason is a practical thing to help cope with life and not a continuum of its own.

But principally there are only few parallels between Epicure and Nietzsche. Nietzsche was a great fan of Greek tragedy which was not a major topic if at all with Epicure although he was close to it.

I would personally agree to that reply. The problem lies with Nietzsche who wrote on a wide variety of questions without having a clearly defined system.

Post by “Cassius” of September 3, 2025 at 10:58 AM

[Quote from ontologix](#)

The problem lies with Nietzsche who wrote on a wide variety of questions without having a clearly defined system.

Yes that's a big problem in saying anything definitive about Nietzsche!

Post by “ontologix” of September 3, 2025 at 1:05 PM

[Quote from Rolf](#)

Quote

And for this cause we call pleasure the beginning and end of the blessed life. For we recognize pleasure as the first good innate in us, and from pleasure we begin every act of choice and avoidance, and to pleasure we return again, using the feeling as the standard by which we judge every good.

Letter to Menoecus 129

I fully agree. From this viewpoint it is only a small step from Epicure to Sigmund Freud. His *Lustprinzip* has been confirmed by modern brain research. German *Lust* is not identical with English lust. *Lustprinzip* rather implies that something pleases you and gives you satisfaction.

Like Epicure Freud was not religious at all. In all writings of Freud you will not find a single reference to an immortal soul except in psychiatric terms.

When world famous Sigmund Freud had to flee the Nazis from Vienna to London in 1938 he was approached by a synagogue if he would like to come around, but he declined. They insisted: *But you are a Jew*. Freud replied: *Of all the nonsense circulating in the world, why should I believe of all things in this particular one?*

I imagine Epicure would have liked this answer. I think Epicure and Freud have a few ideas in common.