

Dalhousie University
Arts and Social Sciences/History of Science and Technology
HSTC 3501/0.3 credit hours/ The Nature of Time I
Fall 2020
online/asynchronous

COURSE INFORMATION

Instructor: Dr. Ben Mitchell
Pronouns: He/they
Office: Online
Office Phone: N/A
Office Hours: By appointment
Email: ben.mitchell@ukings.ca



Throughout the term I will be available to chat through email, Brightspace, and Microsoft Teams. Except where we have arranged to meet beforehand, please expect at least a day response time. In the event of unforeseen class cancellations or changes, please refer to the course's Brightspace page for updates. I encourage students to contact me for assistance as needed for course related questions and guidance.

(Image credit: Life by Selena Photography)

Course Description

(Please note: this course has changed somewhat from the posted description on the course calendar.)

This course will consider philosophical, historical, and historiographical questions related to the nature of time from antiquity to the renaissance. It will encourage students to reflect on history and historical thought itself, as well as the social implications of historicity and periodization. We will consider such topics as why indigenous histories are so often denied a historical status while given a more ambiguous space in “ancestral” time. The course will go on to explore how mythological readings of ancient Mesopotamian and Egyptian relationships to time and memory both inform, and in some cases conceal, people’s daily life and struggles during these vast periods. We will explore a myriad of Greco-Roman thinkers from the Pre-Socratics to Plotinus. Looking east, we will consider the interdependent and complimentary nature of time and nature in ancient Daoist thought in which the temporal and atemporal are one and the same. Looking to the Abrahamic world, we will consider how orthodox and heterodox streams in the tradition viewed the nature of creation and its relationship to time, from cyclical, to the linear, to the apocalyptic. During the Middle Ages, we will explore why the Venerable Bede was so focused on determining the date of Easter and what it had to do with Passover, while also considering medieval Jewish and Islamic reflections on ancient notions of time and creation in the writings of Averroes and Moses Maimonides. Finally, the course will end with a reflection on how the perspective we take on time is a factor in morality and how to live a good life within Dante’s Divine Comedy.

Course Pre-requisites, Co-requisites and/or other Restrictions

None.

Course Rationale and/or Other Restrictions and Requirements

This course requires an understanding of the English language and assumes some familiarity with historical principles and methods.

Learning Management System Site Information

This course will be hosted on Dalhousie's Brightspace platform through your my.dal access (the link to your Brightspace page should be at the top of the "Quick Links" list after you have logged into your account. Once you have logged into Brightspace you should be able to find the course page under "My Courses." There you will find a copy of the syllabus, course discussion forums, assignment submission, and digital versions of all of your required and suggested readings.

Description of Class Format

This is an asynchronous and online course supplemented with two text or voice-based discussions with the instructor near the start and end of term.

Course Learning Outcomes

Upon completion of this course, students should be able to:

Learning Outcome #1

Participate meaningfully in historiographical discussions about the nature of time from Antiquity to the Renaissance.

Learning Outcome #2

Be able to identify themes in discussions of time, temporality, memory, and related concepts.

Learning Outcome #3

Conduct primary or secondary source-based textual analysis and present a novel hypothesis based upon their findings.

Required Text(s)

All texts will be available digitally through the course's Brightspace page.

Course Schedule

This course will consist of 12 week-long "units" involving recorded lectures, suggested supporting literature and media, discussions, short interviews with the instructor, reflection assignments, and a research paper or final assignment. Students are required to submit assignments and activities by the Friday of the week they are due.

For more information about University holidays and important dates from the University calendar, including withdrawal and drop dates, please see https://www.dal.ca/academics/important_dates.html

(Important Note: On weeks with more than one assigned reading students are only required to have read **one (1)** of the options available to them)

Week/Module Class Dates	Focus Topic	Activities	Readings
1 Sept 8–11	History, Historiography, and Indigeneity	Introductions	Weir, ‘Time Immemorial’ and Indigenous Rights: A Genealogy and Three Case Studies (Calder, Van der Peet, Tsilhqot’in) from British Columbia
2 Sept 14 – 18	Mesopotamia: Myth and Bureaucracy	Reflection 1 Due	The Epic of Gilgamesh
3 Sept 21 – 25	Ancient Egypt: Eternity and Unrest		The Adventures of Setna and Si- Osire
4 Sept 28 – Oct 2	Abrahamic Creation	Reflection 2 Due	Ecclesiastes
5 Oct 5 – 9	The Greeks and their Gifts: The Pre- Socratics, Plato, and Aristotle		A Presocratic Reader, selections Plato: Timaeus, selections Aristotle: Physics, selections
6 Oct 12 – 16	Orthodox Late Antiquity: The Stoics, Epicureans, and Plotinus	Reflection 3 Due	Lucretius, The Nature of Things, selections The Stoics Reader, selections Plotinus, The Enneads, selections
7 Oct 19 – 23	Heresy and Apocalypse in Late Antiquity	Reflection 4 Due	The Gnostic Bible, selections
8 Oct 26 – 30	Daoism and Spontaneity	Reflection 5 Due	Lao Tzu, Tao te Ching: An All-new Translation, selections Zhuangzi, The Essential Writings, selections
9 Nov 2 – 6	Augustine, Memory, and Creation	Instructor Interview Due	Augustine, The Confessions: Book 10 “Memory” Book 11 “Time and Eternity” Book 12 “Platonic and Christian Creations”
Reading Week November 9 – 13			
10 Nov 16 – 20	The Venerable Bede: Calendars, Computes, and Clocks	Reflection 6 Due	Bede: The Reckoning of Time, selections
11 Nov 23 – 27	The Children of Córdoba	Reflection 7 Due	Averroes, Faith and Reason in Islam, selections Maimonides, A Guide for the Perplexed, selections
12 Nov 30 – Dec 4	The Divine Comedy	Reflection 8 Due Final Assignment Due	Dante, Divine Comedy, selections

Course Assessments

Assessment		Weight
Reflection 1 Due	Week 2: Friday, Sept 18th	5%
Reflection 2 Due	Week 4: Friday, Oct 2nd	5%
Reflection 3 Due	Week 6: Friday, Oct 16th	5%
Reflection 4 Due	Week 7: Friday, Oct 23rd	5%
Reflection 5 Due	Week 8: Friday, Oct 30th	5%
Instructor Interview Due	Week 9: Friday, Nov 6th	20%
Reflection 6 Due	Week 10: Friday, Nov 20th	5%
Reflection 7 Due	Week 11: Friday, Nov 27th	5%
Reflection 8 Due	Week 12: Friday, Dec 4th	5%
Final Assignment Due	Week 12: Friday, Dec 4th	30%
Participation	End of Term	10%

Grades will be given out numerically. Students wishing to convert numeric to letter grades can visit the university's conversion descriptors under the Dalhousie Grading Practices Policy at:

https://www.dal.ca/dept/university_secretariat/policies/academic/grading-practices-policy.html

Participation

Participation will be broadly interpreted as consistent, thoughtful interaction with the course through the discussion forums. Have questions or general thoughts about the material that you do not really think fit in with a reflection? Find something in another class that seemed relevant and interesting that you would like to share? Want to respond thoughtfully to something a fellow classmate has said? Digging deeper, were you playing Animal Crossing the other day and felt that all that harvesting and homemaking really made you think of some Stoic or Epicurean premise? Or were you watching your favorite Twitch streamer play Stardew Valley and that made you think of the notion of "shared" time? As long as it is respectful and relevant to course themes your contributions are very much welcome here.

Reflections

Throughout the term students are expected to post to the forums five (5) 500-word reflections on the readings and/or lecture themes covered in the course (each worth 5%) and **at least** three (3) 500-word peer reflections discussing what they found valuable about another student's reflection, and how it has influenced their own thinking about the course material (each worth 5%). If they wish, students can do more peer-reflections and have them count towards their own reflections.

These reflections will be graded based on their ability to show how well the student has been able to reflect on, analyze, synthesize, and correlate class material, clarity of presentation, and imagination.

Instructor Interview

By at latest Friday, November 6th students are required to have arranged a time to speak with the professor over Microsoft Teams or Brightspace. This conversation can be voice or text-based, depending on the student's preference.

The purpose of this approximately 30 minute interview is to check in with you to see how you are doing in the course in general, but it will also include a specific component in which I will ask you about your thoughts and preparation for the final project. What is your tentative thesis so far? What are some of the primary and secondary sources do you hope to use? Why do you think they are good sources? What concerns or limitations do you think

you will face? If you are doing an alternative final assignment, how do you intend to incorporate course content into your final product? The graded component of this discussion will be based on evidence of preparedness and forethought about the final assignment.

Final Assignment

Those students who intend to go on to advanced degrees or who wish to further their skills writing academic papers are encouraged to consider doing an academic research paper for their final assignment. This assignment is an original 3000 to 4500-word research paper that will present a novel argument relevant to some theme or topic of the course. It will be based on textual analysis and reflection, and will be graded based on structure, style, the effective use of evidence, how well it shows an active engagement with its sources, and the quality of the thought being expressed within it. It will also be evaluated based on proof reading and consistent citation.

In dialogue with the instructor, those students who wish to may also propose an alternative final assignment, whether artistic, or based on some other professional discipline of the student's preference. The substance of the assignment will be agreed upon by both instructor and student, and will contain the work equivalent of a 300 to 4500-word research paper.

Course-specific policies

- When possible, the deadline for late assignments can be re-negotiated as agreed upon by both instructor and student within reasonable parameters. However, work submitted two weeks after the last week of classes can not be considered and will receive a failing grade.
- Plagiarism detection software is not being used in this course.
- All course lectures will be recordings. Where possible, the instructor will also seek to provide transcripts of lectures.

Course Content Bibliography:

- A Presocratics Reader: Selected Fragments and Testimonia, Second Edition.* Ed, Patricia Curd. Trans, Richard D. McKirahan and Patricia Curd. Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 2011.
- Alighieri, Dante. *The Divine Comedy: Inferno; Purgatorio; Paradiso.* Trans, Allen Mandelbaum. London: Everyman's Library, 1995.
- Aristotle. *Physics.* Trans, Robin Waterfield. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008.
- Augustine. *The Confessions.* Trans, Henry Chadwick. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008.
- Averroes, *Faith and Reason in Islam: Averroes' Exposition of Religious Arguments.* Trans, Ibrahim Y. Najjar. Oxford: Oneworld Publications, 2001.
- Bede. *Bede: The Reckoning of Time.* Trans, Faith Wallis. Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1999.
- Ecclesiastes: An Introduction and Commentary.* Trans, Knut Martin Heim. Westmont: InterVarsity Press, 2019.
- Lao Tzu, *Tao te Ching: An All-new Translation.* Trans, William Scott Wilson. Boston: Shambhala, 2012.
- Lucretius. *The Nature of Things.* Trans, A. E. Stallings. New York: Penguin, 2007.
- Maimonides, Moses. *A Guide for the Perplexed, 4th Revised Ed.* Trans, M. Friedländer. New York: E.P. Dutton, 1904.
- Plato. *Timaeus and Critias.* Trans, A.E. Taylor. London: Routledge, 2013.
- Plotinus. *The Enneads.* Ed and trans, Lloyd P. Gerson. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017.
- “The Adventures of Setna and Si-Osire.” In *The Literature of Ancient Egypt: An Anthology of Stories, Instructions, Stelae, Autobiographies, and Poetry.* Ed, William Kelly Simpson, 470-489. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003.
- The Epic of Gilgamesh: Norton Critical Edition.* Trans, Benjamin Foster. New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2019.
- The Gnostic Bible: Revised and Expanded Edition.* Eds, Willis Barnstone and Marvin Meyer. Boston: Shambhala, 2009.
- The Thunder: Prefect Mind.* Trans, Hal Taussig, Jared Calaway, Maia Kotrosits, Celene Lillie, Justin Lasser. New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2010.
- The Stoics Reader: Selected Writings and Testimonia.* Trans, Brad Inwood and Lloyd P. Gerson. Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing, 2008.
- Weir, Lorraine. “‘Time Immemorial’ and Indigenous Rights: A Genealogy and Three Case Studies (Calder, Van der Peet, Tsilhqot’in) from British Columbia.” *Journal of Historical Sociology* 26, no. 3 (2013), 383-411.
- Zhuangzi: The Essential Writings with Selections from Traditional Commentaries.* Trans, Brook Ziporyn. Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing, 2009.

SECTION B: UNIVERSITY POLICIES, STATEMENTS, GUIDELINES and RESOURCES for SUPPORT

This course is governed by the academic rules and regulations set forth in the University Calendar and the Senate. <https://academiccalendar.dal.ca/Catalog/ViewCatalog.aspx?pageid=viewcatalog>

University Statements

- Territorial Acknowledgement:

Dalhousie University is located in Mi'kma'ki, the ancestral and unceded territory of the Mi'kmaq. We are all Treaty people.

- Academic Integrity

At Dalhousie University, we are guided in all of our work by the values of academic integrity: honesty, trust, fairness, responsibility and respect. As a student, you are required to demonstrate these values in all of the work you do. The University provides policies and procedures that every member of the university community is required to follow to ensure academic integrity. (read more: http://www.dal.ca/dept/university_secretariat/academic-integrity.html)

- Accessibility

The Student Accessibility Centre is Dalhousie's centre of expertise for student accessibility and accommodation. The advising team works with students on the Halifax campus who request accommodation as a result of: a disability, religious obligation, or any barrier related to any other characteristic protected under Human Rights legislation (NS, NB, PEI, NFLD).

If there are aspects of the design, instruction, and/or experiences within this course that result in barriers to your inclusion please contact either your instructor or the Student Accessibility Centre at https://www.dal.ca/campus_life/academic-support/accessibility.html.

- Student Code of Conduct

Everyone at Dalhousie is expected to treat others with dignity and respect. The Code of Student Conduct allows Dalhousie to take disciplinary action if students don't follow this community expectation. When appropriate, violations of the code can be resolved in a reasonable and informal manner—perhaps through a restorative justice process. If an informal resolution can't be reached, or would be inappropriate, procedures exist for formal dispute resolution. (read more: https://www.dal.ca/campus_life/safety-respect/student-rights-and-responsibilities/student-life-policies/code-of-student-conduct.html)

- Diversity and Inclusion – Culture of Respect

Every person at Dalhousie has a right to be respected and safe. We believe inclusiveness is fundamental to education. Dalhousie is strengthened in our diversity and dedicated to achieving equity. We are

committed to being a respectful and inclusive community where everyone feels welcome and supported, which is why our university prioritizes fostering a culture of diversity and inclusiveness.
(read more: <https://www.dal.ca/cultureofrespect.html>)

- Fair Dealing policy

The Dalhousie University Fair Dealing Policy provides guidance for the limited use of copyright protected material without the risk of infringement and without having to seek the permission of copyright owners. It is intended to provide a balance between the rights of creators and the rights of users at Dalhousie.

(read more: https://www.dal.ca/dept/university_secretariat/policies/academic/fair-dealing-policy-.html)

University Policies and Programs

- Important Dates in the Academic Year (including add/drop dates)
http://www.dal.ca/academics/important_dates.html
- Dalhousie Grading Practices Policy
https://www.dal.ca/dept/university_secretariat/policies/academic/grading-practices-policy.html
- Grade Appeal Process
https://www.dal.ca/campus_life/academic-support/grades-and-student-records/appealing-a-grade.html
- Sexualized Violence Policy
https://www.dal.ca/dept/university_secretariat/policies/health-and-safety/sexualized-violence-policy.html
- Scent-Free Program
<http://www.dal.ca/dept/safety/programs-services/occupational-safety/scent-free.html>

Learning and Support Resources

- General Academic Support – Advising
https://www.dal.ca/campus_life/academic-support/advising.html (Halifax)
- Student Health & Wellness Centre: https://www.dal.ca/campus_life/health-and-wellness.html
- On Track (helps you transition into university, and supports you through your first year at Dalhousie and beyond) https://www.dal.ca/campus_life/academic-support/On-track.html
- Indigenous Student Centre https://www.dal.ca/campus_life/communities/indigenous.html
- Elders-in-Residence (The Elders in Residence program provides students with access to First Nations elders for guidance, counsel and support. Visit the office in the Indigenous Student Centre or contact the program at elders@dal.ca or 902-494-6803.)
<https://www.dal.ca/academics/programs/undergraduate/indigenous-studies/a-day-in-the-life/elders-in-residence.html>
- Black Student Advising Centre https://www.dal.ca/campus_life/communities/black-student-advising.html
- International Centre http://www.dal.ca/campus_life/student_services/international-centre.html

- South House Sexual and Gender Resource Centre <https://southhousehalifax.ca/about/>
- LGBTQ2SIA+ Collaborative - <https://www.dal.ca/dept/hres/education-campaigns/LGBTQ2SIA-collaborative.html>
- Dalhousie Libraries <http://libraries.dal.ca>
- Copyright Office <https://libraries.dal.ca/services/copyright-office.html>
- Dalhousie Student Advocacy Services <http://dsu.ca/dsas>
- Dalhousie Ombudsperson https://www.dal.ca/campus_life/safety-respect/student-rights-and-responsibilities/where-to-get-help/ombudsperson.html
- Human Rights and Equity Services <https://www.dal.ca/dept/hres.html>
- Writing Centre https://www.dal.ca/campus_life/academic-support/writing-and-study-skills.html
- Study Skills/Tutoring
- http://www.dal.ca/campus_life/academic-support/study-skills-and-tutoring.html