

Independent Study on Seneca

Prof. Jeremy Reid

Course and Contact Information

Meeting times: In person, time TBD

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Office: Humanities Building 360

Office hours: M 1–3pm (in person), or by appointment

Course description

The purpose of this study is to do a close reading of Seneca and to understand his place in Stoic philosophy and Roman culture. We will focus especially on Seneca's letters on ethics.

Assessment

50% weekly writing assignments

50% final paper (5000–8000 words)

For the weekly writing assignments, one of you will do a summary of either (a) the assigned text in outline, or (b) a close analysis of a particular stretch of argument; the other will write up a discussion of interesting/puzzling/surprising/cool issues raised in the text. Aim for one to two pages; be concise.

Texts

We will be working from the following texts:

[Sherman, *Stoic Wisdom*](#)

[Seneca, *On Benefits*, trans. Griffin & Inwood](#)

[Seneca, *Anger, Mercy, Revenge*, trans. Kaster & Nussbaum](#)

[Seneca, *Letters on Ethics: to Lucilius*, trans. Graver](#)

Ideally, you would also work your way through:

[Inwood, *Reading Seneca: Stoic Philosophy at Rome*](#)

Schedule of Readings

Week 1

Sherman, *Stoic Wisdom*, chapters 1–5

Week 2

Sherman, *Stoic Wisdom*, chapters 6–9

Week 3

Seneca, *On Clemency*;

Reid, “Stoic Forgiveness”

Week 4

Seneca, *On Benefits*, introduction & books 1–3

Week 5

Seneca, *On Benefits*, books 4–7

Week 6

Seneca, *Letters on Ethics*, letters 1–20

Week 7

Seneca, *Letters on Ethics*, letters 21–41

Week 8

Seneca, *Letters on Ethics*, letters 42–59

SPRING BREAK

Week 9

Seneca, *Letters on Ethics*, letters 60–72

Week 10

Seneca, *Letters on Ethics*, letters 73–83

Week 11

Seneca, *Letters on Ethics*, letters 84–93

Week 12

Seneca, *Letters on Ethics*, letters 94–104

Week 13

Seneca, *Letters on Ethics*, letters 105–116

Week 14

Seneca, *Letters on Ethics*, letters 117–end (including fragments)

Week 15

[Student presentation of papers]

Plagiarism

Plagiarism is a form of cheating or fraud; it occurs when a student misrepresents the work of another as his or her own. Plagiarism may consist of using the ideas, sentences, paragraphs, or the whole text of another without appropriate acknowledgment, but it also includes employing or allowing another person to write or substantially alter work that a student then submits as his or her own. Any assignment found to be plagiarized will be given an "F" grade. All instances of plagiarism in the College of Liberal & Creative Arts will be reported to the Dean of the College, and may be reported to the University Judicial Affairs Officer for further action.

Disability Access

Students with disabilities who need reasonable accommodations are encouraged to contact the instructor. The Disability Programs and Resource Center (DPRC) is available to facilitate the reasonable accommodations process. The DPRC is located in the Student Service Building and can be reached by telephone (voice/415-338-2472, video phone/415-335-7210) or by email (dprc@sfsu.edu).

Student Disclosures of Sexual Violence

SF State fosters a campus free of sexual violence including sexual harassment, domestic violence, dating violence, stalking, and/or any form of sex or gender discrimination. If you disclose a personal experience as an SF State student, the course instructor is required to notify the Title IX Coordinator by completing the report form available at <http://titleix.sfsu.edu>, emailing vpsaem@sfsu.edu or calling 338-2032.

To disclose any such violence confidentially, contact:

- The SAFE Place - (415) 338-2208; http://www.sfsu.edu/~safe_plc/
- Counseling and Psychological Services Center - (415) 338-2208;

<http://psyservs.sfsu.edu/>

- For more information on your rights and available resources: <http://titleix.sfsu.edu>