In antiquity, philosophy was rarely a purely theoretical subject. From Socrates to the Neoplatonists, the ancients saw philosophical learning as a way of life—one that could help a person attain eudaimonia, or human flourishing. In this class, the first in a series of four, we will discuss what it was like to be a philosophy student in antiquity. We’ll examine a variety of philosophical exercises and practices that were recommended by ancient schools of thought, from listening to lectures to philosophical reading and writing. Apart from offering a window onto a fascinating pedagogical tradition that is different from our own, this historical overview will prompt critical reflection on our own conception of what it means to do philosophy, and on how we draw boundaries between philosophy, self-help, and spirituality.

Coursebooks (recommended):

- Brad Inwood & Lloyd Gerson (editors), The Epicurus Reader: Selected Writings and Testimonia (Hackett 1994, 978-0872202412)
- Robin Hard (translator), Marcus Aurelius, Meditations: With Selected Correspondence (Oxford University Press 2011, ISBN: 978-0199573202)

03/29: Therapeutic Arguments and Spiritual Exercises

- First Half: Introduction to the Hellenistic Schools
  - Pierre Hadot, What is Ancient Philosophy, Ch. 7: ‘The Hellenistic Schools’ (optional)
- Second Half: Therapeutic Arguments and Spiritual Exercises
  - Martha Nussbaum, The Therapy of Desire, Ch. 1: ‘Therapeutic Arguments’
  - Pierre Hadot, Philosophy as a Way of Life, Ch. 3: ‘Spiritual Exercises’

04/05: The Philosophical Classroom

- First half: On Listening to Lectures
04/12: Reading for Wisdom

- First half: Aphorisms and Letters
  - Seneca, selections from *Letters* 30, 84 and 94
- Second half: Summaries
  - Epictetus, *Handbook*

04/19: Self-Examination and Spiritual Direction

- First Half: Self-Examination
  - Seneca, *On Anger*, III.36-39
  - Marcus Aurelius, *Meditations*, Book II
  - Foucault, ‘Writing the Self’ (optional)
- Second Half: Spiritual Direction:
  - Seneca, *On Tranquillity* (selections)
  - Philodemus, *On Frank Criticism* (selections)