

## The “Good Life” in Greek Poetry CS3903F, Fall 2024

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### OVERVIEW

#### Course Information

Dr Il-Kweon Sir

Please come to student hours (also called “office hours”)! They exist to help you – both regarding this course and for your broader academic development. Drop in if you have questions, but also if you want to talk to me about something in class, in your reading, or even on TV that’s inspired you.

#### Course Description

How do we lead a “good life”? In our society, everyone from politicians to retirees and children claims to have an idea of what it looks like, but we also recognise “experts” in this area, be they academics, economists, religious leaders, or philosophers. This course examines the “good life” according to ancient Greek poets, who often presented themselves as the transmitters and guardians of knowledge and wisdom in their own society. Starting from discussions of life amidst death, we will consider the importance of money, power, prestige, war, work, love, age, sex, and race to the conception of the “good life” in Greek epic, lyric, and tragedy of the archaic and classical periods. We will also study the boundaries and links between poetry and “philosophy” and the continuities and discontinuities between ancient and contemporary perspectives.

## Learning Objectives

Students who complete this course will:

- be able to recognise, describe, and analyse major ideas pertinent to conceptions of the “good life” in Greek poetry up to the 5<sup>th</sup> century BCE;
- be able to recognise, describe, and analyse the relationship between presentations of the “good life” and their literary, historical, and ideological contexts;
- be able to recognise, describe, and analyse the continuities and differences in contemporary and ancient perspectives on the “good life”;
- be able to recognise, describe, and analyse the rich poetic qualities of the texts studied;
- have improved their research, presentation, and writing skills.

## Instructor

Hello! I'm Il-Kweon Sir (my first name is pronounced in two syllables and rhymes with “one”; “Sir” is pronounced like the title). I hail from Korea via the UK and I'm very glad to be joining Western this year from the University of Cambridge, where I have researched and taught since receiving my degrees from the University of Oxford. My teaching and research are closely aligned, focused on the study of the ancient Greek and Roman world through its languages and literature with a special interest in lyric poetry. I'm particularly excited to teach this course as it approaches some of the biggest concerns in Greek culture – themes that first drew me to Classics and continue to inspire my research – through some of the most astonishing pieces of Greek literature from a very human perspective. It also directly relates to my developing research on wellbeing in Greek literature.

## Prerequisites

There are no prerequisites for this course. The themes and content of this course would combine well with the “Greek Epic” (Fall), “Athenian Drama” (Winter), “Ancient Greek Religion” (Fall), “Women in Ancient Greece” (Fall), and “Slavery in Antiquity” (Winter) courses in the Department of Classical Studies.

## Required Books

R. Lattimore, *Greek Epic and Elegy*. (Chicago, 1951). [Re-printed many times, including recently with introduction and notes by E. V. Rieu. Mar2(hi)-1(s)5(8y)-3( )1f1 Tw 0.29 0 Td[ 0.29 0epahii







Hesiod's ?  
Texts: Selections from lyric (see Source Book), Hesiod's .

[WED 9<sup>th</sup> OCT: MID-

**Closing Discussions**

Discussion Question: "Happy families are all alike; every unhappy family is unhappy in its own way."  
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incorrect citation or omission of authorship can amount to the silencing of scholarly perspectives and identity.

Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, at the following Web site:

[http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic\\_policies/appeals/scholastic\\_discipline\\_undergrad.pdf](http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_discipline_undergrad.pdf). You, as the student, are responsible for knowing and avoiding misconduct.

I encourage you to make sure you understand and know how to avoid plagiarism before submitting any work for assessment.



