

# SOCIAL FOUNDATIONS I

**Class code** T03.0101.089

Freshman Programme

**Instructor** Dr. Curt Noel

**Details**

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Place and time of office hours to be announced.

**Class Details** Fall, 2009

Tuesdays, 10.00 a.m. to 1.00 p.m.

43 Gordon Square (Birkbeck), Room G02

**Prerequisites** None

**Class  
Description**

This course introduces students to some of the most significant debates which thinkers conducted during the ancient and early medieval periods. Geographically, we focus on the cultures of the Mediterranean basin and the Islamic Middle East and North Africa, as well as China; chronologically, on the years from about 500BC to about 700AD. Although we look at the past, the primary emphasis is on the character and evolution of ideas, as well as the societies and cultures in which these ideas were expressed. We will examine ideas and practices of religion, philosophy, and politics. By examining some of the foremost expressions of pagan, Jewish, Christian, Islamic, Confucian and other thinkers, students will become aware of some of the complexities of thought and belief and of the relationships between beliefs and society in these cultures. Students should also see how many concerns have endured for long periods, sometimes for millenniums. We will discuss questions about the nature of good; of mankind's relationship with God; about the character of love; about political authority; of the relationship between an individual and the state; of what makes good and bad law; about social conflict and radical rebellion. Perhaps the most important question, most frequently asked by thinkers, has been: how should we live our lives?

The course consists of class lectures, occasional viewing of videos and use of some internet and other visual resources, and the reading of books and essays. Class discussion is crucially important. We will also make several co-curricular class visits, as shown below.

**Desired  
Outcomes**

There are several basic aims. One is for students to improve their ability to think analytically about and to discuss intelligently a range of ideas. This should help students to look more thoughtfully at today's world, as well as that of the past. A second aim is to enable students to express themselves as effectively as possible – to examine evidence, marshal arguments and present conclusions clearly and persuasively. This applies to both classroom discussion and written work. The third aim is to help students increase their knowledge of earlier times and other cultures. This is especially important for American students who live in a vast country and know mainly their own culture only. They will confront radically different societies and codes of conduct and may come to appreciate the saying: "The past is another country. They do things differently there." We hope the readings and discussions will help students from all cultures become better informed about the world around them, more questioning, and more self-reliant.

**Assessment  
Components**

Book Review= 15%. Midterm Exam=20%. Long Essay=30%. Final Exam=30%. Class participation=5%.

Class participation includes **classroom discussion** and the **required class visits**.

Failure to submit or fulfil any required course component results in failure of the class.

**Assessment  
Expectations**

**Grade A:** Thorough knowledge and understanding of the required readings; signs of benefiting from class discussion and other activities; integration of varied ideas and materials; at best, imaginative use of non-required readings and original or unusual thought; well focused on the question. All expressed in coherent and effective language. Some use of the lectures without heavily relying on them.

**Grade B:** Good knowledge and understanding of the required readings with some reliance on other materials, including class discussion; extensive though thoughtful use of lectures; little if any unusual thinking; adequately focused on the question. Coherent and effective expression.

**Grade C:** Faulty knowledge and understanding of the readings; little use of other materials and heavy reliance on the lectures; ideas are unclear, perhaps contradictory, and there is no sign of the student having done any thinking of his/her own; shaky focus on the question. Expression is wobbly and sometimes ineffective.

**Grade D:** Clear misunderstanding of the required readings or little sign of having read them; no use of other materials; relies almost solely on lectures for ideas, approaches and facts, and jumbles even this; fails to focus on the question or to express her-/him-self adequately.

**Grade F:** No sign of having done the required reading or other work and has failed to benefit even from the lectures. Not even clever, effective writing can disguise the fact that the student has not worked sufficiently. Where has this student been?

**Grade  
conversion**

NYU in London uses the following scale of numerical equivalents to letter grades:

A=94-100  
A-=90-93

B+=87-89  
B=84-86  
B-=80-83

C+=77-79  
C=74-76  
C-=70-73

D+=67-69  
D=65-66

F=below 65

Where no specific numerical equivalent is assigned to a letter grade by the class teacher, the mid point of the range will be used in calculating the final class grade (except in the A range, where 95.5 will be used).

## Grading Policy

NYU in London aims to have grading standards and results similar to those that prevail at Washington Square. At the College of Arts and Sciences, roughly 39% of all final grades are in the B+ to B- range, and 50% in the A/A- range.

We have therefore adopted the following grading guideline: in any non-Stern course, class teachers should try to insure that no more than 50% of the class receives an A or A-. (Stern has a different grading policy that we follow in all Stern courses, please see below).

A guideline is not a curve. A guideline is just that-it gives an ideal benchmark for the distribution of grades towards which we work.

Stern School of Business classes adhere to the following Stern grading guidelines:

There should be no more than

- 25-35% A's - awarded for excellent work
- 50-70% B's - awarded for good or very good work
- 5-15% C's or below - awarded for adequate or below work

## Attendance Policy

NYU-L has a strict policy about course attendance. **No unexcused absences are permitted.** Students should contact their class teachers to catch up on missed work but should **NOT** approach them for excused absences. Excused absences will usually only be considered for serious, unavoidable reasons such as personal ill –health or illness in the immediate family. Trivial or non-essential reasons will not be considered.

Please note that you will need to ensure that no make-up classes – or required excursions - have been organised before making any travel plans for the semester.

**All absences due to illness must be reported on the first day of absence via phone (Freephone 0800 316 0469) or email [freshmen.in.london@nyu.ac.uk](mailto:freshmen.in.london@nyu.ac.uk).** Absences due to illness must be discussed with the Assistant Director for Freshmen Programmes. You will be asked to complete an Excused Absence Form (which can be obtained from NYU in London staff) and you will also need to produce a valid doctor's note, having sought treatment for the illness within one week of your return to class.

**Absence requests for non-illness purposes** must be discussed with the Assistant Director for Freshmen Programmes prior to the date(s) in question – no excused absences for non-illness purposes can be applied retrospectively.

Unexcused absences will be penalized by deducting 3% from the student's final course mark. Students are responsible for making up any work missed due to absence.

Unexcused absences from exams are not permitted and will result in failure of the exam. If you are granted an excused absence from examination (with authorisation, as above), your lecturer will decide how you will make-up the assessment component, if at all (by make-up examination, extra coursework, viva voce (oral examination), or an increased weighting on an alternate assessment component, etc.).

NYU-L also expects students to arrive to class promptly (both at the beginning and after any breaks) and to remain for the duration of the class. If timely attendance becomes a problem it is the prerogative of each instructor to deduct a mark or marks from the final grade of each late arrival and each early departure.

Please note that for classes involving a **field trip or other external visit**, transportation difficulties are never grounds for an excused absence. It is the student's responsibility to arrive at an agreed meeting point in a punctual and timely fashion.

Please refer to the Student Handbook for further details.

### Late Submission of Work

- (1) Written work due in class must be submitted during the class time to the professor.
- (2) Late work should be submitted **in person** to the Assistant Director for Freshman Programmes **in office hours** (Mon – Fri, 10:30 – 17:30), who will write on the essay or other work the date and time of submission, in the presence of the student. Another member of the administrative staff can accept the work, in person, in the absence of the Assistant Director for Freshman Programmes and will write the date and time of submission on the work, as above. Please also send an electronic copy to Becky Kelley ([becky.kelley@nyu.ac.uk](mailto:becky.kelley@nyu.ac.uk)) for submission to Turnitin.
- (3) Work submitted up to 5 weekdays after the submission time without an agreed extension receives a penalty of 10 points on the 100 point scale.
- (4) Written work submitted more than 5 weekdays after the submission date without an agreed extension fails and is given a zero.
- (5) **Please note** end of semester essays must be submitted on time.

### Plagiarism Policy

Plagiarism: the presentation of another person's words, ideas, judgment, images or data as though they were your own, whether intentionally or unintentionally, constitutes an act of plagiarism.

**All students must submit an electronic copy of each piece of their written work to [www.turnitin.com](http://www.turnitin.com) and hand in a printed copy with the digital receipt to their professor. Late submission of work rules apply to both the paper and electronic submission (see section 12 below) and failure to submit either copy of your work will result in automatic failure in the assignment and possible failure in the class.**

#### Electronic Submission

All students must submit an electronic copy of their written work to [www.turnitin.com](http://www.turnitin.com). This database will be searched for the purpose of comparison with other students' work or with other pre-existing writing or publications, and other academic institutions may also search it. The database is managed by JISC (Joint Information Systems Council) and has been established with the support of the Higher Education Funding Council for England.

In order for you to be able to submit your work onto the Turnitin website, you will need to set up an account:

- 1) Go onto the Turnitin website <http://www.turnitin.com>
- 2) Click 'New Users' in the top right hand corner
- 3) Select user type of 'student'
- 4) Enter your class ID & Turnitin class enrollment password (these will be e-mailed to you after the drop/add period, or contact Becky Kelley if you have misplaced these at [becky.kelley@nyu.ac.uk](mailto:becky.kelley@nyu.ac.uk))
- 5) Follow the online instructions to create your profile.

To submit your work for class, you will then need to:

- 1) Log in to the Turnitin website
- 2) Enter your class by clicking on the class name
- 3) Next to the piece of work you are submitting (please confirm the due date), click on the 'submit' icon
- 4) Enter the title of your piece of work

- 5) Browse for the file to upload from wherever you have saved it (USB drive, etc.), please ensure your work is in Word or PDF format, and click 'submit'
- 6) Click 'yes, submit' to confirm you have selected the correct paper (or 'no, go back' to retry)
- 7) You will then have submitted your essay onto the Turnitin website.
- 8) Please print your digital receipt and attach this to the hard copy of your paper before you submit it to your professor (this digital receipt appears on the web site, immediately after you submit your paper and is also sent to your e-mail address). Please also note that when a paper is submitted to Turnitin all formatting, images, graphics, graphs, charts, and drawings are removed from the paper so that the program can read it accurately. Please do not print the paper in this form to submit to your lecturers, as it is obviously pretty difficult to read! You can still access the exact file you uploaded by clicking on the 'file' icon in the 'content' column.

Please also see the Late Submission of Work policy, above.

Students must retain an electronic copy of their work for one month after their grades are posted online on Albert and must supply an electronic copy of their work if requested to do so by NYU in London. **Not submitting a copy of a piece of work upon request will result in automatic failure in the assignment and possible failure in the class.** NYU in London may submit in an electronic form the work of any student to a database for use in the detection of plagiarism, without further prior notification to the student.

Penalties for confirmed cases of plagiarism are set out in the Student Handbook.

**Required  
Text(s)**

Plato, *The Trial and Death of Socrates. Four Dialogues* ( N.Y., 1992, 0486270661)

Aristotle, *The Politics* (rev. ed., London, 1992, 0140444211)

*The Gospel of Mark* (New International Version, London, 2006, 0340943595)

M. Smith, *The Secret Gospel* (Wellingborough, 1985, 0850304393) Class handout (reader)

M. Smith, *Jesus the Magician* (Wellingborough, 1985, 0850304059) Class handout (reader)

Plato, *Symposium* ( Oxford, 1994, 0192834274)

Ibn Hazm, *The Ring of the Dove* (tr. A. J. Arberry, London, 1953) Class handout (reader)

Plato, *Republic* (Oxford, 2008, 9780199535767)

Confucius, *The Analects*, (Oxford, 2008, 9780199540617)

**Supplemental  
Texts(s) (not  
required to  
purchase as  
copies are in  
NYU-L Library)**

K. Armstrong, *Islam: A Short History* (Phoenix, 2002, 1842125834)

<b>Internet Research Guidelines</b>	Internet research is NOT admissible as part of this course, EXCEPT with your professor's explicit permission or as required as part of the course.
<b>Additional Required Equipment</b>	None
<b>Session 1</b> (Tu 8 /09/09)	INTRODUCTION. Introduction to the Course and to Greek Society and Ideals (Tu 8 /09/09)  Plato, <i>Apology</i> and <i>Crito</i> in <i>The trial and Death of Socrates. Four Dialogues</i>
<b>Session 2</b> (Tu 15/09/09)	MORALITY, POWER AND AUTHORITY (Tu 15/09/09)  Plato, <i>Republic</i> , chaps. 4, 6, and 9  B. Hughes, "Athenian Democracy" (video in class),
<b>Session 3</b> (Tu 22/09/09)	MORALITY, POWER AND AUTHORITY (Tu 22/09/09)  Plato, <i>Republic</i> , chaps. 8 and 11  <b>Required Class Visit</b> to British Museum Parthenon Marbles and Greek Galleries (in Class)
<b>Session 4</b> (Tu 29/09/09)	FAITH: JUDAISM, CHRISTIANITY, AND MAGIC (Tu 29/09/09)  Mark, <i>The Gospel of Mark</i> , pp 8-55
<b>Session 5</b> (Tu 6/10/09)	FAITH: JUDAISM, CHRISTIANITY, AND MAGIC (Tu 6/10/09)  M. Smith, <i>The Secret Gospel</i> ,  "The Secret Gospel of Judas" (video in class)  <b>Book Review due</b> ; hand in in class
<b>Session 6</b> (Tu 13/10/09)	FAITH: JUDAISM, CHRISTIANITY AND MAGIC (Tu 13/10/09)  M. Smith, <i>Jesus the Magician</i>
<b>Session 7</b> (Friday 16/10/09) (Make-up Day)	LOVE AND SOCIETY. IDEAL AND REALITY (Friday 16/10/09) (Make-up Day)  Plato, <i>Symposium</i> , pp. xi-95
<b>Session 8</b> (Tu 20/10/09)	LOVE AND SOCIETY. IDEAL AND REALITY (Tu 20/10/09)

Ibn Hazm, *The Ring of the Dove*, reader

K. Armstrong, *Islam: A Short History*, pp 3-81

### **Midterm Examination in Class**

#### **Session 9**

(Tu 27/10/09)

ISLAMIC ORIGINS: GOD AND CULTURE (Tu 27/10/09)

*The Qur'an*, suras 1 to 5, 17, 24, 30, 42, 49, 81, 83 and 88

#### **Session 10**

(Tu 3/11/09)

CONFUCIANISM AND CHINESE SOCIETY (Tu 3/11/09)

Confucius, *The Analects*, pp. vii – xxvii and Books 1 to 11

#### **Session 11**

(Tu 17/11/09)

CONFUCIANISM AND CHINESE SOCIETY (Tu 17/11/09)

Confucius, *The Analects*, Books 12 to 20

#### **Session 12**

(Tu 24/11/09)

HAPPINESS, POWER AND AUTHORITY (Tu 24/11/09)

Aristotle, *Politics*, pp 18-27, 51-87, and 167-215

### **Long Essay due; to be handed in in Class**

#### **Session 13**

(Tu 1/12/09)

HAPPINESS, POWER AND AUTHORITY (Tu 1/12/09)

Aristotle, *Politics*, 238-51, 264-72, 359-405 and 426-54

#### **Session 14**

(Tu 8 /12/09)

CONCLUSION. ANCIENT AND MEDIEVAL ROOTS OF MODERNITY (Tu 8 /12/09)

Overview of the course

#### **Session 15**

FINAL EXAMINATION

Date and time to be announced.

#### **Classroom**

##### **Etiquette**

Students are expected to remain in class for the duration of the class.

Toilet breaks should be taken before or after class or during class breaks.

Food, including gum, is not to be consumed in class.

Mobile phones should be set on silent and should not be used in class except for emergencies.

Please kindly dispose of rubbish in the bins provided.

#### **Required Co-**

Class visit to British Museum, as indicated above in Session 3. On foot.

**curricular  
Activities**

Class visit to Lullingstone Roman Villa, Friday, 23 October, by coach.

Students may also be required to attend and report informally on current activities pertinent to this course, e.g., exhibitions, films, displays, lectures, and other similar events in London. The student's attendance and report may be counted as part of the class participation grade.

**Suggested Co-  
curricular  
Activities**

Students are encouraged to get to know and enjoy the museums, galleries and historic sites of London which will help them understand many aspects of the past – of both British and other cultures. Particularly recommended are the British Museum, the Museum of London, the National Portrait Gallery, the National Gallery, Tate Britain, the British Library, the Victoria and Albert Museum, the Geffrye Museum, the Tower of London, the Imperial War Museum, etc. Many are free except for temporary special exhibitions, and many, like the National Gallery, offer free lectures about particular items, artists or collections.