

Integrated Studies 0002 (Spring 2024): Curiosity: Ancient and Modern Thinking about Thinking

Ancient Curiosity: In this stream we will look at ancient Greek perspectives on curiosity. From our very oldest surviving evidence, Greeks were curious about curiosity. A close study of Homer's *Odyssey* will start us off. We will see a hero, Odysseus, driven all over the Mediterranean, trying to make his way back home to the island of Ithaca. There is suffering and endurance as he wanders dislocated for a decade. But there is also an ongoing set of engagements with things to know. He meets new gods, monsters, animals, and other humans and tries to figure what they're all about. Next we'll focus on the philosopher Plato, who was deeply interested in how we know things and why we find ourselves consistently chasing after new knowledge. We'll see that for him it is a form of liberation. We'll close with a slightly shorter look at the philosophy Aristotle. He was Plato's best student and disagreed with him on just about everything. A close look at Aristotle will give us a different way to think about curiosity as a core component of what a human being is all about.

Modern Curiosity: In this class, we will explore a modern perspective on what curiosity is and what it can do. We will begin with an assessment of recent scientific definitions of curiosity, and seek to understand how and in what ways they are limited. Then, we will draw on contemporary work in the humanities to suggest an alternative framing. Rather than think of curiosity as a drive to acquire new bits of information, we will come to see that curiosity is a practice of connection. It connects perceptions, facts, and ideas into growing networks of knowledge. And it connects knowers, not only to the things they want to know but also to the networks of people and histories that make knowledge meaningful. Curiosity connects, and it does so within the connective tissues of brain and body, system and society. As we seek to understand this connective nature of curiosity, our examination will take us through and among a variety of disciplines, including cognitive science, psychology, neuroscience, linguistics, philosophy, information science, and network science. Finally, we will investigate how this new connective paradigm can reinvigorate the study of the mind (its contours and creativity), and inform new approaches to social equity and educational practice.

Teaching Team Information

Cognitive Science

Professor Dani S. Bassett (they/them), 114 Hayden Hall, dsb@seas.upenn.edu

Office Hours: Tuesdays, 11:45am-12:45pm and by appointment

Classical Studies

Professor Peter Struck (he/him), 291 Cohen Hall, struck@sas.upenn.edu

Office Hours: Thursdays, 12-1pm, and by appointment

Seminars

Dr. David Dunning (he/him), Cohen Hall 175, dunningd@sas.upenn.edu

Office Hours: Tuesdays, 1:30-3:00pm and by appointment

Dr. Kristian Taketomo (he/him), Hill Club Lounge, taketomo@sas.upenn.edu

Office Hours: Fridays, 2:45-4:00pm and by appointment

Dr. Julio R. Tuma, Cohen Hall 435, tuma@sas.upenn.edu, 215-898-4772

Office Hours: Tuesdays, 2:30-3:25pm and by appointment

Class Commitments

Statement on Names and Pronouns. In our classroom, it is important that we refer to everyone by their names and by their pronouns. Pronouns can be a way to affirm someone's gender, but they can also be unrelated to a person's gender. They are simply a public way in which people are referred to in place of their name (e.g., "he" or "she" or "they" or "ze" or many others). In this classroom, you are invited but not required to share the pronouns you use (or the pronouns you want to use in this particular space), and we ask that all of us commit to being attentive to and using each other's pronouns. If you accidentally misgender someone or use an incorrect

pronoun for them, please simply correct yourself to their pronoun. If during the course you would like us to change the pronoun we are using for you, please let us know.

Bathroom Statement. An all-gender bathroom is available in Arch (room G06). Additional all-gender bathrooms are available in Locust Walk 3609 (rooms 107, 209, 306), the Graduate Student Center 3615 Locust Walk (rooms 207, 307), and Robbins House 3537 Locust Walk (rooms 204 and 304). For an up-to-date map of all-gender restrooms on campus, see [here](#).

Name Designation Statement. The University of Pennsylvania is committed to providing an equitable and safe experience for students whose birth name and/or legal name does not reflect their gender. Any student, including transgender, genderfluid, genderqueer, gender diverse, non-cisgender and cisgender students who wish to designate a name different from their birth or legal name can do so by editing their Personal Information page in Path@Penn. For additional Preferred First Name, Pronouns, and Gender Identity Information, see <https://sfs.upenn.edu/student-records/update-data>.

Statement on Course Content. Recent work across the sciences and the humanities has identified a bias in content engagement. Scholarly work from marginalized gender, racial, and ethnic identities receives less engagement than expected were these factors unrelated to citation, referencing, and syllabus-building practices. In building the syllabus for INTG002, we sought to proactively consider choosing content that reflects the diversity of the field in thought, form of contribution, gender, race, ethnicity, and other factors. We look forward to future work that could help us to better understand how to support equitable practices in the development of course content across the sciences and the humanities.

Positionality Statement. In this course we will be canvassing pieces by and/or about a range of scholars whose position, privilege, commitments, and lived experience may be vastly different from our own. Together, our goal in this class is to come to these texts with respect and an eagerness to learn. We are socialized into an unjust and unequal society, and we inherit biases woven into the fabric of that society. We aim to approach the course (and its diverse content) in a way that prioritizes the needs and well-being of scholars from historically and currently marginalized groups. We can do this by listening to our colleagues and fellow students, practicing intellectual humility, and being actively curious about our biases, blindspots, and areas of ignorance.

Commitment Statement Soliciting Feedback. At Penn and in this course, we aim to educate and respect students with diverse backgrounds and perspectives. The diversity students bring to class is a resource and an essential feature of university education. We aim to present materials and activities that are respectful of diversity, including academic background as well as gender, sexuality, disability, age, socioeconomic status, ethnicity, race, and culture. Your suggestions to improve diversity and inclusivity in the course are encouraged and appreciated.

Texts

Classical Studies:

Homer, *Odyssey*, trans. by Emily Wilson (Norton) **ISBN-13: 978-0393356250**

Jonathan Lear, *Aristotle: The Desire to Understand* (Cambridge) **ISBN-13: 978-0521347624**

Plato, *Phaedo*, David Gallop, trans. (Oxford) **ISBN-13: 978-0199538935**

Cognitive Science:

Main Text: Perry Zurn & Dani S. Bassett, *Curious Minds* (MIT Press; 2022).

Secondary Text, available online through Franklin Library: Perry Zurn and Arjun Shankar, Editors, *Curiosity Studies: A New Ecology of Knowledge* (Minnesota Press; 2020).

A variety of primary sources, available online or through the course CANVAS page.

Seminar Times & Locations:

Please attend the seminar you registered for/assigned to you:

- 301 Dr. Tuma, Fridays 10:15-11:05, Hill Seminar Room
- 302 Dr. Tuma, Fridays Noon-12:50, Hill Seminar Room
- 303 Dr. Kristian Taketomo, Fridays Noon-12:50, Hill Club Lounge
- 304 Dr. Kristian Taketomo, Fridays 1:45-2:35, Hill Club Lounge
- 305 Dr. David Dunning, Fridays 1:45-2:35, Hill Seminar Room
- 306 Dr. David Dunning, Fridays 3:30-4:20, Hill Seminar Room

Assessment and Course Grade Breakdown

You will receive one single grade for Integrated Studies 002.

Each of the two streams and the Seminar is worth 30% of this single grade. The Thursday integrative session is worth 10% of his final grade.

The grade breakdown for each stream is as follows:

Classical Studies (30% of INTG002 grade)

Tutorial 1 - Week of February 19th - Week 5 (15%)

Tutorial 2 - Week of March 25th - Week 9 (20%)

Paper – April 14th at Midnight (25%)

FINAL - TBD (40%)

Cognitive Science (30% of INTG002 grade)

Paper 1 - February 25th at Midnight (30%)

Paper 2 - April 7th at Midnight (30%)

FINAL - TBD (40%)

Thursday Integrative Sessions (10% of INTG002 grade)

Seminars (30% of INTG002 grade)

Attendance & Participation (20%)

Integration Essay 1 - Due Midnight March 1st (20%)

Group Integration Assignment - Various due dates in weeks 10-13 (30%)

Final Integration Essay 2 - Due Midnight April 26th (30%)

Policy on Academic Integrity: Students are expected to follow Penn's [Code of Academic Integrity](#) . Violations of the code — i.e., cheating on exams, plagiarism, etc. — will be referred to the Office of Student Conduct and will result in a failing grade for the assignment, plus whatever other sanctions are levied by the Office. If you have any questions or doubts about what constitutes a violation of the code, please ask.

Policy on Academic Freedom: The University of Pennsylvania protects [academic freedom](#), which was established to promote the integrity of research and teaching. The principles of academic freedom are founded on the idea that a university's purpose is to generate curiosity and disseminate new knowledge that can serve the common good in a democratic society, and that such knowledge requires free and open inquiry. To safeguard the university's public mission, academic freedom entails the following rights for faculty and students:

- The right of faculty members to full freedom in research, teaching, extramural speech (public speech on issues of general concern) and intramural speech (speech about the university itself, including criticism of it).
- The right of students to freedom in learning, which includes freedom of association and expression and freedom of inquiry in the classroom.

Policy on Artificial Intelligence and AI-assisted Technologies: The University of Pennsylvania has not settled upon a uniform policy on the use of AI and AI-assisted technologies (e.g., large language models such as chatbots, image generators, data mining bots, etc.). For the purposes of Integrated Studies 0002, we will not be accepting AI-generated (or AI-assisted) writing assignments. In general, we do not think the use of these technological products meets our criteria for what constitutes authorship. More importantly, we do not feel that the use of AI is conducive to the type of learning in which we want you to engage via our curriculum. As you have learned in INTG0001, writing is a process and a craft – one that demands your attention and allows you to refine your thoughts as you engage with the text you produce. We do not want to deny you the opportunity to continue to develop these important skills. Exceptional cases may arise in which you might want to use some AI-generated material, say to explore some aspect of human vs. AI-generated curiosity, and each stream may consider these exceptional circumstances provided you: 1) ask for permission prior to the use of such material for an assignment; 2) properly cite and give detailed attribution regarding which AI-technology you employ and how it is employed; 3) remember that ultimately, you are accountable for what is produced in a submission in which you are claiming authorship.

Weekly Theme	Tuesday Mornings (Dr. Bassett)	Tuesday Afternoons (Dr. Struck)	Thursday Morning/Integration	Seminars
Jan. 18-19 Week 0			Introductions, syllabi, expectations	Introduction
Jan. 22-26 Week 1: What is Curiosity?	DB: A modern view of curiosity. What is a modern view of curiosity? Is curiosity about collecting? About acquiring knowledge? About asking questions?	PS: Knowledge and Curiosity in Antiquity What does knowledge look like in ancient Greece? What counts as knowledge? How is it found? What are its functions in society? [Habinek]	Integrative Session led by Dr. Taketomo	Seminars
Jan 29-Feb 2 Week 2: How We Know Things	DB: Science of curiosity. What is science? What practices characterize scientific inquiry? What are the limitations of scientific inquiry, and how do those limitations impact the practice of science?	PS: Homer's <i>Odyssey</i> as a story of curiosity What are the humanities? What practices characterize humanistic inquiry? Then, we'll look at books 1-6, we'll get oriented to Greek antiquity. We meet Odysseus and Telemachus, information seekers young and old.	Integrative Session led by Dr. Struck	Seminars

<p>Feb 5-9</p> <p>Week 3: Asking Questions</p>	<p>DB: Philosophy of curiosity.</p> <p>A philosophical critique of the acquisitional account of curiosity, and a proposal for a connective account.</p>	<p>PS: Travel and curiosity</p> <p>In books 7-12, Odysseus moves from pillar to post and finally back to Ithaca, rampant curiosity all the way.</p>	<p>Integrative Session led Dr. Tuma</p>	<p>Seminars – Trip to Penn Museum</p>
<p>Feb 12-16</p> <p>Week 4: Connectivity</p>	<p>DB: Networks of the mind.</p> <p>How does the mind build connective architectures of knowledge? What sorts of architectures might the mind build?</p>	<p>PS: Curiosity about a human; what is the “man”?</p> <p>In books 13-18, Odysseus’ identity becomes the main subject of curiosity. Just who is the disguised beggar hanging around Ithaca, and how does he become known?</p>	<p>Integrative Session led by Dr. Dunning</p>	<p>Seminars</p>

<p>Feb 19-23: Week 5: Motive, style, voice</p>	<p>DB: Styles of curiosity. How might distinct styles of curiosity produce different architectures of knowledge? **Cognitive Science Paper 1 due at midnight on Sunday February 25th**</p>	<p>PS: Curiosity and intimacy In books 19-24, Penelope and Odysseus display a different kind of knowing, more based on intuition than making inferences. **Classical Studies Tutorial 1 This Week – signup sheets will be available on Canvas**</p>	<p>TBD</p>	<p>Seminars</p>
<p>Feb 26-March 1 Week 6: Sources and situated knowledge</p>	<p>DB: Styling curiosity in knowledge. How might the individual and collective mind, society and culture, impact the formation of knowledge structures?</p>	<p>PS: Plato on how the desire for knowledge shapes Socrates' life We'll look at sources of knowledge and modes of testing claims to knowledge in Plato's <i>Apology</i>.</p>	<p>Integrative Session led by Dr. Dunning</p>	<p>Seminars **Integrative Essay 1 Due by Midnight (March 1st)**</p>
<p>March 4-8 Spring Break</p>	<p>Spring Break</p>	<p>Spring Break</p>	<p>Spring Break</p>	<p>Spring Break</p>

<p>March 11-15 Week 7: Pathways of knowledge</p>	<p>DB: Walking curiosity.</p> <p>How do thoughts connect while walking? How does the mind traverse a path? What sorts of walks might the mind take?</p>	<p>PS: Plato on where knowledge comes from.</p> <p>Plato's <i>Meno</i> gives us a demonstration of how questions provoke knowledge to emerge, seemingly out of nowhere.</p>	<p>Integrative Session led by Dr. Taketomo</p>	<p>Seminars</p>
<p>March 18-22 Week 8: Body & Mind</p>	<p>DB: Back to the science of curiosity.</p> <p>Where in the brain are knowledge networks built, encoded, and represented? How might neurodiverse minds build knowledge networks?</p>	<p>PS: Plato on the body, mind, and the afterlife</p> <p>The <i>Phaedo</i> raises the question: where does knowing happen? if the body is subject to annihilation, is there something else to us that isn't? Is that where knowledge happens?</p>	<p>Integrative Session led Dr. Struck</p>	<p>Seminars</p>
<p>March 25 - 29 Week 9: Futures and afterlife</p>	<p>DB: Curiosity & education.</p> <p>How can we reimagine education to meet diverse connective curiosities in the classroom?</p>	<p>PS: Plato on the afterlife.</p> <p>Curiosity about body and mind leads Plato to close the <i>Phaedo</i> with a new big picture view of the world.</p>	<p>Integrative Session led by Dr. Tuma</p>	<p>Seminars</p>

		<p>**Classical Studies Tutorial 2 This Week – signup sheets will be available on Canvas**</p>		
<p>April 1-5 Week 10: Institutionalizing knowledge</p>	<p>DB: On silencing curiosity. Is it ever silenced, and if so, how? How do institutions structure knowledge to amplify or silence specific voices?</p> <p>**Cognitive Science Paper 2 due Sunday (7th) night at midnight**</p>	<p>PS: Plato on knowledge The theory of the forms we have seen now gets a deep dive, in <i>Republic</i>, book 6. When we know, what is it that we know?</p>	<p>Integrative Session led by Dr. Bassett “Tunneling Curiosity”</p>	<p>Seminars</p>
<p>April 8-12 Week 11: Soul & Ethics</p>	<p>DB: Ethics of curiosity. Is curiosity always good? Can curiosity cause harm? We’ll hear perspectives from feminism, trans studies, and environmental ethics.</p>	<p>PS: Plato on knowledge. In <i>Republic 7</i>, we look at normal life as an experience analogous to living in a cave and ask what it would take to get out of it.</p> <p>**Classical Studies Paper due midnight, Sun. (14th)**</p>	<p>Integrative Session led by Dr. Taketomo</p>	<p>Seminars</p>

<p>April 15-19 Week 12: Cause and change</p>	<p>DB: Curiosity & revolutions.</p> <p>How do scientific and political revolutions depend upon curiosity? What are affiliated resistant practices that support the building of new worlds?</p>	<p>PS: Aristotle Basics.</p> <p>We read the <i>Physics</i>, book 2, to understand substance, informed matter and imbodyed form, cause, and teleology.</p>	<p>Integration session led by Dr. Dunning</p>	<p>Seminars</p>
<p>April 22-26 Week 13: Impulses</p>	<p>DB: Curiosity & imagination.</p> <p>What role does imagination play in scientific curiosity? Does imagination lead to serendipitous discoveries?</p>	<p>PS: Aristotle's soul.</p> <p>For Aristotle knowing happens in the Greek <i>psyche</i>, which could be translated as mind as well as soul. In <i>On the Soul</i>, book 2, chaps. 1-3, he sets down what a soul is.</p>	<p>Integration session led by Dr. Bassett</p> <p>“Shenanigan Curiosity”</p>	<p>Seminars</p> <p>**Integrative Assignment 2 - Due April 26th at Midnight**</p>

<p>April 29-30: Final Week: Curiosity & Wonder</p>	<p>DB: Curiosity & wonder.</p> <p>What role does wonder play in curiosity, or curiosity in wonder? How does wonder work, and what are its affordances for scholarly inquiry?</p>	<p>PS: Aristotle's knowing soul.</p> <p>With a focus on <i>On the Soul</i>, book 3, chaps. 3-5, and some readings from the <i>Metaphysics</i>, and <i>On Divination During Sleep</i>, we'll examine the soul as a collection of functions that culminates in knowledge-seeking, even while we're sleeping!</p>	<p>NO CLASS – Reading Period</p>	<p>NO CLASS – Reading Period</p>
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Final assignments in both streams: TBD