

**HPS 0515 Magic, Medicine and Science**  
 Summer session I, 2003

**Instructor:** Brian Hepburn  
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**Office Hours** T,Th 12:00 – 1:00 (or by appointment)  
**Meeting times** T,Th 8:30A – 11:45A  
**Room** CL 216

**COURSE DESCRIPTION**

This is a history, philosophy and science course rolled in to one. The main theme will be that science as we know it today and our current worldview is an historical byproduct of a long and complicated search for the correct philosophy of nature.

Specifically, we will look at the history of science, from Ancient Greece up to Newton, tracing the themes of magic, medicine and science. For a number of different periods in history we will look broadly at their "science" and their views on what nature is and how it operates.

Since the period we're covering is huge we will only skim the historical detail and there will be only minor emphasis on remembering dates and places. More important will be a grasp of the overall chronology and how all the eras tie together thematically. At the end of this course you should be able to say how Newtonian natural philosophy differed or was similar to Aristotelian, or Platonic, or how the observational astronomy of Ptolemy and his ilk, represented a different philosophical outlook than post-Copernicus, and so on.

The strongest thread throughout will be Hermeticism. We will look at its role in early medicine, magic, religion and science.

**REQUIREMENTS**

<b>4 quizzes</b>	(Short answer, true false, multiple choice, mix. Take home.)	40%
<b>Paper</b>	(4–5 pages)	30%
<b>Final</b>	(multiple choice)	30%

**MATERIALS**

The course reader is the only required text. There will be various handouts and extra material made available in class and online (website to be announced). There are also in-class videos, but no external viewing of those should be required.

**SCHEDULE of TOPICS**

<b>MAY 13</b>	Introduction. Discussion of history, science in general. The problem of change. The Hermetic Tradition
<b>15</b>	The Ancients. Aristotle, Plato, Greek Cosmos and cosmology. Reading: <i>Aristotle's Philosophy of Nature</i> and <i>The Greeks and the Cosmos</i>
<b>20, 22</b>	The Ancients continued. Neo-Platonism, Plotinus, the Hermetic Tradition and Early Christianity (readings continue from last week)
<b>27, 29</b>	Renaissance Magic. Ficino and Pico. The Caballa. Reading: <i>On the Dignity of Man, Natural Magic, hermetism, and occultism ...</i>
<b>JUNE 3, 5</b>	Early medicine, Paracelsus, Galen, Hippocrates. Alchemy, the Nature of Matter. Reading: <i>The Alchemists</i> and selections from the Hippocratic corpus.
<b>10, 12</b>	Astronomy. Ptolemy, Copernicus. Reading: <i>The Earth and the Universe</i> .
<b>17, 19</b>	The Scientific Revolution: Galileo, Kepler, Descartes and the Newtonian Synthesis

**COURSE POLICIES**

I am not against your working together on the take home quizzes, although you'll get more out of them if you at least attempt them on your own. I am against duplicating work on the paper, whether a classmate's or from another source. PLAGIARISM will NOT be tolerated and will result in an automatic rejection of the paper followed by either a rewrite or failure of the paper, depending on the severity. Please don't let yourself fall into a situation where you are even tempted to plagiarize. You can send me early drafts, discuss your topic with me, etc.. Start early and seek my advice if you need it.

ATTENDANCE is not required but it's the only feasible way you can expect to pass this class. I will take roll every morning, but only for two purposes. First, it helps me learn your names and second, it helps me adjudicate borderline grades.

Above all I want this class to be fun, flexible and interesting. I'm open to suggestions from you regarding directions, topics, activities, etc.. I will try, in the first class to get a sense of your interests and backgrounds but both of these should change over the next 6 weeks.