

PHILOSOPHY BOOK CLUB

On Suffering, Fall 2018 – Spring 2019

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MEETING TIME: TBD
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“Be a philosopher, but amidst all your philosophy be still a man.”
—David Hume, *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding*

Humans suffer, that’s quite obvious. Unfortunately, it is not clear how humans should deal with suffering. Through the books we will read and our discussions, we hope to identify suffering in human life and to learn how we can live good lives (what the Greeks called *eudaimonia*) in face of suffering.

We will (try to) read the entireties of the following titles:

FALL	<i>The Meditations of Marcus Aurelius</i> If there ever were a true philosopher-king, it would have to be Marcus Aurelius, one of the greatest emperors of Rome and famed practitioner of Stoicism. Meditations served as a kind of diary or autobiography for Marcus Aurelius. For us, it serves as a kind of advice column on self-reflection and self-improvement.
WINTER	<i>The Myth of Sisyphus</i> by Albert Camus What is the Absurd, and how do we deal with it? In answering this question, Camus likens our short human lives to the fate of Sisyphus, a Greek king condemned by the gods to roll a boulder up a hill only to fail each time for all eternity. The myth may seem like a tale of hopelessness and frustration, yet Camus teaches us how one may be happy in the face of such suffering.
SPRING	<i>Siddhartha</i> by Herman Hesse Spoilers, the novel is not about the Gautama Buddha. It is, however, a tale about a man just as troubled as the young Buddha, embarking on a very similar journey of self-discovery. While Siddhartha draws from Buddhist ideas about spirituality and enlightenment, it can also be simply seen as a novel about one man trying to discover his place in the world.