Overview
The New Testament springs out of the Old Testament and early Judaism…but it springs into the hellenistic world. This is no small matter. A careful study of the Greco-Roman world provides us with insights into the first efforts to contextualize the gospel. This in turn becomes a model for our own ministry. In this course, we will give an overview of the hellenistic environment of the New Testament, ranging from classical times into the first century AD. In order to give some coherence to the mass of material out there, we will concentrate on themes surrounding creation: What is the universe? How did it come into being (if it did come into being)? What is its value (if any)? These themes will be traced in philosophy, religion, poetry, and the fine arts.

The course is designed with a heavy emphasis on reading translated primary source materials with the help of course lectures. You will have the opportunity to share your knowledge on both a mid-term and a final examination.

Textbooks
A.A. Long and D.N. Sedley, *The Hellenistic Philosophers*
Walter Burkert, *Greek Religion*
Hesiod, *Theogony*
Robin Waterfield, *The First Philosophers*
Plato, *Timaeus*
Tragedies: Read 3 from either Aeschylus, Sophocles, or Euripides
Lucretius, *On the Nature of the Universe* (*De rerum natura*)
Virgil, *Georgics*
Ovid, *Metamorphoses*

Copies of the primary source materials are available in the book center. However, I am not committed to a particular translation, and so you are free to find copies of the texts where you please, or to read the texts on-line (e.g. at perseus.tufts.edu).

Assessment
Mid-Term Exam (Class 6) 50%
Final Exam (Date TBA) 50%

Class 1,2: Historical Overview
Reading: Begin reading Ferguson or equivalent overview, to be completed by end of term
Classes 3-7: The Classical Legacy

Class 3: Homer and Hesiod
   Reading: Hesiod’s Theogony (if you have never read Homer you ought to do that at some point once the class is finished)

Classes 4: Greek Tragedy
   Reading: Three tragedies total, from either Aeschylus, Sophocles, or Euripides. Class discussion will focus on Sophocles’ Oedipus plays (Oedipus Tyrannus, Oedipus at Colonnus, Antigone)

Visual Arts
   Students are encouraged to visit the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston to get first hand experience with Greek artifacts

Class 5: Pre-Socratic Philosophy
   Reading: Waterfield, The First Philosophers

Class 6: Plato
   Reading: Plato’s Timaeus
   Mid-Term

Class 7: Religion

Classes 8-9: The Hellenistic Age
   Reading: Long and Sedley, The Hellenistic Philosophers

Class 8: Alexander and his Legacy

Class 8: The Advent of Rome

Class 9: Social Structures

Class 9: Developments in Religion and Philosophy
   Reading: Lucretius, On the Nature of the Universe (De rerum natura)

Class 9: View of the Natural World
   Reading: Virgil’s Georgics, Ovid’s Metamorphoses

Class 10: Hellenism and the New Testament