

# INSTITUTE FOR HERMETIC STUDIES - SIX WEEK ASTROLOGY COURSE

## “CLASSICAL ASTROLOGY IN THE WESTERN ESOTERIC TRADITION”

### MODULE ONE

#### NOTES FOR MODULE ONE:

These are the notes I'm using for the course. They are skeletal, but this big picture overview will help you see the arc we are building.

#### MODULE 1. COURSE OVERVIEW & CORE CONCEPTS

*Synopsis: Week 1 is a broad overview of astrology in the context of Western Esotericism. We will define the art, outline the major philosophical principles underlying it and address some common anti-astrological critiques.*

- a. Astrology & Western Esotericism (Technical Hermetica, Pseudepigrapha, Theurgy)
  1. Homer via Porphyry (“Cave of the Nymphs”); the Great Bear
  2. Plato’s “Myth of Er” and Spindle of Necessity
  3. Aristotle’s Causal Cosmology (Supra- and Sublunary Spheres)
  4. Hermeticism (Poimandres 1:25; Vices/Virtues; Seven Governors)
  5. Gnosticism (Aeons, Archons, Abraxas and the Demiugros)
  6. Neoplatonism (Theurgy; Henosis)
  7. Mithraism (Tauroctony; Planetary Grades; Anabasis/Ascent through the Spheres)
  8. Qabalah (Cosmology of the Tree of Life; Planetary and Zodiacal attributions to the Hebrew Alphabet)
  9. Rosicrucianism (Millenarianism/New Age, Stella Nova, Fire Trigon)
  10. Freemasonry (Hiramic Tragedy, Tetramorph, Royal Arch)
- b. Orientation and Definitions (Hermetic, Micro/Macro, “Positivistic Arrogance”)
  1. “The study of the mirroring of celestial events on the terrestrial sphere”
  2. Aristotelian/Ptolemaic Cosmology
  3. Hermetic Analogy: Astrology is to Astronomy as Alchemy is to Chemistry as Magic is to Technology
  4. Positivistic Arrogance (Qualifiability vs. Quantifiability; Enlightenment Critique)
- c. Objectivity vs. Subjectivity (Animistic/Enchanted Worldview vs. Psychological)
  1. Animism/Enchanted Cosmos
  2. Aristotle and Ptolemy’s Causal Model
  3. Symbolic (Planets indicate) or Causal (Planets Cause); the Clock Analogy
  4. The Psychological Model (Planets as Compartmentalized Components of the Psyche)
- d. Determinism vs. Free Will (Compatibilism as a Synthesis, Stoicism)
  1. Astrological Fatalism/Stoicism
  2. Astrological Magic as a Mitigatory System
  3. Compatibilism (Matryoshka Dolls; the Billiards Analogy; Chronos, Kairos & Aion)
- e. Heliocentrism vs. Geocentrism (Anti-Astrological Argument #1 – geo-referential)
- f. Tropical vs. Sidereal & Precession (Anti-Astrological Argument #2 – seasonal)

## LINKS TO SUPPLEMENTARY MATERIAL:

I don't want to inundate you, but these articles would be good to at least skim. They'll really help you flesh out some of the philosophy and cosmology behind astrology and will help you situate it in the broader context of Western Esotericism.

Porphyry's astrological interpretation of the "Cave of the Nymphs" sequence from Homer's *Odyssey*.  
[https://www.tertullian.org/fathers/porphyry\\_cave\\_of\\_nymphs\\_02\\_translation.htm](https://www.tertullian.org/fathers/porphyry_cave_of_nymphs_02_translation.htm)

On Plato's "Myth of Er" from his *Republic*.  
<https://www.thoughtco.com/the-myth-of-er-120332#:~:text=The%20Myth%20of%20Er%20from%20Plato's%20Republic%20tells%20the%20story,an d%20the%20wicked%20are%20punished.>

A great concise article on the Aristotelian and Ptolemaic cosmologies upon which astrology is based.  
<https://www.loc.gov/collections/finding-our-place-in-the-cosmos-with-carl-sagan/articles-and-essays/modeling-the-cosmos/ancient-greek-astronomy-and-cosmology>

"Poimandres" from the *Corpus Hermeticum*. Check out v.25 especially.  
[http://ldysinger.stjohnsem.edu/@texts/0301\\_corp\\_herm/01\\_poimandres.htm](http://ldysinger.stjohnsem.edu/@texts/0301_corp_herm/01_poimandres.htm)

A fantastic article on Mithraic cosmology.  
<http://www.mysterium.com/mithras.html>

On the Rosicrucian obsession with Great Conjunctions and New Ages.  
<https://tartantombraider.wordpress.com/2020/12/21/the-great-conjunction-of-1623-and-the-rosicrucian-enlightenment/>

And, for those of you who are Freemasons or are interested, here is a link to Robert Hewitt Brown's CLASSIC Stellar Theology and Masonic Astrology.  
<http://www.baytallaah.com/bookspdf/131.pdf>

That should be more than enough to keep you occupied, LOL.

You don't have to know all this stuff for the course, as there'll be no exam, but if you wanted a fuller picture, this will help.