

INTD 113X: Ignatian Reflection/Practice

Daily Readings & Exercises — Fall 2026

Cyrus Olsen, D.Phil. · Tuesdays 5:30–6:20pm · 8 students, Pass/Fail, 1 credit

Office hours: Tuesday/Thursday, 10:00–11:30 a.m. · Email: cyrus.olsen@scranton.edu

Every excerpt below is drawn from a public-domain translation — no permissions needed to print, project, or hand out in class. Each pairs one short passage (never more than a few sentences) with a citation and a link to the complete free text, plus a concrete in-room exercise scaled to a room of 8. Nothing here requires advance reading; every passage is short enough to read together, aloud, in under a minute.

Week 1 · Tue, Sep 1 — Orientation — Why Examine a Day at All

Tradition: Preview only (Pythagorean throughline named, not assigned)

In-class exercise: Syllabus walkthrough. Name the throughline the term will trace — Pythagoras to the Stoics to Ignatius and beyond — without assigning reading yet. No pairs today.

Week 2 · Thu, Sep 8 — Awareness — Noticing Without Judging

Tradition: Socrates (Plato, Apology 38a) (*trans. Benjamin Jowett — public domain*)

“the unexamined life is not worth living” — Socrates, explaining at his trial why he cannot stop questioning himself and others.

Full text: <https://classics.mit.edu/Plato/apology.html>

In-class exercise: 3-min silent noticing warm-up: “what did you notice about yourself today — no judgment, just notice.” Pairs each share one noticing, no follow-up questions required.

Week 3 · Tue, Sep 15 — Gratitude — Starting From the Given

Tradition: Seneca, On Anger (De Ira) III.36 (*trans. Aubrey Stewart, 1900 — public domain*)

“When the light has been removed from sight... I scan the whole of my day and retrace all my deeds and words. I conceal nothing from myself, I omit nothing.” Seneca describes his own nightly practice, and the calm sleep that follows it.

Full text: <https://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/56075>

In-class exercise: Gratitude round-robin in pairs: one good thing from the day, no elaboration needed. Close with a one-word share to the room.

Week 4 · Tue, Sep 22 — Consolation & Desolation — Naming the Felt Sense

Tradition: Ignatius of Loyola, Spiritual Exercises §43 (General Examen) (*trans. Joseph Rickaby, SJ, 1915 — public domain*)

Ignatius's five-point Examen opens with gratitude (“give thanks to God our Lord for the favors received”) and only then moves to seeing clearly. This is the course's own namesake practice, introduced directly for the first time.

Full text: http://ldysinger.stjohnsem.edu/@texts2/1550_ignatius/05_examen.htm

In-class exercise: Pairs each name one “consolation” moment (energy, ease) and one “desolation” moment (heaviness, friction) from the past few days — naming only, no diagnosing why.

Week 5 · Tue, Sep 29 — Indifference — Loosening the Grip

Tradition: Epictetus, Enchiridion, ch. 1 (*trans. Elizabeth Carter, 18th c. — public domain*)

“Some things are in our control and others not... The things in our control are by nature free, unrestrained, unhindered; but those not in our control are weak, slavish, restrained, belonging to others.”

Full text: <https://classics.mit.edu/Epictetus/epicench.html>

In-class exercise: Write one current worry on paper. Sort it into two columns: what's actually in my control / what isn't. Pairs compare columns, no fixing.

Week 6 · Tue, Oct 6 — Election — One Small Real Choice

Tradition: Aristotle, Nicomachean Ethics VI.5 (*trans. W. D. Ross — public domain*)

“It is thought to be the mark of a man of practical wisdom to be able to deliberate well about what is good and expedient for himself... with a view to the good life in general.”

Full text: <https://sacred-texts.com/cla/ari/nico/nico059.htm>

In-class exercise: Each student names one small, real decision pending this week. Pairs help each other clarify the decision — explicitly not decide it for them.

Week 7 · Thu, Oct 15 — Review — Re-Entry After the Break

Tradition: Pythagoras, The Golden Verses, vv. 40–44 (full circle to Week 1's preview) (*trans. N. Rowe / Hall — public domain*)

“Never suffer sleep to close thy eyelids, after thy going to bed, till thou hast examined by thy reason all thy actions of the day.”

Full text: <https://sacred-texts.com/cla/gvp/gvp03.htm>

In-class exercise: Journal check-in: did the practice survive Fall Break? Pairs discuss honestly — skipped days are expected and fine to name.

Week 8 · Tue, Oct 20 — Magis — What “More” Means to You

Tradition: Ignatian magis (framed conceptually; the course's own required text, Magnifica Humanitas, carries this forward)

No new primary excerpt this week — magis is explored through the students' own language rather than a further citation.

In-class exercise: Private sentence completion: “More ___, less ___.” Each student shares only the one word they're most willing to say aloud.

Week 9 · Tue, Oct 27 — Build Your Own Practice

Tradition: Benjamin Franklin, Autobiography (13 virtues, examined week by week) (*public domain*)

Franklin kept a small book with a page for each of thirteen virtues and marked a fault against the virtue he was working on that week — a daily, secular self-examination that (unknown to him) would later be echoed almost exactly in the Jewish Mussar tradition (see Week 10).

Full text: <https://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/148>

In-class exercise: Each student sketches their own 5-movement (or fewer) version of the practice, in their own format — journal, voice memo, walk, checklist. No template is imposed.

Week 10 · Tue, Nov 3 — This Isn't Only a Christian Thing

Tradition: Three traditions in parallel: Jewish, Islamic, Buddhist

Jewish — Cheshbon HaNefesh (“accounting of the soul”), the Mussar-movement practice popularized by Rabbi Israel Salanter, itself built on Franklin's method (see Week 9). Islamic — the caliph Umar ibn al-Khattab: “Take account of yourselves before you are taken to account, and weigh your deeds before they are weighed.” Buddhist — the Buddha's instruction to his son Rahula to reflect on an action before, during, and after doing it (Ambalatthika-Rahulovada Sutta, Majjhima Nikaya 61).

Full text: https://www.sefaria.org/Cheshbon_HaNefesh

In-class exercise: Each student picks whichever tradition encountered so far (this week's or an earlier one) feels closest to their own idiom, and explains why to a partner.

Week 11 · Tue, Nov 17 — Troubleshooting — When It Stops Working

Tradition: Epictetus, Enchiridion, ch. 5 (*trans. Elizabeth Carter — public domain*)

“Men are disturbed not by things, but by the views which they take of things... When, therefore, we are hindered, or disturbed, or grieved, let us never impute it to others, but to ourselves — that is, to our own views.”

Full text: <https://classics.mit.edu/Epictetus/epicench.html>

In-class exercise: Normalize skipped days and “faking it.” Pairs troubleshoot: what got in the way this week, and one small fix — not a resolution to never skip again.

Week 12 · Tue, Dec 1 — Practice Under Real Pressure

Tradition: Marcus Aurelius, Meditations V.1 (*trans. George Long — public domain*)

“In the morning when thou risest unwillingly, let this thought be present — I am rising to the work of a human being.” Marcus wrote this to himself while running an empire, not as abstract advice.

Full text: <https://classics.mit.edu/Antoninus/meditations.html>

In-class exercise: Apply the 5-movement practice to a live source of pressure — finals, a pending decision, a hard conversation — in pairs.

Week 13 · Tue, Dec 8 — Closing — A Letter to Your Future Self

Tradition: Synthesis; no new text

No assigned reading. Students write privately; the letter is confirmed as completed, not read, per the course's pass/fail design.

In-class exercise: Closing letter to their own future self. Completion-only credit — attendance confirms the letter exists; content is never collected or reviewed.

Notes on sourcing

All primary-source excerpts are old enough to carry no copyright (translations range from the 18th to the early 20th century), so they can be freely printed, projected, or posted to D2L without a permissions check — unlike the SJLA 110X texts, which are modern editions under active copyright. Weeks 8 and 13 deliberately carry no new citation, since the design goal for both is students' own language rather than another authority's.