

MA in Cultural Astronomy and Astrology
Foundations in Cultural Astronomy and Astrology
Week 1: Culture and Cosmos
Required Reading

As this is the first week of the first core module, please remember the golden rule: **you must not do more reading than you can cope with!** It is very easy to feel overwhelmed at the beginning of the course. The reading is therefore carefully prioritised. The general principle is that there is always more optional reading than is possible for any one person to read so, having done the

Lecture Notes on Culture.

NB. You can not cite lecture notes in your essays. You can, though, follow up any of the sources.

Discussion Reading for Next Week

Plato, *Timaeus*, sections 27-44

We will be focusing on Timaeus' discussion on how the origin of the cosmos, particularly on how the World Soul was created. This passage is one of the foundations of the western esoteric teachings.

The recommended edition is the Loeb classic edition, which you can access through the UWTSD online library:

https://www-loebclassics-com.ezproxy.uwtsd.ac.uk/view/plato-philosopher_timaeus/1929/pb_LCL234.17.xml?rskey=8Y1f1b&result=1

You can, if you wish, read the entire work, although the discussion we are focusing on **Sections 27-44**.

OR there are two good versions if you wish to buy this:

- Plato, *Timaeus*, trans. R.G.Bury, Cambridge Mass., London: Harvard University Press, 1931.
- Plato. *Complete Works*. Edited by John Cooper, M. Indiana: Hackett Publishing Co. Inc., 1997.

Raymond Williams. 'Culture' in *Keywords, A vocabulary of Culture and Society* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985., pp. 87-93.

<http://s3.amazonaws.com/arena-attachments/1385668/2a0d6d0b045feef2adb6ae76ec9a2c92.pdf?1509502303>

Raymond Williams, who died in 1988, was one of the UK's leading cultural theorists, and had an international reputation. He was one of a group of left-wing intellectuals who believed that culture had to be understood of society was to be reformed. We don't have to believe, though, that society has to be reformed in order for his work to be useful.

If you consult the Fontana edition in hard copy, the citation is Williams, Raymond, *Keywords* (London: Fontana 1983), pp. 87-93. An updated version was published in Bennett, Tony, Lawrence Grossberg and Meaghan Morris (eds.), *New Keywords: A Revised Vocabulary of Culture and Society* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2005), pp. 63-9. However, the original version still stands as the basis for discussion of culture).

Nicholas Campion, *Astrology and Cosmology in the World's Religions* (New York: New York University Press, 2012), chaps 1 and 2.

There will be two chapters in this book to read every week. You can buy a paperback or access it as an e- book through the University Library

Discussion Reading for This Week

You should already have completed the discussion reading for this week

Eagleton, Terry, *The Idea of Culture* (Oxford: Blackwell 2000), pp. 1-31.

E BOOK (University Library) and PDF on Moodle

Eagleton is a Marxist and one of the UK's most controversial thinkers. His book is the only one to serve both as a scholarly examination of theories of culture and a general introduction to the topic. Some people agree with Eagleton, others disagree, some like his style and others don't, but his work is one of the best starting points for a discussion of what culture is.