Professor Rutkin

The History of Astrology From Antiquity to the Present

The Fromm Institute
For Lifelong Learning

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What is Astrology?

What is the distinction between astrology and astronomy?

Motion and influence

Terminological and Conceptual Distinction

Modern vs. Premodern modes of thinking, i.e. removing our modern conceptual spectacles

Astrology vis-à-vis Science, Religion and Magic (now vs. in the past) [Questions to be raised!]

Is astrology a type of divination?
Astrology’s Two Main Roles in the History of Science and Culture

[1] Astrology’s Natural Philosophical Foundations (Astrology and Science)


Astrological practice remains much the same as it did in the past, even though it no longer possesses its former scientific and theological foundations both conceptual and institutional
Brief Introduction to Practical Astrology: Four Canonical Types

• Revolutions or General Astrology (including Great Conjunctions)
• Nativities (natal astrology; birthcharts)
• Interrogations
• Elections (including talismans)
• The borderland between astrology and magic
• Along with historical astrology and medical astrology
• We will explore most of these in this course
What is astrology today?
Astrology Today

• An alternative discourse of knowledge and practice
• No longer considered legitimate knowledge, i.e. it is no longer taught in the finest contemporary universities, except as science
• And it no longer has either scientific or theological foundations
• This was not always the case, as we will learn in the course
• Yet the actual astrological practices remain much the same now as they did in the past!
Some Differences between Contemporary and Premodern Astrology

• The dialectical dynamic between astronomy and astrology
• 10 planets now vs. 7 in the past
• Discovery of Uranus (1781), Neptune (1846) and Pluto (1930)
• Vs. just the sun to Saturn
• More psychological today
I like to call Astrology

- An alternative discourse of knowledge and practice
- With its distinctive vocabulary, grammar and rhetoric
- We will develop this now beginning with the basic vocabulary:
- Planets, signs and houses
A Legitimate Astrological Statement

- Is formed as follows:
- A planet is *in* a zodiacal sign in the heavens
- And when a horoscope has been erected
- The planet-in-a-sign is then located *in* its relevant terrestrial house
- Thus, planets, signs and houses are the basic vocabulary
- Let’s go through them now beginning with the zodiacal signs
- Signs vs. Constellations (imp. distinction)
Zodiacal Signs
What’s Your Sign?
Aries the Ram
Cardinal Fire

• Do we have any Aries people in the class?
• What does the sentence mean: “I am an Aries”?
• There is much more to astrology than just the sun sign!
Taurus the Bull
Fixed Earth
Gemini the Twins
Mutable Air
Cancer the Crab
Cardinal Water

Cancer
JUNE 21 - JULY 21
Leo the Lion
Fixed Fire

JULY 22 - AUGUST 21
Virgo the Virgin
Mutable Earth
Libra the Scales/Balance
Cardinal Air
Scorpio the Scorpion
Fixed Water
Sagittarius the Archer
Mutable Fire

SAGITTARIUS
November 23 - December 20
Capricorn the Goat
Mutable Earth
Aquarius the Water Bearer
Fixed Air (not Water!)
Pisces the Fish
Mutable Water
The Planets

- Sun
- Moon
- Mercury
- Venus
- Mars
- Jupiter
- Saturn
- Uranus
- Neptune
- Pluto
Planets ‘rule’ Signs

• Sun rules Leo
• Moon rules Cancer
• Mercury rules Gemini and Virgo
• Venus rules Taurus and Libra
• Mars rules Aries and Scorpio
• Jupiter rules Pisces and Sagittarius
• Saturn rules Aquarius and Capricorn
• Uranus co-rules Aquarius
• Neptune co-rules Pisces
• Pluto co-rules Scorpio
In Modern Astrology

• The planets represent the different parts of a person
• They may be divided into three levels
• [1] Personal: Sun, Moon, Mercury, Venus and Mars
• Representing the native’s mind, body and emotions
Planets (cont.)

• [2] Societal Planets: Jupiter and Saturn
  • Representing: school, family, etc

• [3] The Outer or Transpersonal Planets:
  • Uranus, Neptune and Pluto
  • Representing the deep psychological or spiritual elements of a person

• Astrology as a richly differentiated psychological art
The Horoscope

- All of these elements come together in a horoscope
- The basic astrological tool
- Which is composed of all the planets
- In their signs
- In their respective terrestrial houses
- In relation to each other (aspects, dignities)
- Such as:
Horoscope for today at 1:00 pm

www.astro.com
Structure of the Course

• The history of Western astrology within its various relevant contexts: scientific, philosophical, religious, political and cultural

• [1] Ancient Astrology: Babylonian and Greco-Roman, Ptolemy (ca. 500 BC-ca. 400 AD)

• [2] Medieval Persian, Arabic and Jewish (ca. 200 AD-1200 AD)

• [3] Medieval, Renaissance and Early Modern European (ca. 1100 AD-ca. 1800)