

History of Ancient Philosophy

Philosophy 301K

University of Texas at Austin

Spring 2015

TTH 11-12:30

UTC 3.124

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Description

Western philosophy owes its birth to the ancient Greeks. In their care many of the fundamental questions in ethics, epistemology, metaphysics, and the philosophy of mind were raised for the first time and developed in striking and sophisticated ways. We will try to determine which questions they asked, what their answers were, and whether we should accept their answers as correct even now. Readings will be drawn primarily from the works of Plato, but will also include material from some important Pre-Platonic thinkers.

Required Texts (*USE ONLY THESE TRANSLATIONS AND EDITIONS*)

A Presocratics Reader, edited and translated by Patricia Curd and Richard McKirahan, **2nd Edition** (Hackett, 2011)

Plato: Five Dialogues, translated by G. M. A. Grube, revised by John Cooper, **2nd Edition** (Hackett, 2002)

Plato: Republic, translated by G. M. A. Grube, revised by C. D. C. Reeve, **2nd edition** (Hackett, 1992)

Objectives and Prerequisites

Philosophy 301K is an introductory undergraduate course in the history of philosophy. Its primary objective is to develop your capacity to (i) interpret historical texts in a philosophically engaged way, and (ii) write analytical essays on philosophical figures and themes. All texts will be read in translation.

Reading Schedule

All readings are REQUIRED. Many of these readings are complex and difficult to follow, so you will need to read them carefully.

<u>Day (Week)</u>	<u>Topics, Readings, and Deadlines</u>
1/20 (1)	Philosophy, the history of philosophy, and the history of ancient philosophy
1/22 (1)	What makes the pious act pious? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>A Presocratics Reader</i>, chapter 4 [Xenophanes], fragments 1-13 • <i>Euthyphro</i> 2a-10a
1/27 (2)	Is the pious act pious because the gods love it? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Euthyphro</i> 10a-11b
1/29 (2)	Is piety a kind of justice? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Euthyphro</i> 11b-end
2/3 (3)	The sophists <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>A Presocratics Reader</i>, chapter 14 [Protagoras, Gorgias, Prodicus, and Hippias], fragments 1-14 and 16-20
2/5 (3)	Socrates on trial <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>A Presocratics Reader</i>, introduction and chapter 2.1 [Thales] • <i>Apology</i> 17a-28b
2/10 (4)	Death or dereliction? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Apology</i> 28b-end
2/12 (4)	Is it wrong for Socrates to escape? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Crito</i> (especially 49a-end)
<i>SHORT PAPER DUE ON 2/15</i>	
2/17 (5)	Can virtue be taught? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Meno</i> 70a-81a
2/19 (5)	The theory of recollection and the method of hypothesis <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>A Presocratics Reader</i>, chapter 3 [Pythagoras and Early Pythagoreanism] • <i>Meno</i> 81a-87c
2/24 (6)	Knowledge and true belief <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Meno</i> 87c-end
2/26 (6)	The meaning of death and the fate of the soul <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Phaedo</i> 63e-72e

- 3/3 (7) The recollection argument
- *A Presocratics Reader*, chapter 5 [Heraclitus], fragments 1-2, 11, 26-27, 33, 37-41, 43, 45-52, 55-61, 66-74, 76-84
 - *Phaedo* 72e-78b

- 3/5 (7) The affinity argument, the *harmonia* theory, and the cloak problem
- *A Presocratics Reader*, chapter 12 [Philolaus]
 - *Phaedo* 78b-88c

- 3/10 (8) Refuting the *harmonia* theory and addressing the cloak problem
- *A Presocratics Reader*, chapter 9 [Anaxagoras]
 - *Phaedo* 91c-99d

- 3/12 (8) The theory of forms and how it solves the cloak problem
- *Phaedo* 99d-107a

SPRING BREAK

- 3/24 (9) What is justice?
- *A Presocratics Reader*, chapter 14 [Antiphon, Critias, and the author of the Anonymous Iamblich] (fragments 21-23)
 - *Republic* (book 1) 327a-340c

- 3/26 (9) The refutation of Thrasymachus
- *Republic* (book 1) 340c-354c

MEDIUM PAPER DUE ON 3/29

- 3/31 (10) Is being just always really good for us?
- *Republic* (book 2) 357a-369b

- 4/2 (10) Justice in the soul
- *Republic* (book 4) 427d-445e (especially 436a-442d)

- 4/7 (11) The arrival of Parmenides
- *A Presocratics Reader*, introduction pp. 2-3 [excerpt from Hesiod's *Theogony*]; chapters 2.2 and 2.3 [Anaximander and Anaximenes] (especially fragments 9 and 24); and chapter 6 [Parmenides] (fragments 1-5)

- 4/9 (11) The legacy of Parmenides
- *A Presocratics Reader*, chapter 6 [Parmenides] (fragments 6-19) [especially fragments 6-8]

- 4/14 (12) Knowledge and Opinion
- *Republic* (book 5) 473a-480a

- 4/16 (12) Philosophers as rulers
- *Republic* (book 6) 484c-502c

- 4/21 (13) The good and the sun
 • *Republic* (book 6) 502c-513e
- 4/23 (13) The cave and getting out of it
 • *Republic* (book 7) 514a-525b
- 4/28 (14) Mathematics as a kind of ethics
 • *Republic* (book 7) 525b-541b
- 4/30 (14) The most pleasant life
 • *Republic* (book 9) 580b-592b

TERM PAPER OUTLINE DUE ON 5/3

- 5/5 (15) Must the poets be banished?
 • *Republic* (book 10) 595a-608b
- 5/7 (15) We are responsible for who we are
 • *Republic* (book 10) 608b-end

TERM PAPER DUE ON 5/15

ELECTRONICS POLICY

You are NOT allowed to use laptops during class meetings UNLESS you have received Matt's permission to do so. You are NEVER allowed to use phones (or other handheld devices) during class meetings.

Assignments

Writing [75%]

Short paper (about 3 pages) [15%] *due on Sunday, February 15th*

Medium paper (about 5 pages) [20%] *due on Sunday, March 29th*

Term paper OUTLINE [10%] *due NO LATER THAN Sunday, May 3rd*

Term paper (about 7 pages) [30%] *due on Friday, May 15th*

- Recommended topics for *each of the first two papers* will be distributed approximately *two or three weeks* before it is due. Recommended topics for *the term paper* will be distributed *approximately one month* before it is due.
- Each of the first two papers (and the term paper outline) will be graded and returned to you approximately *two weeks* after it is due.
- Late submission of either of the first two papers will carry a penalty of *one-third of a letter grade* for each day it is late. Late submission of the term paper will carry a penalty of *one full letter grade* for each day it is late.

Quizzes [15%]

- At the beginning (or in the middle) of exactly 15 of our 30 lecture meetings, there will be a short quiz on the readings assigned for that meeting. These quizzes are designed to be relatively easy for anyone who has completed the relevant readings. Each quiz will be worth 1% of your final grade.

Participation [10%]

- The lecture meetings of this course are designed to be interactive. You will have many opportunities at each meeting to ask questions, raise objections, defend positions, and so on. Part of your participation grade will be based on the quantity and quality of your contributions to this component of the lecture meetings.
- The purpose of the Friday discussion sections is to give you an opportunity to engage with the course material, and with each other, in a more active and collaborative manner than is possible during the lecture meetings. Another part of your participation grade will be based on the quantity and quality of your contributions to the discussion meetings.
- Every now and then Matt will post questions in the “Discussions” section of the 301K CANVAS website. You are encouraged, but not required, to offer an answer, respond to someone else’s answer, ask a further question, and so on. You are also encouraged, but not required, to post your own questions or to respond to questions posted by other students. Any contribution you make to the “Discussions” section of the site will count as extra credit toward your participation grade.