

Philosophy 2220: Greek Philosophy
 Spring 2024
 Penelope Haulotte
 Office Hours: Zoom by appointment, or MW 11-12.
 Office: Hum 559
 eMail: PenelopeHaulotte@gmail.com



Diogenes
 by Jean-Léon Gérôme, 1860.

Course Overview

Philosophy in the West conceives its origins in the ancient Greek tradition. This class introduces philosophy through a survey of the extant material from these thinkers. In particular, this class will travel from Thales and the pre-Socratics through Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle and finally providing a brief engagement with the Stoics, Skeptics, and Epicureans of the Hellenistic period. These investigations will primarily discuss metaphysics (the nature of ultimate reality), epistemology (the study of knowledge), and ethics (the study of the good life) through critical engagement with these thinkers. What is a life worth living? How does such a life stand in relation to political authority? Should we fear death—and if so, why? Who can claim genuine knowledge of things? What is the power of philosophy? Can philosophy grasp the truths of ultimate reality, and if so, how? The aim is to see how these different topics come together for the ancient Greeks, and, possibly for us as their

contemporary readers as well. This course will be fully online and consists of weekly reading responses, a midterm, and a final.

Learning Outcomes and Objectives

My aims for this course are twofold. On the one hand, I want us to learn about ancient Greek philosophy together. This is already a challenging task, as the ancient world is quite distant from our own. But ancient Greek philosophy is also the foundation for a large share of later Western philosophy. Accordingly, on the other hand, I see it as one of my central goals in this course to prepare you for the sort of research environment and expectations of upper-level humanities coursework by building a firm historical foundation. Hence many of our activities are structured around developing the skillset that is required for upper-level humanities coursework (as well as many other professional environments): such as close reading of primary texts and writing an argumentative final paper.

Required Text

Readings in Ancient Greek Philosophy: From Thales to Aristotle ed. S. Marc Cohen, Patricia Curd, and C.D.C. Reeve. 5th edition. Indianapolis: Hackett, 2016.

All other required texts will be posted to Canvas.

Method of Evaluation

Your grade is composed of two parts.

1. Weekly Reading Responses: 40%.
2. Four Reflection Papers: 60%.

Your grade for the semester will be determined based on two components: reading responses due at the end of each week, and four reflection papers over the course of the semester. The rubric for the reflection paper is posted to Canvas.

Reading Response (and Weekly Routine)

This class is asynchronous and online. This means that we do not have the opportunity to see one another and discuss philosophy in person, which means we must settle for second-best: writing. Each week (specifically, I aim for every Monday) I will (1) make an announcement, (2) post lectures for the week, and (3) open a discussion forum thread. You will be expected each week to post one 1-3 paragraph reply on each discussion forum thread by Sunday night of each week (so before the next batch drops). This is to ensure that you don't run behind and so that other classmates can benefit from your discussion posts.

I realize that often these discussion forum posts are a real pain and a waste of time. I would like us to try to take this space seriously. A lot of the learning that happens in philosophy classes doesn't just come from the instructor talking, but students learning from each other, and other than discussion forum posts, there's simply no easy way to make this happen. I do not (and will not) require you to respond to one another, but I would encourage you to think of your classmates as potential sources of keen insight. I try to think of discussion forum posts as like talking in class – you are allowed to be informal, unsure, and so on. Try to aim the discussion toward everyone,

including your peers, and I would encourage you to read what your fellow students have to say. I promise I will match your effort!

These assignments are largely graded on completion. You are not “graded” on how well you answer the prompt I write each week. I’m instead looking for what *you* think about what we just read. Sometimes you won’t have much to say other than to ask questions, and that is totally fine. Asking questions is actually very helpful, since your classmates probably have similar questions and will benefit from you voicing it! I would encourage you not to think of your grade while writing these and instead just grapple with the philosophical content.

Reflection Papers

The largest share of your grade is composed of four reflection papers, roughly due every four weeks of the semester. A more detailed rubric is posted online to Canvas.

Extra Credit

There is only one extra credit opportunity for this course. A rubric will be posted to Canvas. For up to 5-points of extra credit you may write a 2-page response to one extra-credit reading (or even just a selection from the readings). More detailed instructions and an example will be posted to Canvas.

Grading Scale

All grades except discussion posts are graded out of 100. The grading scale is provided below.

97-100 = A+
 93-96 = A
 90-92 = A-
 87-89 = B+
 83-86 = B
 80-82 = B-
 77-79 = C+
 73-76 = C
 70-72 = C-
 66-69 = D
 65 and below = F

Online

This class is entirely online. Moreover, every aspect of the course is asynchronous *except* my weekly office hours. As a result, this course will require a lot of individual initiative. Since there are not scheduled class times, I will be posting a lecture on the readings assigned for every week. It is required that you watch all of these lectures in their entirety, as they will allow you to check your understanding. **If you do not listen to the lectures, you will probably not get a good grade.** Moreover, weekly reading responses posted on learn will be your primary opportunity to ask questions related to the course. I highly encourage you to post whatever questions come to mind, as it will not only allow you to receive an answer, but it will also help out your classmates and create a cooperative atmosphere as well! Learning is best done in a collective and cooperative atmosphere, which requires that we each take initiative. I promise to meet you halfway.

I understand that because of the (still ongoing) coronavirus pandemic, online courses can be a little bit of a hassle. I am in general an understanding instructor, but it is important that you stay in contact with me about any problems you have with the course. If you are unable to complete a response or assignment on time because of external circumstances, it is **imperative** that you let me know via email **beforehand**, if at all possible. The most important part of succeeding in this course is not going AWOL (absent without official leave). Circumstances notwithstanding, please try to stay in communication with me about your ability to fulfill the requirements of the course. Barring exceptional circumstances, if you do not complete an assignment, and do not let me know about your circumstances ahead of time, **you may receive a 0 for the assignment and will not be allowed to make it up later.**

Finally, no form of ChatGPT or any other artificial intelligence software is allowed to be used in any way for any assignment whatsoever. The assignments are designed with the intention of me being able to assess your knowledge and skills. There is no value in me grading the mindless output of artificial intelligence, and when you use this software, you make a mockery of the entire enterprise of education as a whole. Therefore, **I will not tolerate any form of academic misconduct, including the use of ChatGPT, and all cases of plagiarism will be reported.** I also reserve the right to give a 0 to any paper, project, or exam that strongly suggests the use of artificial intelligence, such as ones that (a) does not reference our course materials, (b) compares our course materials to something irrelevant, (c) writes on course material that we have not yet covered as a class, (d) provide inane descriptions of what critics or others believe rather than providing an actual argument, etc. These papers are bad, and it is doubly bad to use terrible papers to cheat in college classes.

Other Rules for the Course

1. All grades are final and non-negotiable. If you have a question about a grade for a particular assignment, eMail me to discuss it.
2. No incompletes will be given for the semester unless you can demonstrate valid and compelling reasons.
3. There will be no additional extra-credit assignments besides what is offered in the syllabus.
4. If you fail to turn in a midterm or a final, you will fail the course.
5. No form of academic dishonesty will be tolerated. All instances of academic dishonesty will be reported to the university administration. (If you plagiarize, I will catch you. I have caught people **almost every single semester** I have been an instructor!)
6. You must demonstrate the appropriate respect for all fellow inquirers.
7. I promise to do my best in responding to your eMails and questions right away, typically within 1-2 business days.
8. No use of ChatGPT or any other form of artificial intelligence at any stage will be permitted or tolerated.
9. I reserve the right to give you a 0 for an assignment if it plainly fails to address the question of the assignment, even if it contains some correct information.

Reading Schedule

Week 1 (1/16): Presocratics
Readings, 1-30.

Week 2 (1/22): Presocratics II

Readings, 31-62.

Week 3 (1/29): Plato
Euthyphro, 80-89.
Apology, 90-105.

Week 4 (2/5): Plato II
Crito, 106-113.
 Martin Luther King Jr., "Letter from a Birmingham Jail," **Online**.
Meno, 145-165.

Week 5 (2/12): Plato III
Phaedo, 166-202.
Reflection Paper 1 Due 2/18.

Week 6 (2/19): Plato IV
 Sappho, Selected Poems, **Online**.
Symposium, 202-233.

Week 7 (2/26): Plato V
Republic I-II, 234-270.

Week 8 (3/4): Plato VI
Republic VI-VII, 333-369.
7th Letter, **Online**.

SPRING BREAK!

Week 9 (3/18): Plato VII
Theaetetus, **Online**.
 Euclid, *Elements*, Selections.
Reflection Paper 2 Due 3/24.

Week 10 (3/25): Aristotle
Metaphysics, 536-546.

Week 11 (4/1): Aristotle II
Physics, 481-492.
De Anima, 512-523.

Week 12 (4/8): Aristotle III
Nicomachean Ethics, 577-593.
Reflection Paper 3 Due 4/14.

Week 13 (4/15): Hellenistic Philosophy
 Epicurus, *Letter to Herodotus*, **Online**.
 Epicurus, *Letter to Menoeceus*, **Online**.

Week 14 (4/22): Hellenistic Philosophy II
Epictetus, selections, **Online**.
Seneca, selections, **Online**.

Week 15 (4/29): Hellenistic Philosophy III
Sextus Empiricus, selections, **Online**.

Week 16 (12/4): **Break**
Reflection Paper 4 Due 5/12!