

PHIL 321

History of Philosophy: Ancient

Fall 2023

Tues./Thurs. 10:00–11:15am

Blackboard Collaborate

Professor: Whitney Schwab

Email: wschwab@umbc.edu

Office Hours: By email

Distribution Requirement Satisfied by this Course: Arts and Humanities (AH)

Functional Competency Satisfied by this Course: Critical Analysis and Reasoning

Course Description

This course surveys some of the major philosophers and philosophical schools that flourished in the eastern Mediterranean from the fourth century BCE to the second century CE. Much of the course will center around the question “what is the best life for a human being to live?” about which all the thinkers we will read have much to say. In the course of considering their answers to that question, we will see how they thought it required us to investigate other questions, including, “What makes actions right or wrong?,” “What is the nature of the human soul?,” “What can be known and how can it be known?”. We will try to get clear on how the thinkers we read answered these questions, and what reasons they gave in favor of their answers. One question we will always ask is whether those reasons (and the views they allegedly support) should be universally accepted, or whether they would only appeal to people in particular circumstances.

Learning Outcomes

By the end of the course students will be able to read and analyze complex philosophical texts. They will have a firm grasp of the basics of Platonic epistemology, including his theory of recollection; Platonic metaphysics, including his theory of the soul and Form; and Plato’s political philosophy as presented in the *Republic*. They will have a firm grasp on Aristotle’s conception of happiness (*eudaimonia*), virtue, the voluntary and involuntary, and whether we are responsible for our character. They will also understand Aristotle’s account of how we acquire knowledge of first principles and be able to compare that account to Plato’s. They will also grasp the basics of Hellenistic epistemology, including Epicureanism, Stoicism, and Skepticism.

Required Texts

—All readings are available as PDFs on the course Blackboard page

Online Format

This course is fully online. Class sessions and assignments will be conducted through the course’s Blackboard Ultra page. Each class session will be conducted on Blackboard Collaborate. To access a Blackboard Collaborate session, click the link that says “Join session” under the “Blackboard Collaborate” tab on the left hand side of the course Blackboard page. We will communicate primarily through the chat.

Collaborate sessions will be recorded. To access a recording, click on the three dots to the right of the “Blackboard Collaborate” tab and then click on “View all recordings.”

Methods of Evaluation

Quizzes: 25% of your grade is based evenly on 5 short quizzes administered through the course Blackboard page in the following way: at **12:00 PM** on days marked ***QUIZ*** on the syllabus (i.e. **9/14, 9/28, 10/26, 11/16, and 11/30**), the quiz will be posted on Blackboard.

You must submit your completed quiz **within 96** hours of its being posted (i.e. by 12:00 PM the following Monday). After that, you will lose 5 points for every 24 hour period it is late, for a maximum of 15 points lost (quizzes are out of 20 points). Although you have 3 days to complete the quiz, you will only have **20 minutes** to complete a quiz once you open it. Submission after 20 minutes will be automatically performed by Blackboard, so make sure you have 20 unbroken minutes in which to complete the quiz before opening it.

Quizzes cover material from the first class after the previous quiz was assigned to the day the quiz is posted. So, for example, the quiz on 9/28 covers the material beginning 9/19 up through 9/28.

Exams: 75% of your grade is apportioned evenly between three non-cumulative exams. Exams will go live 15 minutes before class time on the day listed on the syllabus and will be due by 12pm on the following Monday. You will have **80 minutes** to complete the exam once you click on the link, and autosubmit will occur at that time. Unexcused late submissions will be docked 10 points per 24 hour period it is late (so, for example, if you complete the exam more than 15 minutes but less than 23 hours and 45 minutes late, the highest grade you can receive is a 90).

Course Policies

- You may not use any AI-text generator (e.g. ChatGPT) to complete any portion of the course
- Most any issue will be manageable, provided you contact me early.
- Ignorance of this syllabus is not an excuse for anything.
- If you suspect you will have problems with any online component of the course, contact me at the beginning of the semester.
- Keep your audio turned off except when asking a question.
- Students are expected to maintain the utmost civility and respect at all times, especially in class discussions.
- I will do my best to respond to emails within two days of receiving them (if I have not, please send me a reminder).
- Final grades will be converted from a percentage to a letter grade in keeping with standard UMBC policy (with standard rounding of partial percentage points):
100–89.5% = A 89.4–79.5% = B 79.4–69.5% = C 69.4–59.5% = D 59.4–0% = F
- Plagiarism of any kind, **including allowing someone to plagiarize your work**, will result in an F on the relevant assignment, an F for the course, and reporting to administrative authorities.

UMBC Statement of Values for Academic Integrity

By enrolling in this course, each student assumes the responsibilities of an active participant in UMBC's scholarly community in which everyone's academic work and behavior are held to the highest standards of honesty. Cheating, fabrication, plagiarism, and helping others to commit these acts are all forms of academic dishonesty, and they are wrong. Academic misconduct could result in disciplinary action that may include, but is not limited to, suspension or dismissal. To

read the full Student Academic Conduct Policy, consult the UMBC Student Handbook, or the Office of Undergraduate Education.

Tentative Schedule (alterations will be announced in class and via email)

Listed here are the readings we will be discussing during each session. Although assigned readings are often short, they are difficult, and multiple readings are necessary. You are expected to have read the relevant text *before* the class meeting. Occasionally, our discussion of a reading will carry over into the next session. When that next session meets you will still be expected to have read the text assigned for it. For example, if our discussion of Plato's *Euthyphro* on 9/7 carries over to 9/12, you will still be expected to have read Plato's *Apology* by 9/12.

PLATO

Week 1: Introduction

8/31: Course overview

Week 2: What makes actions pious?

9/5: *Euthyphro*

9/7: *Euthyphro* continued

Week 3: What matters in life? Can we ever justly disobey the laws?

9/12: *Apology*

9/14: *Apology*, continued (**QUIZ**)

Week 4: How can we know the natures of things? What is justice?

9/19: *Meno*, 80a–86d

9/21: *Republic*, Book 2 up to 361d7

Week 5: Why do we form political units? What's the best way to organize them?

9/26: *Republic*, 361d8 to 434d

9/28: *Republic*, 361d8 to 434d (**QUIZ**)

Week 6: What is the structure of the human soul? What is justice?

10/3: *Republic* 434d–end of Book 4

10/5: *Republic* 434d–end of Book 4, continued

Week 7: Plato's cave; exam

10/10: Plato's Cave

10/12: **First exam, during class**

ARISTOTLE

Week 8: What is the goal of human life? What is happiness?

10/17: *Nicomachean Ethics*, Book 1, Chapters 1–5, 7, and 13

10/19: *Nicomachean Ethics*, Book 1, continued

Week 9: What is virtue? How are we responsible for our actions?

10/24: *Nicomachean Ethics*, Book 2, Chapters 1–6

10/26: *Nicomachean Ethics*, Book 3, Chapter 1 (**QUIZ**)

Week 10: Can anyone be responsible? What is understanding?

10/31: *Nicomachean Ethics*, Book 3, Chapter 2–5

11/2: *Posterior Analytics* Book 1, Chapters 2 and 3

Week 11: How can we know first principles?

11/7: *Posterior Analytics* Book 2, Chapter 19

11/9: **Second exam, during class**

HELLENISTIC PHILOSOPHY

Week 12: Epicureanism: atomism

11/14: *Letter to Herodotus*

11/16: *Letter to Herodotus*, continued (**QUIZ**)

Week 13: Epicureanism: Should we fear death?

11/21: *Letter to Menoeceus*

11/23: **Thanksgiving, no class**

Week 14: Stoicism: knowledge and freedom

11/28: Stoic epistemology

11/30: Stoic freedom (**QUIZ**)

Week 15: Stoicism and Skeptics on the ideal life

12/5: Stoics on the ideal life

12/7: Pyrrhonian Skepticism

Week 16: Review

12/12: **Third exam, during class**

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ACCESSIBILITY AND DISABILITY ACCOMMODATIONS, GUIDANCE AND RESOURCES

Accommodations for students with disabilities are provided for all students with a qualified disability under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA & ADAAA) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act who request and are eligible for accommodations. The Office of Student Disability Services (SDS) is the UMBC department designated to coordinate accommodations that creates equal access for students when barriers to participation exist in University courses, programs, or activities.

If you have a documented disability and need to request academic accommodations in your courses, please refer to the SDS website at sds.umbc.edu for registration information and office procedures.

SDS email: disAbility@umbc.edu

SDS phone: [410-455-2459](tel:410-455-2459)

If you will be using SDS approved accommodations in this class, please contact the instructor to discuss implementation of the accommodations. During remote instruction requirements due to COVID, communication and flexibility will be essential for success.

SEXUAL ASSAULT, SEXUAL HARASSMENT, AND GENDER BASED VIOLENCE AND DISCRIMINATION

[UMBC Policy](#) in addition to federal and state law (to include Title IX) prohibits discrimination and harassment on the basis of sex, sexual orientation, and gender identity in University programs and activities. Any student who is impacted by sexual harassment, sexual assault, domestic violence, dating violence, stalking, sexual exploitation, gender discrimination, pregnancy discrimination, gender-based harassment, or related retaliation should contact the University's Title IX Coordinator to make a report and/or access support and resources. The Title IX Coordinator can be reached at titleixcoordinator@umbc.edu or 410-455-1717.

You can access support and resources even if you do not want to take any further action. You will not be forced to file a formal complaint or police report. Please be aware that the University may take action on its own if essential to protect the safety of the community.

If you are interested in making a report, please use the [Online Reporting/Referral Form](#). Please note that, if you report anonymously, the University's ability to respond will be limited.

Notice that Faculty and Teaching Assistants are Responsible Employees with Mandatory Reporting Obligations

All faculty members and teaching assistants are considered Responsible Employees, per UMBC's [Policy on Sexual Misconduct, Sexual Harassment, and Gender Discrimination](#). Faculty and teaching assistants therefore required to report all known information regarding alleged conduct that may be a violation of the Policy to the Title IX Coordinator, even if a student discloses an experience that occurred before attending UMBC and/or an incident that only involves people not affiliated with UMBC. Reports are required regardless of the amount of detail provided and even in instances where support has already been offered or received.

While faculty members want to encourage you to share information related to your life experiences through discussion and written work, students should understand that faculty are required to report past and present sexual harassment, sexual assault, domestic and dating violence, stalking, and gender discrimination that is shared with them to the Title IX Coordinator so that the University can inform students of their [rights, resources, and support](#). While you are encouraged to do so, you are not obligated to respond to outreach conducted as a result of a report to the Title IX Coordinator.

If you need to speak with someone in confidence, who does not have an obligation to report to the Title IX Coordinator, UMBC has a number of [Confidential Resources](#) available to support you:

[Retriever Integrated Health](#) (Main Campus): 410-455-2472; Monday – Friday 8:30 a.m. – 5 p.m.; For After-Hours Support, Call 988.

[Center for Counseling and Well-Being](#) (Shady Grove Campus): 301-738-6273; Monday-Thursday 10:00a.m. – 7:00 p.m. and Friday 10:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m. (virtual) [Online Appointment Request Form](#)

Pastoral Counseling via [The Gathering Space for Spiritual Well-Being](#): 410-455-6795; i3b@umbc.edu; Monday – Friday 8:00 a.m. – 10:00 p.m.

Other Resources

[Women's Center](#) (open to students of all genders): 410-455-2714; womenscenter@umbc.edu; Monday – Thursday 9:30 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. and Friday 10:00 a.m. – 4 p.m.

[Shady Grove Student Resources](#), [Maryland Resources](#), [National Resources](#).

Child Abuse and Neglect

Please note that Maryland law and [UMBC policy](#) require that faculty report all disclosures or suspicions of child abuse or neglect to the Department of Social Services and/or the police even if the person who experienced the abuse or neglect is now over 18.