

History of Ancient Greek Philosophy

Description

In one of Plato's dialogues, Socrates suggested, "it is not life, but rather the good life, that is worth living." For him and for ancient Greek culture in general, human life was much more than mere survival or just coping.

What is the good life for us today? Do we ask ourselves this question often enough? And in which way does one effectively define and pursue the good life? Is the quest for the good life a timely or untimely one? In other words: are there several definitions of the good life, each modeled on the specificity of a given time, or is there only one good life, which appeals to all times? Can these questions be posited outside the "walls of the city," the Greek metaphor for human interdependence and the social bond?

Twenty-five hundred years ago, philosophy was born on the Eastern shores of the Mediterranean Sea as the response to these dilemmas, which grew out of a fascination with the nature of the universe, eternity assumed as the unchanging truth of mathematics, the relation between any whole and its parts, the oscillation in nature between stability and change, what things are and what they become. Our readings and discussions will explore how the ancient Greek philosophers posed these questions and sought to solve them by articulating the meaning of five key-concepts: death, happiness, beauty, justice, and truth.

Requirements

Philosophy is a demanding discipline and this is a demanding class, which will need your full dedication. Listed below are the reading and viewing assignments for the course. Each one of them should be prepared thoroughly before class. Should you miss a class for a justified reason, I expect you to get notes from a classmate and still complete the reading assignment for that day. All your written work has to be submitted by Blackboard, in a Word format (virus free!), and in hard copy at the Philosophy Department's office (Rocky 209). On every one of your written pieces I expect to find a header with your name, the class in which you are enrolled, the type of assignment as named in the Syllabus, and page

numbers. Look at the sample paper template on Blackboard for how I expect your papers. For every day late a paper is handed in, ½ of a grade point will be subtracted (i.e., an A will become an A-). Extensions may be asked and obtained in advance only for medical, family reasons, or multiple overlapping deadlines.

Texts

Plato, *Five Dialogues: Eutyphro, Apology, Crito, Meno, Phaedo*, Hackett (Required)

Plato, *Symposium*, Hackett (Required)

Plato, *Republic*, Hackett (Required)

Aristotle, *The Nichomachean Ethics*, Hackett (Required)

Aristotle, *Politics*, Hackett (Required)

A Presocratics Reader, Hackett (Required)

Hussey, *Hellenistic Philosophy*, Hackett (Recommended)

Course Structure and Assignments

August	30	Introduction and Background Why the Greeks?
September	4	Thales, Anaximander, Anaximenes. “The Milesians,” <i>A Presocratic Reader</i> , 9-24 Recommended secondary reading: Hussey, <i>The Presocratics</i> , “The Milesians,” 11-31
	6	Pythagoras and Pythagoreanism “Pythagoras and Pythagoreanism,” <i>A Presocratic Reader</i> , 17-24 Recommended secondary reading, Hussey, <i>The Presocratics</i> , “Pythagoras and the Greek West,” 60-77
	11	Heraclitus “Heraclitus,” <i>A Presocratic Reader</i> , 29-41 Recommended secondary reading, Hussey, <i>The Presocratics</i> , “Heraclitus,” 32-59
	12	Make Up Class, 8-9:30 pm Heraclitus, continued
	13	Parmenides “Parmenides,” <i>A Presocratic Reader</i> , 42-51 Recommended secondary reading, Hussey, <i>The Presocratics</i> , “Parmenides and Zeno,” 78-99
18	Zeno of Elea “Zeno of Elea,” <i>A Presocratic Reader</i> , 73-77 Recommended secondary reading, Hussey, <i>The Presocratics</i> , “Parmenides and Zeno,” 99-106	

	20 Plato, <i>Apology</i> , in <i>Five Dialogues</i> Response Assignment on Heraclitus and Parmenides Due
	25 Plato, <i>Crito</i> and <i>Euthyphro</i> , in <i>Five Dialogues</i>
	27 Plato, <i>Symposium</i> The Speeches of Phaedrus, Pausanias, Eryximachus, Aristophanes and Agathon 1-39 Response Assignment on the Early Dialogues Due
October	2 Plato, <i>Symposium</i> Socrates Questions Agathon and Diotima Questions Socrates; The Speech of Diotima, 40-60
	4 Plato, <i>Symposium</i> Alcibiades' Entrance, the Speech of Alcibiades, Final Dialogue, 61-77
	9 Plato, <i>Republic</i> Book III and IV
	11 Plato, <i>Republic</i> Book V Is Plato a Feminist or an Anti-Feminist: Short Written Exercise
OCTOBER BREAK	
	23 Plato, <i>Republic</i> Book VI
	25 Plato, <i>Republic</i>

	Book VII
	Plato continued
	30 Take-Home Distributed
November	1 Aristotle Metaphysics Excerpts from <i>Physics</i> and <i>Metaphysics</i>
	6 Aristotle, <i>Nicomachean Ethics</i> Book I Take-Home Exam Due
	8 Aristotle, <i>Nicomachean Ethics</i> Book II
	13 Aristotle, <i>Nicomachean Ethics</i> Book VII
	15 Aristotle, <i>Nicomachean Ethics</i> Books VIII and IX
	20 Class Canceled Short Assignment on Friendship Due
Thanksgiving Break	
	27 Aristotle, <i>Politics</i> Book I, Chapters 1-7
	29 Aristotle, <i>Politics</i> Book III, Chapters 1-12

<i>December</i>	4 Aristotle, <i>Politics</i>
	Book VII, Chapters 1-4, 13-17
	6 Conclusion Final Paper Proposal Due
	13 Final Paper Due