

Fall 2014

PHIL 411

A Survey of Ancient Western Philosophy

Schedule # 22571

T, TH 12h30-13h45

EBA 408

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OFFICE HOURS:

AL 434: T, TH 10h45-12h30, and by appointment.

COURSE OBJECTIVES:

The primary objective of this course is to improve your understanding of ancient Western philosophy. By 'ancient Western philosophy' we mean philosophy as it was developed by the ancient Hellenic peoples and by the ancient Romans. The period begins in the 6th century B.C.E. and continues until the 3rd century C.E.

You will read English translations of some of the major works from the period. These works are among the most insightful and ingenious works in the history of philosophy, and they are fundamental to the development of Western philosophy. If you know ancient Greek or Latin, I will be happy to provide you with access to the ancient texts in their original languages. If you don't know ancient Greek or Latin, I encourage you to study these important languages.

I will offer lectures during every class. My lectures are designed to help you understand better the assigned readings, and to introduce you to the broader philosophical discussions to which the assigned readings contribute. During lectures, I will engage you directly in philosophical discussion. I will pose questions to you, encourage debate, and moderate class discussion. Your questions are welcome at any time during class session. You should expect to have many questions about the assigned readings, the content of my lectures, and the philosophical issues we will address.

The secondary objective of the course is to prepare you for more advanced work in the tradition of Western philosophy. Later Western philosophy emerges out of, and is essentially shaped by, ancient Western philosophy. I will help you to relate the ideas and methods of the ancient Western philosophers to those employed by subsequent philosophers working in the fields of logic, metaphysics, epistemology, and ethics.

A tertiary objective of the course is to improve your logical ability. We will study and employ the philosophical methods invented by the ancient philosophers. These logical methods remain the basic methods of Western philosophy and, arguably, Western rationality in general. Classroom discussion and graded work will test your mastery of these methods.

OVERVIEW OF COURSE CONTENT:

The course will proceed chronologically. We begin with Socrates and the Presocratic philosophers, reading some of Plato's "Socratic" works and many of the fragmentary texts from the Presocratic Natural Philosophers and the Sophists. In the second part of the course, we read works by Plato and Aristotle. In the third part of the course, we consider the Hellenistic schools of philosophy—the Epicureans, the Stoics, and the ancient Skeptics.

TEXTS:

All of the assigned readings are found in the course textbook:

Introductory Readings in Ancient Greek and Roman Philosophy, edited by C. D. C. Reeve and Patrick Lee Miller, with a general introduction by Lloyd P. Gerson, Hackett Publishing Co.

I highly recommend purchasing this textbook. You cannot find better English translations of the assigned readings than those in the textbook. I doubt you can purchase all of the translations for a lower price. However, you need not purchase the course textbook, as there are various translations of all of the assigned readings in the SDSU library, in other local libraries, on the internet, and elsewhere.

The following books may help you better understand ancient Western philosophy, in general, and the assigned readings, in particular: G.M.A Grube's *Plato's Thought*; C.D.C. Reeve's *Socrates in the Apology*; Tom Robinson's *Aristotle in Outline*; Myles Burnyeat's *The Original Sceptics*; E. Hussey's *The Presocratics*; and Sandbach's *The Stoics*. These are available in the library, and may be purchased online.

GRADED WORK:

You will take three in-class essay exams and write a research paper. Your final grade will be based on your exam grades and the grade of your paper.

In-class Essay Exams:

You will take three in-class essay exams. All exams will be cumulative. Each is worth 25% of your final grade. Exam questions will require you to:

- a. report basic factual knowledge about ancient Western philosophy,
- b. analyze and criticize philosophical arguments presented in the assigned readings and lectures, and
- c. compare and contrast the ideas developed by different ancient Western philosophers.

RESEARCH PAPER:

You will write a short research paper; it is worth 25% of your final grade. The grade for your paper will be based on the following criteria:

Method and Content Criteria:

a. Undertake a bibliographical search in the SDSU library. Find one philosophical article that has some aspect of either Plato's or Aristotle's philosophy as its main focus. Talk to me *during office hours* about the article you have found. Show me that you have made a photocopy of the article. (10 points)

b. Restate the main argument of the article you have found using the following steps (45 points):

1. Explicitly state the main conclusion of the article, and
2. Explicitly state the main premises presented in the article in support of the main conclusion.

c. Criticize the main argument of the article using the following steps (45 points):

1. State and explain an objection to the argument using the following steps:
 - a. Explicitly state which of the premises presented in support of the main conclusion you will criticize, and
 - b. Develop an argument against that supporting premise, using evidence found in at least one Platonic dialogue or one Aristotelian treatise.
2. Explain how someone might respond to your objection.

General Criteria:

For each violation of the following general criteria, 2.5 points will be deducted from the grade of the paper, unless otherwise indicated:

- a. The paper must have a title page with your red i.d. on it.
- b. The paper must be machine-written on white, letter-size (8 1/2" x 11") paper.
- c. You must use a normal size font (usually no larger than 12 point).
- d. The paper must be double spaced.
- e. All margins (sides, top, and bottom) must be roughly 1 inch from the edge of the paper.
- f. If you submit a printed copy of the paper, the pages of the paper must be either stapled or clipped together. I prefer that you send your paper as an email attachment, but this is not required.

- g. You must number all of the pages, except for the title page.
- h. There must be fewer than 3 misspellings, otherwise you lose 2 points for each misspelling after the third, in addition to the 2.5 point you lose for violating this criterion.
- i. There must be fewer than 5 grammatical mistakes, not including misspellings, or you lose 2 points for each grammatical error after the fifth, in addition to the 2.5 point you lose for violating this criterion.
- j. The paper must be handed in on time, or a letter grade will be deducted for each day it is late, in addition to the 2.5 point you lose for violating this criterion.

ASSIGNED READINGS and IMPORTANT DATES

You should complete the readings before the class for which they are assigned.

August 26-28: The Prephilosophical Context, the Milesian Monists, Three Iconoclasts, and Eleatic Monism.

September 2-4: Plato's *Apology*, the Pluralists, and the Sophists.

September 9-11: Plato's *Apology*, *Euthyphro* and *Crito*.

September 16-18: Plato's *Republic* Books 1-4, 9, and 10.

September 23-25: Plato's *Republic* Books 5-8.

September 30: Plato's *Protagoras*, and *Symposium*.

October 2: Plato's *Parmenides* and *Timaeus*.

October 7: **Exam #1.**

October 9: Aristotle's *Metaphysics*.

October 14: Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics*.

October 16: Aristotle's *De Anima*.

October 21: Aristotle's *Physics*.

October 23: Aristotle's *Categories*, *De Interpretatione*, *Topics*, and *Posterior Analytics*.

October 28-30: Aristotle's *Politics*.

November 4: **EXAM #2.**

November 6: Epicurus.

November 11: **No class—Veteran's Day celebration.**

November 13: Greek Stoics.

November 18: Pyrrho of Elis.

November 20: Cicero.

November 25: Lucretius.

November 27: **No class—Thanksgiving celebration.**

December 2: Epictetus.

December 4: Plotinus.

December 9: Proclus. **Final paper due. Please send as an email attachment.**

December 11: **FINAL EXAM: 10h30-12h30 in regular classroom.**

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

If you are a student with a disability and believe you will need accommodations for this class, it is your responsibility to contact Student Disability Services at (619) 594-6473. To avoid any delay in the receipt of your accommodations, you should contact Student Disability Services as soon as possible. Please note that accommodations are not retroactive, and that accommodations based upon disability cannot be provided until you have presented your instructor with an accommodation letter from Student Disability Services. Your cooperation is appreciated.

RELIGIOUS OBSERVANCES

The University Policy File includes the following statement on Absence for Religious Observances:

By the end of the second week of classes, students should notify the instructors of affected courses of planned absences for religious observances. Instructors shall reasonably accommodate students who notify them in advance of planned absences for religious observances.

California Education Code 89320 states:

The Trustees of the California State University shall require that each state university, in administering any test or examination, to permit any student who is eligible to undergo the test or examination to do so, without penalty, at a time when that activity would not violate the student's religious creed.

Please notify me if you plan to be absent for religious observance.

How to Read the Assigned Texts

A. Getting the Main Ideas

Use this method to become familiar with the main concepts used in the assigned reading:

1. Quickly look through the text.
 - a. In your notebook, note any words that are bolded, underlined, italicized, or otherwise highlighted in the assigned text.
2. Skim the introduction and conclusion.
 - a. In your notebook, list any word(s) appearing in both.
 - b. List any word(s) unfamiliar to you.
3. Skim the first and last sentence of each textual division.
 - a. In your notebook, list any word(s) appearing frequently, and
 - b. List any word(s) unfamiliar to you.
4. Skim the assigned reading one textual division at a time.
 - a. In your notebook, list any word(s) appearing frequently, and
 - b. List any word(s) unfamiliar to you.
5. Look up the words on your lists in:
 - a. An ordinary dictionary (which you should own), and
 - b. A Dictionary of Philosophy (which can be found in the reference section of the library).

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B. Finding the Arguments:

Read the assigned text slowly! As you read each sentence, ask yourself the following questions. For some sentences, you can answer “yes” to more than one of these questions; for others, you can answer “yes” to none. If you aren’t sure of the answer, put a question mark next to the sentence and move on!:

1. Is the author presenting a definition of a word or concept? If yes, then:
 - a. Highlight or underline the word/concept,
 - b. Note in the margin that it is a definition,
 - c. Write the definition in your notebook, preferably in the words of the author and in your own words.

2. Is the author presenting a conclusion of an argument? (Hint: Look for conclusion indicators such as ‘therefore’, ‘hence’, ‘thus’, ‘it follows that’, and ‘in conclusion’.) If yes, then:
 - a. Highlight or underline the sentence,
 - b. Note in the margin that it is a conclusion,
 - c. Write the conclusion in your notebook, preferably in the words of the author and in your own words, and
 - d. Note whether or not the conclusion serves as a premise in another argument.

3. Is the author presenting the premise of an argument? (Hint: Look for premise indicators such as ‘since’, ‘because’, ‘if’, and ‘either’.) If yes, then:
 - a. Highlight or note the premise,
 - b. Note in the margin that it is a premise,
 - c. Write the premise in your notebook, preferably in the words of the author and in your own words, and
 - d. Note whether or not the premise is the conclusion of another argument.

4. Is the author presenting an example? If yes, then:
 - a. Highlight or note the example,
 - b. Note in the margin that it is an example,
 - c. Note what the example supports or undermines, and
 - d. Write the example, and what it supports, in your notebook (preferably in the words of the author and in your own words).

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C. Organizing the Arguments

1. For each of the conclusions you noted in part B2 (above):
 - a. Determine which of the premises you discovered in part B3 (above) relates to that conclusion.
 - b. Using your argument patterns, organize these premises into valid or strong arguments in support of the conclusion.
 - c. Determine whether the conclusion is the main conclusion of the work you are reading:
 - i. If it is, then the argument in support of it is the main argument.
 - ii. If not, then ask how it is related to the main conclusion of the work.
2. State the main argument of the work you are reading:
 - a. State the main conclusion of the work.
 - b. State the premises supporting that main conclusion.
 - c. Using your argument patterns, determine whether the argument is valid or strong.
3. State any arguments that support the premises of the main argument:
 - a. State the premise of the main argument.
 - b. State the premises supporting that premise.
 - c. Using your argument patterns, determine whether the argument is valid or strong.
4. Note any premises presented without supporting argument.
5. State any arguments presented against any premises in the main argument.
6. Evaluate the main argument:
 - a. If any of the premises of the main argument are not supported by further argument, then present the best reasons you can discover for thinking those premises are false.
 - b. For those premises supported by further argument:
 - i. If any of the premises of these arguments are not supported by further argument, then present the best reasons you can discover for thinking those premises are false.
 - ii. For those premises supported by further argument, repeat Step C6b for these premises.

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7. Ask yourself how the main argument presented in the assigned reading relate to the main arguments made in the previous assigned readings? Note your answer.
8. Ask yourself what argument is the author likely to present in the next part of the text? Note your answer.
9. If you are having difficulties:
 - a. Reread the assigned reading, and try again.
 - b. Review previous assignments and class notes, and try again.
 - c. Skim the next part of the text, and try again.
 - d. Note the words, sentences, and/or paragraphs that you don't understand, and explain in your own words what you don't understand.
 - e. Raise questions either in class or during office hour.

Cheating and Plagiarism

From the "University Policies" section of the SDSU General Catalog:

Institutions of higher education are founded to impart knowledge, seek truth, and encourage one's development for the good of society. University students shall thus be intellectually and morally obliged to pursue their course of studies with honesty and integrity. Therefore, in preparing and submitting materials for academic courses and in taking examinations, a student shall not yield to cheating or plagiarism, which not only violate academic standards but also make the offender liable to penalties explicit in Section 41301 of Title 5, California Code of Regulations as follows: Expulsion, Suspension, and Probation of Students. Following procedures consonant with due process established pursuant to Section 41304, any student of a campus may be expelled, suspended, placed on probation, or given a lesser sanction for one or more of the following causes that must be campus related.

Cheating

Cheating is defined as the act of obtaining or attempting to obtain credit for academic work by the use of dishonest, deceptive, or fraudulent means. Examples of cheating include, but are not limited to copying, in part or in whole, from another's test or other examination; discussing answers or ideas relating to the answers on a test or other examination without the permission of the instructor; obtaining copies of a test, an examination, or other course material without the permission of the instructor; using notes, cheat sheets, or other devices considered inappropriate under the prescribed testing condition; collaborating with another or others in work to be presented without the permission of the instructor; falsifying records, laboratory work, or other course data; submitting work previously presented in another course, if contrary to the rules of the course; altering or interfering with the grading procedures; plagiarizing, as defined below; and knowingly and intentionally assisting another student in any of the above.

Plagiarism

Plagiarism is defined as the act of incorporating ideas, words, or specific substance of another, whether purchased, borrowed, or otherwise obtained, and submitting same to the university as one's own work to fulfill academic requirements without giving credit to the appropriate source. Plagiarism shall include but not be limited to: submitting work, either in part or in whole, completed by another; omitting footnotes for ideas, statements, facts, or conclusions that belong to another; omitting quotation marks when quoting directly from another, whether it be a paragraph, sentence, or part thereof; close and lengthy paraphrasing of the writings of another; submitting another person's artistic works, such as musical compositions, photographs, paintings, drawings, or sculptures; and (f) submitting as one's own work papers purchased from research companies.

Disciplinary Action

Cheating and plagiarism in connection with an academic program at the university may warrant two separate and distinct courses of disciplinary action that may be applied concurrently in response to a violation of this policy: academic sanctions, such as grade modifications; and punitive sanctions, such as probation, suspension, or expulsion.

Academic sanctions are concerned with the student's grades and are the responsibility of the instructor involved. Punitive sanctions are concerned with the student's records and status on campus and shall be the responsibility of the university president or designated representative. The Coordinator of Judiciary Procedures shall be the president's representative in matters of student discipline.