

Phil 2140: Greek and Roman Philosophy

Instructor: John Russon, Mackinnon 338.

Office Hours: Tuesday 1:15-2:15, Wednesday 3:00-4:30

TA: Casey Ford, ford@uoguelph.ca. (Office hours Wednesday, 11-12.)

Course Meets: Tuesdays and Thursdays, 11:30-12:50, Rm. CRSC (Crop Science) 117

Ancient Athens produced the two philosophical thinkers that tower over all who came before and all who came after: Plato (c.427-c.347 B.C.) and Aristotle (384-322 B.C.). These thinkers, from the period of the flourishing of ancient Greek culture, effectively invented the practice of philosophy that has shaped and transformed Western culture and, indeed, world-culture. The Greek philosophers were especially concerned with describing accurately the nature of reality, and then trying to understand the place of the human being within reality. We will begin our study of their with the insights of philosophers before Socrates, and consider the dynamic and rational nature of reality. We will then turn to the figure of Socrates himself, the Athenian philosopher who inspired Plato and is the subject of Plato's writings. We will look at his distinctive method, and see how this method is related, in Plato's philosophy, to the insights of the pre-Socratic philosophers. We will then look at the works of Plato's student, Aristotle, (who was himself supposedly the teacher of Alexander the Great), for the systematic study of nature and our place in it. We will conclude, finally, with the Roman philosopher Seneca—the advisor to the Roman Emperor Nero—to see how the Greek philosophical perspective has developed and been transformed in dealing with the realities of political life in the time of the Roman Empire.

Schedule of Readings.

Do the following reading before the indicated classes. Come to class prepared to discuss the material you've read.

Dates: Reading:

Pre-Socratic Philosophy:

Sept 9 Sophocles, Antigone, Second Chorus (handout)

Sept 14 Heraclitus: Fragments (F) 1, 9, 10, 16, 21, 22, 25, 30, 48
[from The First Philosophers, pp 37-44]

16 Pythagoras: Testimonia (T) 14, 15, 16, 23, 24 (from pp 98-99,
101-102) and F4 (p. 111)

Plato:

Sept 21 Apology
23 Apology (in class test)

Sept 28 Phaedo
30 Phaedo

Oct 5	<u>Phaedo</u>
7	<u>Phaedo</u>
Oct 12	Parmenides Fragments
14	<u>Sophist</u>
Oct 19	<u>Sophist</u>
21	<u>Sophist</u>
<u>Aristotle:</u>	
Oct 26	Physics II.1;
28	On the Soul II.1; Parts of Animals I.1
Nov 2	On the Soul II.2-4
4	Posterior Analytics II.19; On the Soul III.4; Metaphysics I.1
Nov 9	Nicomachean Ethics I.7, 13
11	Nicomachean Ethics II.2-6
Nov 16	Nicomachean Ethics VIII.1-6
18	Nicomachean Ethics II.1, Politics I.1-2
<u>Seneca:</u>	
Nov 23	Letters 5 (Moderation) and 7 (Crowds) [pp 170-174]
25	Letter 12 (Old Age) and 70 (Suicide) [pp 175-177, 202-207]
Nov 30 (final class)	Letters 41 (God in Man) and 124 (Reason and the True Good) [pp 188-190, 256-261]

Course Texts:

Waterfield, The First Philosophers: The Presocratics and Sophists, Oxford.

Plato, Complete Works, Hackett.

Aristotle, Basic Writings, Modern Library.

Seneca, The Stoic Philosophy of Seneca, Norton.

Assignments:

Reading, Attendance, and Participation.

You must do the assigned readings in advance of class, and come to class prepared to discuss them.

In-class test on Socrates and Presocratics: September 23: 15%

There will be a short test in the latter part of class on September 23, in which you will answer question about Heraclitus, Pythagoras, and/or Socrates.

Critical Essay on Plato, due October 26: 35%

You must write a critical essay, 8-10 pages in length, on Plato. Topics will be handed-out in class. Your essay will defend your own thesis about the topic (i.e., you will argue for what you believe is right). Your essay will also explain Plato's views on the relevant topics, and defend those claims by careful textual analysis and documentation. This paper will be based on your own thoughts, your own careful reading of the text, and your learning from class lectures and discussion. You are NOT to consult other scholarly interpretations of Plato.

Take-home Test on Aristotle, due November 23: 35%

You will be given questions in class on the material we have studied from Aristotle, and you will have time to work on the answers at home. Again, you are not to consult secondary literature, but are to base your answers on your own engagement with the texts and the issues.

Reaction Paper on Seneca, due November 30: 15%

You will hand in a final reaction paper (1 single-spaced page in length) explaining your personal reaction to the ideas in our readings from Seneca.

SEVEN STANDARD STATEMENTS

E-mail Communication

As per university regulations, all students are required to check their <uoguelph.ca> e-mail account regularly: e-mail is the official route of communication between the university and its students.

When You Cannot Meet a Course Requirement...

When you find yourself unable to meet an in-course requirement because of illness or compassionate reasons, please advise the course instructor (or designated person, such as a teaching assistant) in writing, with your name, id#, and e-mail contact. See the undergraduate calendar for information on regulations and procedures for Academic Consideration:

<http://www.uoguelph.ca/registrar/calendars/undergraduate/current/c08/c08-ac.shtml>

Drop Date

The last date to drop one-semester Fall 2010 courses, without academic penalty, is Thursday November 4. For regulations and procedures for Dropping Courses, see the Undergraduate Calendar: <http://www.uoguelph.ca/registrar/calendars/undergraduate/current/c08/c08-drop.shtml>

Copies of out-of-class assignments

Keep paper and/or other reliable back-up copies of all out-of-class assignments: you may be asked to resubmit work at any time.

Academic Misconduct

The University of Guelph is committed to upholding the highest standards of academic integrity and enjoins all members of the University community – faculty, staff, and students – to be aware of what constitutes academic misconduct and to do as much as possible to prevent academic offences from occurring. The Academic Misconduct Policy is detailed in the Undergraduate Calendar:

<http://www.uoguelph.ca/registrar/calendars/undergraduate/current/c08/c08-amisconduct.shtml>

Recording of Materials

Presentations which are made in relation to course work—including lectures—cannot be recorded in any electronic media without the permission of the presenter, whether the instructor, a classmate or guest lecturer.

Resources

The Undergraduate Calendar is the source of information about the University of Guelph's procedures, policies and regulations which apply to undergraduate programs. It can be found at:

<http://www.uoguelph.ca/registrar/calendars/undergraduate/current/>