



PHIL*2140 Ancient Greek Philosophy

Fall 2018

Section(s): C01

Department of Philosophy

Credit Weight: 0.50

Version 1.00 - August 29, 2018

1 Course Details

1.1 Calendar Description

A survey of the beginnings of Western philosophy, this course will focus on themes such as the nature of reality, the ways we might come to have knowledge, and the good life for human beings. This course will typically consider such thinkers as Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, and Epictetus, although the specific course content will vary with the instructor.

Pre-Requisite(s): 2.00 credits or (1 of PHIL*1000, PHIL*1010, PHIL*1030, PHIL*1050)

1.2 Course Description

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 read major texts by Plato and Aristotle on the nature of reality, the nature of knowledge, ethics and politics, contextualized by other writings by ancient writers.

1.3 Timetable

Wednesdays 7:00 - 9:50 pm, MCKN 115

please check Webadvisor for any changes.

1.4 Final Exam

Tuesday December 4, 7:00-9:00 pm

2 Instructional Support

2.1 Instructor(s)

John Russon

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2.2 Teaching Assistant(s)

Teaching Assistant: Nour Abuhsan
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3 Learning Resources

3.1 Required Resource(s)

Pericles/Thucydides and Xenophon (Readings)

You are required to read "Pericles' Funeral Oration" (from Thucydides' *History of the Peloponnesian War*) and Xenophon's "Constitution of the Spartans," both of which will be available as pdf documents posted in courselink.

Plato (Readings)

You are required to read the following texts in the following required translations. Other translations are not acceptable.

From *The Republic of Plato*, translated by Bloom:

Republic Book II

Republic Book V.472a – Book VI.511e

Republic Book VII.514a – 521a

From *Four Texts on Socrates*, translated by West and West:

Apology

Aristotle (Readings)

You are required to read the following texts from the following required translations. Other translations are not acceptable:

From *On the Soul*, translated by Shiffman:

On the Soul, Book II Chapters 1-6, 12, Book III Chapters 1-2, 4-5.

From *Nicomachean Ethics*, translated by Bartlett and Collins:

Nicomachean Ethics, Book I Chapters 7, 13, Book II Chapter 1-2, 6-7, 9, Book VIII Chapters 3, 6, 8-9,13, and Book IX Chapters 1, 3-4, 8-9,12, Book X, Chapters 6-8.

Outside Reading (Readings)

Whereas in other courses you are often required to do outside reading about the material we are studying in class, in this course the opposite is the case: **do not** consult other sources about Plato and Aristotle to supplement your study of these texts. The purpose of this course is to have you read the actual texts on their own, and to learn from them what the points are that Plato and Aristotle are making. Outside sources are not reliable, and if you go against these instructions and do consult other texts it will almost certainly result in you producing lower quality work that will earn you a lower grade.

4 Learning Outcomes

4.1 Course Learning Outcomes

By the end of this course, you should be able to:

1. Enhanced Insight

The single most important outcome from taking this class will be that you individually take your own life seriously, and reflect with care, subtlety and insight on how you are shaping your life and on what you can do to make for yourself a fulfilling present and future. These writers are not presenting you with dry facts about the external world, but are calling upon you to participate in reflection on your own experience and, through that reflection, to engage actively and self-critically in shaping *how* you exist.

2. Improved Thinking

In addition to offering profound and subtle reflections on how we make meaningful lives for ourselves, the writers we are studying this term are also some of the most rigorous and sophisticated thinkers our culture has ever produced. Engaging with their thoughts should teach you to be much more discerning and articulate in your understanding of many aspects of reality, and should make you a better thinker generally.

3. Improved Reading The main form of study in this course is reading and writing about difficult

texts. Learning to read these texts well will help you to become a better reader and writing about them will help you to develop better skills with language in general.

4. Increased Understanding

You should become familiar with the specific insights and ideas of these philosophers about the distinctive nature of *human* life, about *knowledge*, about *virtue*, about *happiness*, about *politics*, about *history* and more.

5. Heightened Awareness Finally, these are some of the most formative thinkers in the history of human culture. Studying these figures is also helping you to become cognizant of the nature of the world you live in, and how it came to develop the form that it has.

5 Teaching and Learning Activities

5.1 Lecture

Topic(s):

Schedule of Readings

This is the tentative schedule of readings; some details might change depending on how the class develops. You should use this schedule to guide you in your weekly class-preparation. Each week, you are expected to have read the assigned material **in advance** of the class meeting, and you should come to class with the text, prepared to discuss the material. These readings are the **primary content** of the class, so you should make them the focus of your attention--the lectures are really a kind of supplement, designed to help you appreciate the meaning and significance of what you are reading. Don't be surprised if you sometimes find the material difficult to understand--if it were easy, you wouldn't need teachers!--but read it through anyway; the class meetings will help you to understand what you read and, if you do your readings and attend classes, you will find that your ability to understand the readings grows dramatically throughout the semester.

Sept 12: Introduction

Athens and Sparta:

Sept 19: Pericles' Funeral Oration and Xenophon, "Constitution of the Spartans." (pdfs on courselink)

Plato:

Sept 26: *Republic* Book II: the nature of the city

Oct 3: *Republic* Book V.472a – Book VI.511e: the nature of knowledge

Oct 10: *Republic* Book VII.514a – 521a: the nature of our experience

Oct 17: *Apology*: politics and philosophy

Aristotle:

Oct 24: *On the Soul*, Book II Chapters 1-4: life and embodiment

Oct 31: *On the Soul*, Book II Chapters 5-6,12, Book III Chapters 1-2, 4-5: perception and insight

Nov 7: *Nicomachean Ethics*, Book I Chapters 7, 13, Book II Chapter 1: human nature

Nov 14: *Nicomachean Ethics*, Book II Chapters 2, 6, 7, 9: moral virtue

Nov 21: *Nicomachean Ethics*, Books VIII Chapters 3, 6, 8-9,13 and Book IX Chapters 1, 3-4, 8-9,12: friendship

Nov 28: *Nicomachean Ethics*, Book X Chapters 6-8: happiness.

6 Assessments

6.1 Assessment Details

In-Class Test (25%)

Date: Wed, Oct 3

The test will include essay questions on the readings from Thucydides, Xenophon and Plato (*Republic* Bk II). The test may also include short answer questions.

Short Critical Essay 1 (25%)

Due: Wed, Oct 24

This will be a paper, about 5 pages in length, reflecting critically on the themes of knowledge and experience studied in the readings from Plato's *Republic* and *Apology*. Exact topics and details about format will be made available in class.

Your essay must have an **introductory paragraph** that includes a **thesis statement**.

Your essay must **explain accurately** the positions of the thinkers being considered.

Your essay must include your own reasoned reflections on those position: you must explain **what** you conclude and **why**.

You must **document** your claims about the philosophers through textual reference and quotation.

You should **not** draw on any sources other than the course texts; if you do, however, you **must** properly document your usage of those sources.

Short Critical Essay 2 (25%)

Date: Wed, Nov 14

This will be a paper, about 5 pages in length, reflecting critically on themes of human nature, experience and ethics raised in the readings from Aristotle's *On the Soul* and *Nicomachean Ethics*. Exact topics and details about format will be made available in class.

Your essay must have an **introductory paragraph** that includes a **thesis statement**.

Your essay must **explain accurately** the positions of the thinkers being considered.

Your essay must include your own reasoned reflections on those position: you must explain **what** you conclude and **why**.

You must **document** your claims about the philosophers through textual reference and quotation.

You should **not** draw on any sources other than the course texts; if you do, however, you **must** properly document your usage of those sources.

Final Examination (25%)

Date: Tue, Dec 4, 7:00 PM

This will be a comprehensive examination, that is, it will include questions on all of the material from the course.

7 University Statements

7.1 Email Communication

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

7.2 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. The regulations and procedures for [Academic Consideration](#) are detailed in the Undergraduate Calendar.

7.3 Drop Date

Courses that are one semester long must be dropped by the end of the fortieth class day; two-semester courses must be dropped by the last day of the add period in the second semester. The regulations and procedures for [Dropping Courses](#) are available in the Undergraduate

Calendar.

7.4 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.

7.5 Accessibility

The University promotes the full participation of students who experience disabilities in their academic programs. To that end, the provision of academic accommodation is a shared responsibility between the University and the student.

When accommodations are needed, the student is required to first register with Student Accessibility Services (SAS). Documentation to substantiate the existence of a disability is required, however, interim accommodations may be possible while that process is underway.

Accommodations are available for both permanent and temporary disabilities. It should be noted that common illnesses such as a cold or the flu do not constitute a disability.

Use of the SAS Exam Centre requires students to book their exams at least 7 days in advance, and not later than the 40th Class Day.

More information: www.uoguelph.ca/sas

7.6 Academic Misconduct

The University of Guelph is committed to upholding the highest standards of academic integrity and it is the responsibility of 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. University of Guelph students have the responsibility of abiding by the University's policy on academic misconduct regardless of their location of study; faculty, staff and students have the responsibility of supporting an environment that discourages misconduct. Students need to remain aware that instructors have access to and the right to use electronic and other means of detection.

Please note: Whether or not a student intended to commit academic misconduct is not relevant for a finding of guilt. Hurried or careless submission of assignments does not excuse students from responsibility for verifying the academic integrity of their work before submitting it. Students who are in any doubt as to whether an action on their part could be construed as an academic offence should consult with a faculty member or faculty advisor.

The [Academic Misconduct Policy](#) is detailed in the Undergraduate Calendar.

7.7 Recording of Materials

Presentations which are made in relation to course work—including lectures—cannot be recorded or copied without the permission of the presenter, whether the instructor, a classmate or guest lecturer. Material recorded with permission is restricted to use for that course unless further permission is granted.

7.8 Resources

The [Academic Calendars](#) are the source of information about the University of Guelph's procedures, policies and regulations which apply to undergraduate, graduate and diploma programs.

