

PHI 204: Introduction to Classical Greek Philosophy

Instructor: Christopher-Marcus (Marcus) Gibson

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Core Curriculum Requirement: AHo

Time: Tues & Thurs, 2:50-4:30pm

Place: Academic Building, Room 4450

Office: TBA

Office Hours: TBA

Course Topic & Learning Goals:

This course offers an introduction to the Greek philosophical tradition from its beginnings with the “Presocratic” thinkers through the end of the classical period. The course will start with an overview of the Ionian cosmologists, Parmenides, and early Atomism, followed by study of major works by Plato and Aristotle which discuss knowledge, virtue, and their role in human lives lived well. In the spirit of these key themes, students will cultivate the abilities required to read philosophical texts, to reconstruct and evaluate arguments, and to advance the philosophical conversation by developing critical responses of their own. This course will fulfill an AHo (Arts & Humanities [o]) Core Curriculum Requirement: “Examine critically philosophical and other theoretical issues concerning the nature of reality, human experience, knowledge, value, and/or cultural production” (<https://sebs.rutgers.edu/core/>).

Academic Integrity Policy:

Learning and doing philosophy crucially involves open discussion. For this reason, any disruption of the classroom environment (whether by talking out of turn, inappropriate use of electronics, or other means) will result in a penalty to the student’s participation grade. Students should also take care to present their own honest work on assignments and avoid any form of plagiarism (including direct copying, unattributed paraphrase, etc.). So long as an assignment acknowledges any sources consulted, this shouldn’t be an issue. See <http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/academic-integrity-policy/> for further review of the university’s academic integrity and plagiarism policies.

Required Books:

The following texts are required and have been ordered for you. If you plan to obtain copies from another source, be sure to find the correct edition. Further required texts will be made available online or through scan.

Cooper, J.C. *Plato: Complete Works*. (ISBN-10: 0872203492)

Irwin, T., trans. *Aristotle: Nicomachean Ethics* (2nd edition). (ISBN-10: 0872204642)

Assignments & Grading Policy:

Graded work will include five short assignments (500 words each) as well as a midterm and final (1,000 words each).

Assignments will respond to prompts which focus on key passages or claims made in a given philosophical text. These responses will be evaluated on the basis of three criteria: (i) articulation of the stated position, (ii) reconstruction of the argument or reasons given for the position, and (iii) further contribution to the philosophical discussion. A good assignment will (i) clearly and concisely present the central claim made or mentioned in the prompt and (ii) will show the reasoning provided by the author in question in support of their central claim. An assignment which receives highest marks will also (iii) further the philosophical discussion in some way that extends beyond the points made in lecture and classroom discussion. This can take a number of forms: for instance, by describing a potential counterexample to a claim made in the argument, identifying an ambiguity, or proposing a further implication of the argument (whether a plausible or implausible one).

Each short assignment will be worth 10% of the course grade, while the midterm and final will each be worth 20% of the course grade; the remaining 10% will be based on students' participation in classroom questions and discussions. This yields the following course grade breakdown:

10% Participation;
50% Assignments;
40% Midterm & Final.

Absences & Late Work:

Regular class attendance is required to succeed in this class, and participation through question and discussion will make up 10% of the course grade (see above).

If you need an assignment extension, you may email me in advance of the deadline to request a one-day extension on the paper, no questions asked. A late paper will receive a one point penalty for each day late, unless you have an excusing circumstance for which you are able to provide appropriate documentation (e.g. a doctor's note).

Schedule (subject to revision):**Week 1**

Tuesday (Sept 4): Introduction, Historical Overview
Reading: *None*

Part I: The Presocratics

Thursday (Sept 6): Thales, Anaximander, Anaximenes
Reading: Lecture 2 Handout

Week 2

Tuesday (Sept 11): Heraclitus

Reading: Kirk, Raven, & Schofield (hereafter KRS), Ch6

Thursday (Sept 13): Heraclitus

Reading: KRS, Ch6

Week 3

Tuesday (Sept 18): Parmenides

Reading: KRS, Ch8; Lesley Brown, "The verb 'to be' in Greek philosophy"

Thursday (Sept 20): Parmenides

Reading: KRS, Ch8; Lesley Brown, "The verb 'to be' in Greek philosophy"

Assignment 1: Heraclitus & Parmenides (due Sept 23, 11:59pm)

Week 4

Tuesday (Sept 25): Atomism - Leucippus & Democritus

Reading: KRS, Ch15

Thursday (Sept 27): The Presocratics in Review; Socrates & Plato

Reading: KRS, Ch15

Part II: Plato

Week 5

Tuesday (Oct 2): Plato, *Euthyphro*

Reading: *Euthyphro*

Thursday (Oct 4): Plato, *Euthyphro*

Reading: *Euthyphro*

Week 6

Tuesday (Oct 9): Plato, *Meno*

Reading: *Meno*

Thursday (Oct 11): Plato, *Meno*

Reading: *Meno*

Assignment 2: *Euthyphro* & *Meno* (due Oct 14, 11:59pm)

Week 7

Tuesday (Oct 16): Plato, *Protagoras*

Reading: *Protagoras*

Thursday (Oct 18): Plato, *Protagoras*

Reading: *Protagoras*

Assignment 3: *Protagoras* (due Oct 21, 11:59pm)

Week 8

Tuesday (Oct 23): Plato, *Republic*

Reading: *Republic* Books I-II

Thursday (Oct 25): Plato, *Republic*

Reading: *Republic* Book IV

Week 9

Tuesday (Oct 30): Plato, *Republic*

Reading: *Republic* Book V

Thursday (Nov 1): Plato, *Republic*

Reading: *Republic* Book VI-VII

Midterm: *Republic* (due Nov 7, 11:59pm)

Part III: Aristotle

Week 10

Tuesday (Nov 6): Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*

Reading: *Nicomachean Ethics* I

Thursday (Nov 8): Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*

Reading: *Nicomachean Ethics* II-III

Week 11

Tuesday (Nov 13): Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*

Reading: *Nicomachean Ethics* VI

Thursday (Nov 15): Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*

Reading: *Nicomachean Ethics* VII

Assignment 4: *Nicomachean Ethics* (due Nov 18, 11:59pm)

Week 12

Tuesday (Nov 20): Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*

Reading: *Nicomachean Ethics X*

Thursday (Nov 22): Thanksgiving Day - No Class

Week 13

Tuesday (Nov 27): Aristotle, *Physics*

Reading: *Physics I*, Chs. 1, 7, 8

Thursday (Nov 29): Aristotle, *Physics*

Reading: *Physics II*, Chs. 1-3

Week 14

Tuesday (Dec 4): Aristotle, *Metaphysics Alpha*

Reading: *Metaphysics Alpha*

Thursday (Dec 6): Aristotle, *Metaphysics Alpha*

Reading: *Metaphysics Alpha*

Assignment 5: *Physics* (due Dec 9, 11:59pm)

Week 15

Tuesday (Dec 11): Conclusion & Review

Reading: *None*

Final (Date TBA): *Nicomachean Ethics & Metaphysics*

Student-Wellness Services:

Office of Disability Services:

<https://ods.rutgers.edu/>

Mental Health Support:

<http://health.rutgers.edu/medical-counseling-services/counseling/>

Scarlet Listeners:

<https://rutgers.campuslabs.com/engage/organization/scarletlisteners>

Suggested Resources:

Jim Pryor's guidelines for reading philosophy:

<http://www.jimpryor.net/teaching/guidelines/reading.html>

Jim Pryor's guidelines for writing philosophy:

<http://www.jimpryor.net/teaching/guidelines/writing.html>

David Chalmers' guidelines for philosophical discussion:

<http://consc.net/norms.html>