

ANCIENT PHILOSOPHY

Philosophy 347C = Classics 347C = Religious Studies 356C

Fall 2005

Mondays-Wednesdays-Fridays, 2:00-3:00

Busch 211

Description

This course examines the high-water marks of philosophy in ancient Greece and Rome, focusing primarily on Plato and Aristotle. A wide range of philosophical problems will be discussed, including the nature of the good life, the justification of knowledge, and the ultimate nature of mind and world. Attention will be paid to how these problems unfolded in their historical context and to how the ancient treatments of them compare to contemporary efforts.

Instructor

Eric Brown

office: Busch 105

phone: 935-4257

email: eabrown@wustl.edu

hours: Thursdays, 2:30-4:00, and by appointment

Prerequisites

One previous course in philosophy, or the permission of the instructor.

Requirements

To save paper and time in class, I will make some information, including some assignments, available via email and the web (at <http://artsci.wustl.edu/~eabrown/347.html>). So every student needs to check the email account that is listed in his or her WebSTAC profile (and needs to make sure that the inbox for that account is not full!). Second, with the same goals in mind, I require that every assignment be submitted as an RTF file attached to an email sent to eabrown@wustl.edu. Unfortunately, there are some glitches with artsci's Webmail, and so it is sometimes difficult for me to read attachments made by Mac OS X's Mail

program. If you'd like to send me a test document to check, please do so. Alternatively, be sure to send your attachment via Webmail.

Grades will be based on four factors.

(1) Satisfactory performance in class. The class will proceed by a blend of lecture and discussion. All students are expected to be ready and willing to participate. Readiness to participate requires having carefully studied the required reading. Mere reading does not suffice. Most of what we are reading is difficult, and some of it is extremely difficult. The following strategy is recommended:

- (a) Well before class, read through the entire required reading once, pushing past puzzling passages and trying to get a sense of what the aim of the whole selection is. (This should take 30 minutes or so.)
- (b) Then, carefully work through the required reading (or the part of the required reading that is listed for special attention by the notation 'esp.') and create an outline of it on your computer. (This should take between one and two hours.)
- (c) In class, raise questions that you have about the passage, and add notes to a hardcopy of your outline. (If you have to miss class, you are responsible for what was said and for getting any handouts or assignments from the Tesis page for the course. Contact a fellow student for notes.)
- (d) After class, reread part or all of the passage and revise your outline on your computer (and keep a hardcopy of the revised outline in your file for the class).

The more work you put in to prepare for class and to review after class, the more you will get out of class, the easier the assignments will be, and the less work you will need to put in at the end of the semester before the exam. As hard as readiness to participate is, willingness to participate is probably harder for most of you, because willingness requires the gumption to ask what you think are naïve questions, to raise what you think are mere tangents, and to volunteer answers that you think are probably wrong. *Participation is not a formal part of the grade, but the instructor reserves the right to give bonus points to students who participate well.*

(2) Five short outlines. Over the course of the semester, each student is required to submit five outlines. An outline is a printed analysis (in outline form) of the day's required reading. The default grade for an outline that meets the description of the previous sentence is 18 points. An especially clear and perceptive outline will receive 20 points. Significantly confused or problematic outlines will receive 16 points. Obviously slapdash "efforts" will receive 14 points. Each student can choose when to submit his or her

outlines, within the following guidelines: a total of five must be submitted and at least one must be submitted in each of units two, three, and four. Outlines must be sent as email attachments to eabrown@wustl.edu before the class begins and will not under any circumstances be accepted late. Everyone is strongly encouraged to submit multiple outlines for unit two, to improve this skill early in the term. *20 points each, for 100 possible points*

(3) Two short papers. Two papers of 1250-1750 words will be due, one for unit three (Plato) and one for unit four (Aristotle). Starting on **Monday, October 10**, a set of paper topics will be posted each week for papers that are due as an email attachment to eabrown@wustl.edu the following Monday, at noon. (This deadline is firm, and any paper submitted late will be downgraded at the rate of 10 points per 24 hours or fraction thereof.) You are free to choose the week that you write, but you must write on one of the topics assigned that week. Also, you must write one of your papers during unit three and the other during unit four. Please use your freedom wisely, and write when you have the time and interest. I will try to return papers in class one week after they are turned in, but I may fail to be this prompt if many people write in the same week. Since you may want to have your first paper back in your hands before you write your second paper, you need to know that I cannot promise a speedy return on your first paper if you write it late in unit three. I will post a handout on writing philosophy papers to provide some guidelines about the standards for these papers. *100 points each*

(4) A final exam. The exam will be divided into three parts. The first part will require identifying a set of quotations from our reading, the second will require writing an interpretive essay about some general topic in the course, and the third will require analyzing an argument that is from one of our authors but not from one of our required readings. You will be allowed to consult your texts (but not your notes) during the exam, and the lists of quotations and topics will give you some options. Moreover, the exam is not designed to stump anyone. There is a final exam in this course only because I want to encourage you to review the entire semester's material and to reflect on the general themes of the course. *200 points*

Five hundred total points are possible. I will set the benchmarks for quality grades after I have seen the final distribution of points, but it will be at least as favorable as the standard scale (97% for an A+, 93% for an A, 90% for an A-, 87% for a B+, 83% for a B, etc.). In order to pass, students taking the class pass/fail must complete all the graded requirements with no worse than a 70% on any of them, and they must score a total of at least 380 points.

Two final notes. First, all students should know that help is available from the Disability Resource Center (935-4062) and the Center for Advanced Learning (935-5970), and I am happy to cooperate with them.

Second, any student whose work does not conform to the University policy on academic integrity, printed in the Course Listings, will automatically fail the course, and will be subject to University disciplinary action. Everything you turn in must be your own work, and it must have been written specifically for this class. I take this rule very seriously; if I were the academic integrity committee, the University would expel you for work that does not conform to the policy on academic integrity.

Texts

The following required texts are available in the bookstore in Mallinckrodt:

Ackrill, ed. A New Aristotle Reader (Princeton)

Cooper, ed. Plato: Complete Works (Hackett)

Curd, ed. A Presocratics Reader (Hackett)

Inwood and Gerson, eds. Hellenistic Philosophy: Introductory Readings (Hackett)

Please use these editions, to keep worries about translation to a minimum in this class.

Syllabus

W 8-31 Introduction to Ancient Greek Philosophy

After the first class, please review The Presocratics, pp. viii-ix and 1-11.

UNIT ONE: "PRESOCRATIC" PHILOSOPHY

The works of the earliest Greek philosophers are lost, but some people later in antiquity quoted from these works or reported on their contents. Thus, we have "fragments" of the lost works (quotations) and "testimonies" concerning what they said. By careful study of these fragments and testimonies, we can reconstruct what the earliest Greek philosophers were saying. In this course, we will be reading the fragments of three early Greek philosophers who had a lasting impact, and all citations of these philosophers should be to the fragment and, if applicable, line numbers, as they are enumerated in our Presocratics Reader.

F 9-2 Parmenides, fr. 1-19, esp. fr. 1-7

M 9-5 NO CLASS — Labor Day

W	9-3	Parmenides, fr. 8, lines 1-49
F	9-5	Parmenides, fr. 8, line 50 - fr. 19
M	9-12	Anaxagoras, fr. 1-27
W	9-14	Empedocles, esp. fr. 28-51
F	9-16	Empedocles, esp. fr. 52-65

UNIT TWO: SOCRATES

Socrates of Athens, for many the prototypical philosopher, wrote nothing, but he influenced scores of young Athenians, many of whom wrote dialogues that featured him as a character. He is featured in most of Plato's dialogues, though he says very different things in different ones. Many scholars think that some of Plato's dialogues represent Socrates more or less as he really was and that others make Socrates say things that the real Socrates never would have said. In unit two, we'll read two works that capture what many people think is the historical Socrates. Note that Plato's works are standardly cited by "Stephanus numbers," which are printed in the margins of every major text and translation of his works; these numbers represent the pagination of the first great scholarly edition of Plato's works in printed books, by Henri Estienne (Latinized as "Stephanus") in 1578. In this class, all citations of Plato's works should be to the Stephanus numbers.

M	9-19	NO CLASS — Instructor out of town
W	9-21	Plato, <u>Euthyphro</u> , esp. 2a-9d
F	9-23	Plato, <u>Euthyphro</u> , esp. 9e-11e
M	9-26	Plato, <u>Euthyphro</u> , esp. 11e-15e
W	9-28	Plato, <u>Gorgias</u> 447a-461b
F	9-30	Plato, <u>Gorgias</u> 461b-468e
M	10-3	Plato, <u>Gorgias</u> 468e-481b
W	10-5	Plato, <u>Gorgias</u> 481b-492c
F	10-7	Plato, <u>Gorgias</u> 492d-523a

UNIT THREE: PLATO

We now turn to Plato's dialogues in which the character Socrates says things that seem not to reflect what the real Socrates thought. This will be nothing but a glimpse of Plato's remarkably inventive and varied contributions to philosophy; his works are so imaginative and fertile that it has been said that all of western philosophy is nothing but footnotes to Plato. Again, in this class, all citations of Plato's works should be to the Stephanus numbers.

M	10-10	Plato, <u>Phaedo</u> 57a-69e
W	10-12	Plato, <u>Phaedo</u> 69e-84b
F	10-14	NO CLASS — Instructor out of town
M	10-17	Plato, <u>Phaedo</u> 84c-102a
W	10-19	Plato, <u>Phaedo</u> 102a-118a
F	10-21	NO CLASS — Fall Break
M	10-24	Plato, <u>Symposium</u> 201d-212c
W	10-26	Plato, <u>Parmenides</u> 126a-131e
F	10-28	Plato, <u>Parmenides</u> 131e-135c

UNIT FOUR: ARISTOTLE

Aristotle studied in Plato's Academy for some eighteen years, and his way of explaining the world permanently changed philosophy. Aristotle's works are standardly cited by the "Bekker numbers" that appear in the margins of every reputable edition and translation. "Bekker numbers" reflect the pagination of the edition of Aristotle's works put together by I. Bekker in the nineteenth century. In this class, all citations of Aristotle's works should be to the Bekker numbers.

M	10-31	Aristotle, <u>Categories</u> 1-2
W	11-2	Aristotle, <u>Categories</u> 3-5
F	11-4	Aristotle, <u>Physics</u> I 1, 7
M	11-7	Aristotle, <u>Physics</u> II 1-6
W	11-9	Aristotle, <u>Physics</u> II 7-9
F	11-11	NO CLASS — Instructor out of town

M	11-14	Aristotle, <u>On the Soul</u> II 1-3
W	11-16	Aristotle, <u>Metaphysics</u> XII 1-5
F	11-18	Aristotle, <u>Metaphysics</u> XII 6-7
M	11-21	Aristotle, <u>Metaphysics</u> XII 8-10
W	11-23	NO CLASS — Thanksgiving Break
F	11-25	NO CLASS — Thanksgiving Break

UNIT FIVE: HELLENISTIC PHILOSOPHY

Historians use the word 'Hellenistic' to describe the Greek-speaking world during the time between the division of Alexander the Great's Macedonian empire (on Alexander's death in 323 BCE) and the birth of the Roman Empire with Octavian's victory at Actium in 31 BCE. During this period, Plato's Academy continued to flourish, but its leaders decided that the real lesson of Plato's writing was skepticism, that is, the view that one should suspend judgment about everything and continue inquiring (skeptikos=inquirer). Philosophers who did not suspend judgment followed either Epicurus or Zeno of Citium. (Zeno and his followers were dubbed "Stoics" because they gathered in the Athenian agora at the Stoa poikilê (=painted portico); followers of Epicurus were just called Epicureans.) Epicureans, Stoics, and skeptics were all enormously influential on the subsequent history of western philosophy. Unfortunately, though, their influence depends upon summaries written at the very end of the Hellenistic period or after. Writings by Epicurus, Zeno, and other great Hellenistic philosophers are largely lost. (Epicurus' three letters and two collections of his maxims are exceptions.) We rely on the summaries and quotations provided by later authors such as Cicero (106-43 BCE) and Diogenes Laertius (3rd c. CE). Aside from two letters and a collection of maxims attributed to Epicurus, we will read excerpts from later summaries; 'IG' here prefaces page numbers in our text of readings about Hellenistic philosophy.

M	11-28	Diogenes Laertius, excerpts on the life of Epicurus (IG 3-5) Epicurus, <u>Letter to Menoecus</u> (IG 28-31) Epicurus, <u>The Principal Doctrines</u> (IG 32-36) Cicero, excerpts on Epicurean ethical views (IG 56-63)
W	11-30	Epicurus, <u>Letter to Herodotus</u> (IG 5-19)
F	12-2	Cicero, excerpts on the Epicurean view of atomic motion (IG 45-49) Lucretius, <u>On the Nature of Things</u> 2.216-293 (IG 64-65)
M	12-5	Diogenes Laertius, excerpts on Stoic ethics (IG 190-203) Cicero, excerpts on Stoic ethics (IG 236-242) Miscellaneous excerpts on Stoic ethics (IG 232-233)

W	12-7	John Stobaeus, <u>Anthology</u> II 7.5-10 (IG 203-219)
F	12-9	John Stobaeus, <u>Anthology</u> II 7.11-12 (IG 203-232)
M	12-12	Miscellaneous excerpts on Stoic view of fate (IG 179-190)
TBA		optional review session
T	12-20	final exam, 6:00 - 8:00 pm