

# PHIL0001: Ancient Philosophy

Term 1, 2019/20

**Lecturer: Merrick Anderson (room TBD)**

**Teaching Assistants: TBD**

**Place and Time: TBD**

## Overview and Objectives

This course examines select ideas from the pre-Socratic philosophers, the sophists, Plato, Aristotle and the later Greeks. We will study a variety of intellectual innovations made by the Ancient Greeks, including their important contributions to (what we now call) epistemology, metaphysics and philosophical methodology, though particular emphasis will be placed on ethical topics. Specific questions to be discussed include: What is knowledge, and how is it possible? What is the value of a definition? What is virtue, and what is its relation to happiness? What is the good life for a human being? We will also think about the relevance of Ancient Greek philosophical positions to our own lives and to our own understanding of the world. In doing so, we will test the staying power of Plato and Aristotle's thought and, more importantly, put into action the Socratic sentiment that the unexamined life is not worth living.

## Requirements and Evaluation

There will be two 'problem-set' assignments throughout the term as well as one final paper. The first assignment will be short and will introduce students to some of the fundamentals of writing philosophy papers; the second assignment will increase in length and build on these fundamentals; for the final paper, students will be expected to write a complete, polished essay. Students will have the opportunity to write practice papers to help prepare for their final paper.

Attending classes regularly and participating in tutorials is mandatory.

## Administrative Issues

*Late Assignments:* Late work will be marked down 1/3 of a letter grade (from an A- to a B+, for example) for the first two days an assignment is late and each day after that, unless there are legitimate extenuating circumstances. Please ask in advance for any extension.

*Please familiarize yourself with the university's policies on plagiarism and abide by the University's rules and guidelines.*

## Required Texts

Readings in Ancient Greek Philosophy: From Thales to Aristotle, (ed.), S. Marc Cohen, Patricia Curd, and C.D.C. Reeve (2016).

The remaining readings (including recommended readings) will be posted online via Moodle.

## Schedule

### **Week 1. Introduction and The Presocratics**

Read Cohen, Kirk, and Reeve – Xenophanes and Parmenides (Sections 4 and 6)

Suggested further reading:

D. Sedley, "Parmenides and Melissus," in A.A. Long (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Early Greek Philosophy* (1999): 113-32

### **Week 2. The Sophists on Justice and Moral Responsibility**

Read Cohen, Kirk, and Reeve – Protagoras, Gorgias and Antiphon (Sections 14.1, 14.2 and 14.5)

Suggested further reading:

R. Barney, "Gorgias's *Encomium of Helen*," in Eric Schliesser (ed.), *Ten Neglected Classics of Philosophy* (2017): 1-25

### **Week 3. Plato's *Euthyphro*: How do we define piety?**

Read Cohen, Kirk, and Reeve – *Euthyphro*

Suggested further reading:

C. Taylor, "The End of the 'Euthyphro,'" *Phronesis* 27.2 (1982): 109-118

### **Week 4. Plato's *Meno*: What is knowledge? How do we investigate?**

Read Cohen, Kirk, and Reeve – *Meno*

Suggested further reading:

G. Fine, "Inquiry in the *Meno*," in R. Kraut (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Plato* (1992): 200-26

### **Week 5. Plato's *Republic*: What is justice? What kind of good is it?**

Read Cohen, Kirk, and Reeve – *Republic*, Books I and II

Suggested further reading:

T. Irwin, "Republic 2: Questions about justice," in G. Fine (ed.), *Plato 2*, (1999): 164-85

## **Reading Week – November 4-10**

### **Week 6. Plato's *Republic*: Parts and virtues of the soul**

Read Cohen, Kirk, and Reeve – *Republic*, Books IV and IX

Suggested further reading:

H. Lorenz, "The analysis of the soul in Plato's *Republic*" in G. Santas (ed.), *The Blackwell Guide to Plato's Republic* (2006): 146-165

### **Week 7. Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics*: Choice and moral responsibility**

Read Cohen, Kirk, and Reeve – *Nicomachean Ethics*, Book III.1-5

Suggested further reading:

S. Bobzien, "Choice and Moral Responsibility," in R. Polansky (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Aristotle's Nicomachean Ethics* (2014): 81-109

**Week 8. Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics*: The human good, the *ergon* argument and happiness**

Read Cohen, Kirk, and Reeve – *Nicomachean Ethics*, Book I and Book X.6–8

Suggested further reading:

C.D.C Reeve, "Beginning and Ending with *Eudaimonia*," in R. Polansky (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Aristotle's Nicomachean Ethics* (2014): 14-33

**Week 9. Aristotle's *Physics*: Not-being and hylomorphism**

Read Cohen, Kirk, and Reeve – *Physics*, Book I.7-8; and *Metaphysics*, VII.1-4.

Suggested further reading:

C. Witt, "Hylomorphism in Aristotle," *The Journal of Philosophy* 84.11 (1987): 673-9

**Week 10. Epicurus: Pleasure and pleasure**

A.A. Long and D. Sedley, "Epicureanism, Section 21: Pleasure," from *The Hellenistic Philosophers* (1987): 112-24

Suggested further reading:

J. Annas, "Epicurus on Pleasure and Happiness," *Philosophic Topics* 15.2 (1987): 5-21