

PHIL 2111
History of Ancient Philosophy
Spring 2014; TR 2:20PM - 03:35PM
Smith 115

Our goal in this class is to give a systematic overview of the history of Ancient Greek philosophy, beginning with the Presocratics and ending with Greek and Roman Stoicism and Epicureanism. We will treat a range of topics in metaphysics, epistemology, ethics, and political philosophy, but we will preface these topics with a brief look at Hesiod's *Theogony* and the ways that *Theogony* both initiates and resists natural philosophy. After we conclude our discussion of Hesiod and the Presocratics, we will examine the philosophical views of both Socrates and Plato, taking special care to consider different accounts of the relationship between these two men. We then turn to Aristotle, both for his critique of Plato and for his own contributions to metaphysics and ethics. We end by looking at ethical developments in the Epicurean and Stoic movements, and conclude with Lucretius's thoughts on the nature of death.

Instructor: Prof. Laura Papish (LauraPapish@gwu.edu)
Office Hours: Thursdays 4:00-6:30pm in 525A Phillips Hall
Office number: (202) 994-4168

Required course texts: You have only one textbook to purchase, and it is available in the GWU bookstore. However, there will be PDF supplements emailed to you at various points throughout the semester.

1. *Readings in Ancient Greek Philosophy: From Thales to Aristotle*, edited by S. Marc Cohen, Patricia Curd, and C.D.C. Reeve. Please make sure to purchase the 4th edition.

Expectations and Policies:

The syllabus: The syllabus is like the law; ignorance of it is no excuse. I also reserve the right to change the syllabus as the class proceeds.

Our roles: While I will act as a facilitator, the course will be driven by **your** concerns, questions, and powers of philosophical reflection. As such, respectful discussion and diligent preparation constitute the lifeblood of this class. It is imperative that you come to class with the material read, a willingness to speak your mind and listen to your classmates, and, of course, a strong work ethic.

Technology: Laptops, cell phones, ipods, ipads and any other electronic device that I do not fully understand how to use are **not allowed in class**. I have zero tolerance for ringing, buzzing, clickety-clack noises and sneaky texting, and students who cannot respect these rules will be asked to leave our classroom for the day. I am in theory willing to make exceptions to this rule, but since I am so skeptical that laptops help and

- Bear in mind that email works best as a formal or semi-formal mode of communication. So if you would like a reply to your email, please make sure you have included the proper salutation (e.g., Hi Laura, Dear Laura, etc.).

University Policy on Religious Holidays: Students should notify faculty during the first week of the semester of their intention to be absent from class on their day(s) of religious observance.

Academic Integrity: I personally support the GW Code of Academic Integrity. It states: "Academic dishonesty is defined as cheating of any kind, including misrepresenting one's own work, taking credit for the work of others without crediting them and without appropriate authorization, and the fabrication of information." For the remainder of the code, see: <http://www.gwu.edu/~ntegrity/code.html>

Support for Students Outside the Classroom:

Disability Support Services (DSS) 202-994-8250

Any student who may need an accommodation based on the potential impact of a disability should contact the Disability Support Services office in the Marvin Center, Suite 242, to establish eligibility and to coordinate reasonable accommodations. For additional information please refer to: <http://gwired.gwu.edu/dss/>

University Counseling Center (UCC) 202-994-5300

The University Counseling Center (UCC) offers 24/7 assistance and referral to address students' personal, social, career, and study skills problems. Services for students include:

- Crisis and emergency mental health consultations
- Confidential assessment, counseling services (individual and small group), and referrals
- Visit: <http://gwired.gwu.edu/counsel/CounselingServices/AcademicSupportServices>

Security

In the case of an emergency, if at all possible, the class should shelter in place. If the building that the class is in is affected, follow the evacuation procedures for the building. After evacuation, seek shelter at a predetermined rendezvous location.

Evaluation:

1. Unannounced reading quizzes during class meetings: There will be somewhere between 2 and 26 unannounced quizzes throughout the course of the term. There are no makeup quizzes, however you may be excused from a quiz if you provide written documentation from a university official or had a documented and sufficiently serious medical illness. These quizzes are designed solely to ensure that you are putting a good faith effort into your reading – in other words, they are meant to be pretty easy. Your single lowest quiz grade will be dropped. **15% of your final grade.**

C) You will be able to understand the motivations behind subsequent philosophical developments, particularly in the Medieval and Early Modern periods.

Tentative schedule: Any changes will be announced, and you should **absolutely expect changes to be made**. We will discuss readings and topics for however long you want and need. This may require eliminating some readings, adding others if people simply adore some topic, moving things forward or back in the schedule. Unless noted otherwise, all readings can be found in your textbook; readings labeled "PDF" will be emailed to you as a PDF attachment.

Topic 1: Presocratic Thought

- Sophocles' *Antigone*, handout
- PDF: Highlighted selections from Hesiod's *Theogony*; Xenophon, Fragments No. 6-9, 13, 15, 22, 24; Heraclitus, Fragments No. 7, 11, 45, 110
- The Milesians: Thales, Anaximander, Anaximenes
- Heraclitus, Parmenides, and Zeno (Zeno is tentative)
- The Sophists

Topic 2: Socrates and Plato

- PDF: Transition to Socrates and Plato through Thucydides, *History of the Peloponnesian War*, Book 2.34-46 (Pericles' Funeral Oration)
- *Apology*
- *Crito*
- *Euthyphro*
- *Protagoras*
- *Meno*
- *Symposium* (selections)
- *Republic* (some later books might be cut)

Topic 3: Aristotle

- *Posterior Analytics*
- *Physics*, everything except VIII.6
- *Categories*
- *Metaphysics* I.1-4, 6, 9 and VII.1-4, 6, 10-11, 13, 15, 17
- *Physics* VIII.6 and *Metaphysics* XII.6-9
- *Parts of Animals* (tentative)
- *Nicomachean Ethics and Politics* (Amendments here will be announced. We will probably cut chunks of 6 and 10 and supplement our textbooks selections with additional passages on friendship from Books 8 and 9 of the Nic Ethics. If we run low on time, there will be cuts to the *Politics*)

Topic 4: Hellenistic Philosophy, esp. Stoic and Epicurean Ethics and views on death

- PDF: *Hellenistic Philosophy*, pp. 190-260
- PDF: *Hellenistic Philosophy*, pp. 28-40, 42-45, 56-63, 95-103
- PDF: Lucretius, Book 3 of *On the Nature of things*