

PL 241—Ancient Philosophy
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"[Socrates] was the first to show that at all times and in every place, in everything that happens to us, daily life gives us the opportunity to do philosophy." --Plutarch, Whether a Man Should Engage in Politics When He Is Old

"The unexamined life is not worth living for human beings." --Plato, Apology 38a

"For this is an experience which is characteristic of a philosopher, this wondering: this is where philosophy begins and nowhere else." --Plato, Theaetetus 155d

"All men by nature desire to understand." --Aristotle, Metaphysics I.1

"When anyone asked [Diogenes the Cynic] where he came from, he said, 'I am a citizen of the world.'" --Diongenes Laertius, Life of Diogenes the Cynic

Course Description:

Ancient Greece is a crucial place to begin investigating our own ideas and institutions. Nietzsche once suggested that properly reading these first entries in the diary of Western culture is more difficult than might appear to be the case. For the ancient Greeks and Romans, many of the inquiries that we now see as fundamentally separated belonged together; to discover something about the structure of the *kosmos* or "world order" was at the same time to discover something important about one's own humanity--and vice versa. The love of wisdom (*philosophia*) that inquired into these matters was not merely a set of doctrines but a whole **way of life** in which these interrelations were uncovered and expressed. In this course we will investigate this notion of philosophy with an eye to questions about whether we should attempt to re-appropriate ancient Greek insights into the natures of world, society, and self. Beyond understanding the ideas and questions of the ancient philosophers, this course prompts students to identify and analyze their own ideas about these questions and challenges students to conceive of philosophy, as the ancients did, as a means of **personal transformation**.

Course Objectives:

The general aim of a philosophy course is, as Kant wrote, to "have the courage to use your *own* mind!" More specifically, as a course that satisfies the Core Curriculum "Values" requirement, students in this course should:

1. Become more skillful in closely reading and analyzing philosophical texts in order to understand them as well as to evaluate them
2. Identify the fundamental questions, theories, vocabulary, and problems in ancient Greek philosophy

3. Identify and question their own beliefs about knowledge, reality, free will, ethics, & society
4. Recognize that the questions and theories of ancient philosophers are relevant and applicable to real-life decision-making in today's world
5. Debate effectively (in speaking as well as in writing), including: expositing positions, organizing thoughts logically, analyzing and evaluating evidence and arguments, accounting for a variety of viewpoints, and speaking directly to fellow students in class

Required Books:

A Presocratics Reader, ed. Curd, trans. McKirahan (Hackett Publishing)
 Plato, *Complete Works*, ed. John Cooper (Hackett Publishing)
 Aristotle, *Selected Works*, tr. Apostle and Gerson (Peripatetic Press)
 Epictetus, *The Handbook* (Hackett Publishing)

Required E-Res Essays (print out your own copy and bring it to class):

John Gatto, "The Seven Lesson Schoolteacher" from *Dumbing Us Down*
 Michael Shenefelt, "Why Study the Greeks? Check the Map" from *The Chronicle*,
 3/7/2003
 Richard McKirahan, "The Sources of Early Greek Philosophy" & "Hesiod and the
 Beginnings of Greek Philosophy and Science" from *Philosophy Before Socrates*
 Julia Annas, "Detachment and Authority" from *Plato: A Very Short Introduction*
 Raja Halwani, "Homer and Aristotle" from *The Simpsons and Philosophy*
 Marie-Odile Goulet-Cazé, "Cynicism," from *Greek Thought: A Guide to Classical Knowledge*
 William F. Lawhead, "Classical Philosophy after Aristotle " from *The Ancient Voyage*
 Julia Annas, "Stoicism" from *Voices of Ancient Philosophy*
 Peter Singer, "One Community," from *One World: The Ethics of Globalization*

Videos on Reserve:

"Thank You for Smoking" (2005, directed by Jason Reitman)
 "The Shawshank Redemption" (1994, directed by Frank Darabont)
 "The Cave" (an animated allegory of the cave narrated by Orson Wells)

Office hours: Please take advantage of my office hours to discuss any problems you have with the reading assignments, writing assignments, discussions in class, meaning of life, etc. Do not feel that you must have a carefully formulated set of questions to pose before you come to see me. The articulation of the problem is often the main stumbling block; so if something is an issue for you, don't hesitate to talk with me about it.

Grading: Your grade in this course will be based on the following:

Participation (includes reflection papers)	= 20%
Gadfly Paper	= 20%
"Defacing the Currency" project	= 10%
Quizzes	= 15%
Midterm Exam	= 15%
Final Exam	= 20%

Course Requirements:

A. Reading and the Reflection Papers

“To read well, that is, to read true books in a true spirit, is a noble exercise, and one that will task the reader more than any exercise which the customs of the day esteem. It requires a training such as the athletes underwent, the steady intention almost of the whole life to this object.

Books [especially great books] must be read as deliberately and as reservedly as they were written.” –Thoreau, *Walden*

One might mistakenly think that simply running one’s eyes over the assigned reading means that one is prepared for class. This assumption neglects reflection. The way to get the most out of your reading and out of class is to spend time BEFORE CLASS *thinking about* each reading so that you will be prepared to answer fact-type questions (e.g., what did Aristotle say about the human function in this reading?) as well as evaluation-type questions (e.g., do you agree with Plato when he has Socrates say that the unexamined life is not worth living?).

To assist in your reflection on the readings, each student must write a short reflection paper for each class for which a reading assignment is given. A reflection paper must:

1. state the main point of the reading (i.e., the main thing that the author is trying to say).
2. ask a question about the reading (make sure it is in the form of a question). This question should be an “unanswered question” by which I mean that it should be an interesting and *difficult* question (i.e., one to which there is no easy or obvious answer). If, after stating the question, you can provide a simple, snappy answer to it, then the question is not a good one.
3. explain why your question is *interesting*, *difficult*, and/or *important to you* (not to me, not to your classmates, not Plato...just YOU!). Do NOT attempt to answer your question in place of this explanation, and don’t choose questions that are not interesting to you.

- These papers are due in class and NO LATE PAPERS WILL BE ACCEPTED FOR ANY REASON EVER!
- Each paper must be clearly labeled to correspond to the reading (note the name of the author of the reading, the name of reading—books titles should be italicized, while article titles should be in quotation marks—and the pages numbers).
- To do well on this assignment, it is important that you follow the directions strictly.
- Reflection papers count toward the participation grade.

B. Attendance: All students are expected to attend *all* classes. If you must be absent, it is advisable to (1) either call or e-mail me *before* class to explain and (2) provide proper documentation of illness (note from health center), personal or family emergency (note from Dean of Students), or a required university event (note from coach/instructor). As detailed in the student handbook, missing six or more classes (including those that are “excused”) shall result in failure of the course.

C. Class Participation:

1. My Assumptions:

- a. Every one of us is able to contribute something to our class discussions.
- b. No one knows everything.
- c. You are citizens (not consumers) at this university.
- d. Questions are just as important as comments.
- e. Expressing agreement with a classmate's comment is just as valuable as expressing disagreement.
- f. Coming to class unprepared is disrespectful to your peers who are prepared.
- g. Some of you are shy about speaking publicly.
- h. Some of you don't believe you can learn from class discussions with your peers.
- i. Those of you who take more time to ruminate sometimes resent students who appear to "shoot their mouths off."
- j. Some of you would prefer to be fed information directly by the instructor.
- k. Many of you wonder why this and other courses ask students to participate.
- l. Some of you wonder what exactly an instructor expects when s/he asks you to participate and how this will be graded.
- m. Laptop computers may be used in class only with proper documentation from the SU Health and Counseling Center.
- n. **Cell phones should be entirely silent and stowed in your bag for the duration of all class meetings.**

2. Why participate? There are two main reasons to participate in your classes. First, pedagogical research has demonstrated that students learn more when they actively participate in class discussions. Second, all students have a civic responsibility to offer their questions and thoughts so that the entire class can collaboratively learn the course material. Furthermore, participating in class will help you practice having thoughtful conversations outside of class.

3. Class format: The format of this class will vary from day to day, including all of the following: recitation "lectures", conversations, debates, seminar. What I mean by recitation "lectures" is that when presenting new material, my presentation will include calling on students to elicit information about the readings. When class takes the form of a conversation I will ask students to discuss their responses to the texts and the issues they raise. Frequently there will be smaller group discussions—sometimes these will involve debating the strengths and weaknesses of theories and ideas, other times these will involve in-depth analysis of the day's topic.

4. Assistance: As soon as possible anyone who feels ill at ease should discuss with the instructor ways of easing oneself into participation.

5. Rubric: A participation grade will be assigned to each student based on which of the following regularly applied to her/him:

F = not physically present, or *severely detracting from* classroom discussion (e.g., **sleeping and/or behaving in a manner that is disrespectful such as checking and/or sending text messages and/or failing to silence cell phones**)

D = present physically but not mentally and/or not being prepared, *or detracting from* classroom discussion (e.g., **regular mid-class bathroom trips, being unprepared, not having text and classroom supplies with you**, having side conversations, daydreaming, making totally irrelevant comments, etc.)

C = **present, alert, and prepared for class** (e.g., having read required texts in at least a cursory way, bringing text and classroom supplies with you to class, reflecting in advance on the day's texts, **having written a reflection paper**, etc.), and **adding to the discussion but in only minimal ways**

B = present, alert, prepared for class (e.g., having read required texts with significant attention, bringing text and classroom supplies with you to class, reflecting in advance on the day's texts, having written a reflection paper, etc.), and **contributing to class discussion** (e.g., **communicating some understanding of the text, asking related questions, sharing ideas, maintaining an appropriate balance of talking & listening, etc.**)

A = present, alert, prepared (e.g., having read required texts thoroughly, bringing notes, text--**with significant passages marked**--and classroom supplies with you to class, reflecting in advance on the day's texts, having written a reflection paper as well as some additional questions to ask to further the conversation, etc.), and **making thoughtful contributions to classroom discussion based on engagement with the texts** (e.g., communicating one's understanding of the text and the overall course, posing related questions to both the instructor and fellow students, sharing ideas and responding to the ideas of others, maintaining an appropriate balance of talking and listening, **applying course material to personal experience; actively engaging in one's own learning**, etc.)

D. Quizzes and Exams: There shall be six unannounced quizzes throughout the semester as well as a midterm exam and a final exam. All quizzes and the exam will be cumulative. A missed quiz or exam earns a zero (unless permission for an alternative has been granted by the professor IN ADVANCE—and I do not automatically grant such requests). The lowest quiz grade will be dropped.

E. Writing: There will be a formal writing assignment of approximately 6 pages. In this assignment you will need to demonstrate both your understanding and evaluation of course texts. Details about this assignment will be announced well in advance of the due date. All papers must be submitted BOTH in hardcopy to me as well as in e-copy to turnitin.com. In advance of the due date you must set up an account (unless you already have one) at www.turnitin.com (the class ID # is 2333786 and the case-sensitive class password is Socrates).

Policy on Cheating, Plagiarism, and other forms of Academic Dishonesty:

All forms of plagiarism and cheating are prohibited. I follow the guidelines and University policy regarding the penalty for those identified as cheating or plagiarizing on exams and/or other assignments in this class (see the student handbook for maximum penalties and the definition of plagiarism). Students found

to be cheating on assignments will receive an F for the course. I reserve the right to have all student written assignments submitted in an electronic format for the expressed purpose of checking assignments for plagiarism against internet sources (including pay-sites for papers) using turnitin.com. If you are in doubt as to whether or not any of your assignments for this class constitute cheating or plagiarism, please discuss this with me BEFORE turning in an assignment.

Students with Disabilities:

If you are seeking an academic accommodation, it is essential that you have appropriate documentation on file with the University and present that documentation to me as early as possible in the semester. If you believe that you have a disability but have no documentation on file at Susquehanna and wish to discuss what steps can be taken to determine whether an accommodation is warranted, please contact the Counseling Center for further information and assistance. Some additional information is available at <http://www.susqu.edu/counseling/disabilities/>.

Tentative Schedule of Topics and Readings:

Week 1, Day 1 (8/25) Introductory session: Plato's Cave (from *Republic* VII)

Unit 1: What Is Ancient Philosophy?

A. Who is Socrates? What is philosophy? Can virtue be taught?

Week 1, Day 2 (8/27) Plato, *Protagoras* Stephanus pages 309a-319a7 (these are the marginal numbers) & Julia Annas, "Detachment and Authority" (**E-res**)

Week 1 Day 3 (8/29) Plato, *Protagoras* 319a8-338e

Week 2 Day 1 (9/1) Plato, *Protagoras* 339a-362a

Week 2 Day 2 (9/3) Plato, *Apology* 17a-35d

Week 2 Day 3 (9/5) Plato, *Apology* 35e-42a & John Gatto, "The Seven Lesson Schoolteacher" (**E-res**)

B. From Mythos to Logos: The Birth of Philosophy and Science

Week 3, Day 1 (9/8) Richard McKirahan, "The Sources of Early Greek Philosophy" & "Hesiod and the Beginnings of Greek Philosophy and Science" (**E-res**)

Week 3, Day 2 (9/10) Thales, Anaximander, and Anaximenes (*APR*, pp. 9-16)

Week 3, Day 3 (9/12) Pythagoreanism & Xenophanes (*APR*, pp. 17-28)

Week 4, Day 1 (9/15) Heraclitus (*APR*, pp. 29-41)

Week 4, Day 2 (9/17) Parmenides (*APR*, 43-51)

Week 4, Day 3 (9/19) The Sophists (*APR*, pp. 97-107)

Week 5, Day 1 (9/22) Discussion of Sophistry and "Thank You for Smoking"

Unit 2: Classical Greek Philosophy

A. Plato

Week 5, Day 2 (9/24) Plato, *Gorgias* 447a-461b2

Week 5, Day 3 (9/26) Plato, *Gorgias* 461b3-481b5

Week 6, Day 1 (9/29) Plato, *Gorgias* 481b6-501c

Week 6, Day 2 (10/1) Plato, *Gorgias* 501c-513e5

Week 6, Day 3 (10/3)	Plato, <i>Gorgias</i> 513e6-527e
Week 7, Day 1 (10/6)	Plato, <i>Crito</i> & Michael Shenefelt, "Why Study the Greeks? Check the Map" (E-res)
Week 7, Day 2 (10/8)	Debate: Should Socrates have escaped from prison? (Make sure to see "The Shawshank Redemption" by 10/10)
Week 7, Day 3 (10/10)	MIDTERM EXAM
Week 8, Day 1 (10/15)	Plato, <i>Phaedo</i> 57a-73a3
Week 8, Day 2 (10/17)	Plato, <i>Phaedo</i> 73a4-84b, 115b-118a
Week 8, Day 3 (10/20)	Plato, <i>Republic</i> IV. 429e6-444e5
Week 9, Day 1 (10/22)	Plato, <i>Republic</i> IX. 571a-592b
Week 9, Day 2 (10/24)	no class
Week 9, Day 3 (10/27)	Plato, <i>Symposium</i> 172a-201c
Week 10, Day 1 (10/29)	Plato, <i>Symposium</i> 201d-223d

B. Aristotle

Week 10, Day 2 (10/31)	Aristotle, <i>On the Soul</i> I.1, II.1-3
Week 10, Day 3 (11/3)	Aristotle, <i>Physics</i> II.1-4 & <i>Metaphysics</i> I.1-2, XII.6-10
Week 11, Day 1 (11/5)	Aristotle, <i>Nicomachean Ethics</i> I.1-6, 13
Week 11, Day 2 (11/7)	Aristotle, <i>Nicomachean Ethics</i> II.1-7
Week 11, Day 3 (11/10)	Aristotle, <i>Nicomachean Ethics</i> III.1-5 & VII.2-3
Week 12, Day 1 (11/12)	no class: read Aristotle, <i>Nicomachean Ethics</i> VIII.1-9, 16
Week 12, Day 2 (11/14)	no class: read Aristotle, <i>Nicomachean Ethics</i> X.7-8 & Raja Halwani, "Homer and Aristotle" (E-res)
Week 12, Day 3 (11/17)	discussion of Aristotle, <i>Nicomachean Ethics</i> VIII.1-9, 16, X.7-8, and Halwani
Week 13, Day 1 (11/19)	Aristotle, <i>Politics</i> I.1-2, III.4, 11

Unit 3: Hellenistic Philosophy: Cynicism, Stoicism, & Contemporary Cosmopolitanism

Week 13, Day 2 (11/21)	Marie-Odile Goulet-Cazé, "Cynicism" (E-res) & Lawhead, "Classical Philosophy After Aristotle" pp. 88-90 (E-res ; end before the section on Epicureanism)
Week 13, Day 3 (11/24)	Peter Singer, "One Community" from <i>One World</i> (E-res)
Week 14, Day 1 (12/1)	Stoicism: Epictetus, <i>The Handbook</i> & Annas, "Stoicism" (E-res) & Lawhead, "Classical Philosophy After Aristotle" pp. 94-99 (E-res ; end before the section on Skepticism)
Week 14, Day 2 (12/3)	"Defacing the Currency" projects
Week 14, Day 3 (12/5)	Final Session: study for final exam; bring in a list of all of your questions

N.B. The final exam will be held in our usual classroom at the time and date scheduled by the Registrar's Office. The final exam schedule is available on the Registrar's website.