

PHIL 332 Introduction to Ancient Greek Philosophy • Cathal Woods
Syllabus
Autumn 2006

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Office:.....
Hours: and by appointment

Texts

Reading in Ancient Greek Philosophy, Cohen, Curd and Reeve, Hackett
[survey book]

Check daily the Blackboard page for this class. Reading questions and handouts can be found here.

Course Goals

This course is an introduction to ancient Greek philosophy. We begin with the early scientific philosophers and introduce two issues which will pervade the term: 'What is there (really)?' and 'How is change possible?' We will then focus on the philosophies of Socrates, Plato and Aristotle, who have continued to be among the most influential figures in all of Western culture. As well as tackling the two questions just mentioned, they also explicitly tackle the ethical question 'How should one live?' and the epistemological partner to the metaphysical one above: '(How) Can we know what (really) is?' We end by looking at two schools which flourished after the death of Aristotle, the Epicureans and the Stoics, who take philosophy, influenced by physics, to be a guide to life.

Instructor's Responsibilities

As the class instructor, I take all of the following to be my responsibility:
to be adequately prepared to facilitate discussion and/or lecture in each class;
to encourage students to think for themselves;
to make the course interesting and engaging to the majority of students;
to make explanations clear, e.g. by using only everyday English and defined terms;
to treat all students with respect;
to grade all tests and papers impartially;
to be available for consultation;
to meet the course objectives to the greatest extent possible.

Student Responsibilities

If you are still attending class in Week 2, I take it that you have agreed that you will do all of the following:

- (i) to attend class;
- (ii) prepare for class by doing the reading and thinking about the issues;
- (iii) answer the reading questions;
- (iv) be prepared to be called on and to participate in class;
- (v) prepare for, take and review the mid-terms and final;
- (vi) work on written assignments and peer reviews.

The more you put into the class, the more you will get out of it. I guarantee that students who fulfill these responsibilities will learn more and enjoy the class more than those who do not.

As you can see from the 'Grading' section below, this class requires constant work throughout the quarter and the grade is based on many different requirements. This is *not* the sort of class where you can afford to miss a day or three. This is *not* the kind of class you can blow off until the final. However, with constant work, you should be able to do very well.

The Class

General Information

All participants (students, teacher, friends and family, roadies and groupies, etc.) are expected to be on time. (Pet Peeve: Please do not pack up your books and bags before the end of class. I find this annoying.) Feel free to bring food and drink. You are welcome to bring family and visiting friends to class.

Class Preparation

For each session, every participant is expected to have read any assigned reading, to have answered any assigned response-to-reading questions, and to be prepared to say at least one thing in class. To enable you to meet these requirements, the readings will be fairly short, and I will almost always supply you with questions to focus your attention. You might find the texts difficult to read, especially if you have not read any philosophy before. You are not alone! I recommend that you read through each reading at least twice, and that you *make notes* while you read, especially to any questions supplied.

Discussion

Class participation is extremely important, as it is where you develop speaking skills. You *must* make contributions to the class discussion. I understand that this policy will make shy students uncomfortable to begin with, but speaking, arguing and discussing are essential to the practice of philosophy. So it is necessary to develop the confidence and ability to speak philosophically. Any student may be called on at any time. (Learn to feel comfortable saying 'I'll pass', 'I don't know,' 'Can you repeat that?' etc.) Occasional inability to answer will not be held against you. If you have a *serious* problem with speaking *in class*, please inform me and you can instead arrange to discuss with me in office hours.

Note that discussion also involves *listening*, to the contributions of your classmates, so that you can (i) respond to them and (ii) learn from them. All participants should pay attention to what others have to say and take their opinions seriously. Give the speaker a chance to make his/her point before responding - don't interrupt.

I will sometimes find it necessary, perhaps due to time constraints, to leave discussion of one point to move on to another or to close the class. This does not at all reflect on the point just made or on those waiting to contribute.

See also *Grading: Class Participation* below.

Disability

VWC recognizes, and is sensitive to, students with special needs. In order to use accommodations, students must first register with the college's disability services co-

ordinator, Fayne Pearson, at 455-3246, and provide the college with appropriate, professional documentation. If you need accommodations in this course because of a documented disability, or if you have emergency medical information to share, please make an appointment to see me during my office hours.

Grades

Weekly Responses (10 @ 5% ea.)	50
Papers (1 @ 25%)	25
Attendance & Participation	25

Weekly Responses: Responses are due by e-mail to the entire class by 7 p.m. each Sunday evening. Responses are worth 5% each; your lowest scores will be dropped. These write-ups are one to two pages long (and definitely no more than two). Some standard types of response would be: to point to an unclarity in the text, such as a key term that is vague or ambiguous (with an explanation of why it is unclear), or giving an exegesis of a difficult passage (with an explanation of the difficulty); a questioning of whether a certain claim in the text is true (with reasons for thinking it is not true); a criticism of the argument in a text (with an explanation of why you think the conclusion does not follow from the premises); development of a corollary that follows from the position in the text. (These 2-pagers can provide practice in exploring and expressing your own ideas rather than the ideas you find in the reading and as such can serve as the basis for a Paper.)

Paper: In a paper you must show not only that you understand a particular topic, but present *and argue for* your own response. Papers are 5-10 pages in length. You are *required* to write a draft, which will be given to another member of the class for peer review. You will be required to review someone else's draft and this work will be graded. Peer reviews are worth 5%; the paper is worth 20%.

Attendance & Participation: See the section 'Discussion' above. Clearly articulating your thoughts is a crucial skill to develop, so participation is graded.

If you miss a class...

In Class 2, you will get contact info for a few other class members. Contact these people for class notes, assignments, etc. Be sure to check the web site and attend the next class in order to get any handouts.

N.B. 1: You are expected to be familiar with, and in compliance with, all provisions of the academic honesty section of the student handbook. All work submitted must be your own. Plagiarism is a failure to cite any ideas (either in quotation *or paraphrase*) that are not your own. Any plagiarism will be prosecuted.

N.B. 2: It is the student's responsibility to keep a copy of all written work, (and to collect work as it is returned.) For this reason, word processing of all documents is highly recommended.