

Philosophy 200
Ancient Philosophy
Fall 2008

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Opening Prayers

O Ineffable Creator, true Fountain of light and wisdom, shed the brightness of Thy light upon the darkness of my understanding. Grant me acuteness in understanding what I read, power to remember it, readiness in learning it, subtlety in interpreting it, and clearness in expressing it. Order the beginnings of my work, direct its progress, and bring it to fulfillment, through Christ our Lord. Amen.

—St. Thomas Aquinas

Course Description

This course will be an historical introduction to Ancient Greek philosophy. It will introduce the thought of the major philosophers of the period in a way that is both philosophical (looking at philosophical problems, views, and arguments) and historical (looking at the connections between individual philosophers and, to a lesser extent, at the relation between these philosophers and their culture).

The course will focus on three central aspects of Ancient Greek philosophy.

- (1) the logical tradition beginning with Socrates' search for definitions and culminating in Aristotle's *Organon*.
- (2) the speculative philosophical tradition beginning with Milesian philosophy of nature, facing a crisis in Parmenides' Challenge to the very possibility of a philosophy of nature, and culminating in the responses to that challenge offered by Democritus, Plato, & Aristotle (and in the distinction between the philosophy of nature & metaphysics).

- (3) the humanistic or practical tradition, receiving its first major articulation in the teaching of Socrates and culminating in the four schools of Plato, Aristotle, the Epicureans, and the Stoics.

This is no mere antiquarian study. Socrates is a perennial reference point in Western thought. Aristotle's logic offers important insights undervalued by many modern logicians. The debate between Aristotelians and Democriteans underlies philosophical thought about nature (including human nature) to this day. In addition, Aristotle's philosophy (in both its speculative and practical aspects) not only has a central place in the Catholic Intellectual Tradition but continues to have an important influence in the larger contemporary philosophical community, providing important insights into the nature of being and goodness.

In looking at these authors, we will do four things

- (1) develop an understanding of their *central concepts, theses, and arguments*. In other words, we will try to see the world as they saw it, to understand why they thought that the world must be understood in this way, and to see how their approaches might solve important philosophical problems
- (2) cultivate the skill of reading *Ancient Greek philosophical texts*.
- (3) place each philosopher in his *historical context*.
- (4) look at the major philosophers (Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, and Democritus) as founders of *intellectual traditions*. We will take particular note of how some of these traditions, in particular the Aristotelian tradition, has laid foundations for the Catholic Intellectual Tradition.

Required Readings

The following books will be used during the course and are available at the UST Bookstore:

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| For the pre-Socratics: | <i>The First Philosophers</i> , Robin Waterfield, ed. |
| For Socrates & Plato: | Plato, <i>Five Dialogues</i> , G. M. A Grube, trans.
Plato, <i>Gorgias</i> , Donald J. Zeyl, trans.
Plato, <i>Republic</i> , G. M. A Grube, trans. |
| For Aristotle: | <i>The Basic Works of Aristotle</i> , Richard McKeon, ed. |

Students who already own other editions of the works of Plato and Aristotle will not need to buy these editions, provided that their editions include standardized page numbers.

Grading

Course grades will be assigned on the basis of the following factors:

Class Attendance & Participation	15%
Written Homework	10%
Course Paper	25%
Mid-Term Examination	25%
Final Examination	25%

Students are expected to attend every class session. Students who must miss class due to illness or conflicting *obligations* should inform the instructor of the reason for their absence.

Written homework must be submitted on the day it is due. It will ordinarily be questions on or analysis of assigned reading passages.

The course paper will be a 6-8 page paper on a topic assigned by the instructor. The paper will involve at most a modest amount of additional reading. It will be due 20 November.

Examinations will be include short-answer and essay questions. Students will be expected to know the basic ideas of the authors studies and to demonstrate an understanding of the definitions of terms, of distinctions made, of theses, and of arguments offered.

Schedule of Readings

DATE	TOPIC	READING
4 Sep	Introduction	
9 Sep	The Ionian Naturalists The First Philosophers	<i>The First Philosophers</i> Introduction & Note on Texts pp. 3–48
11 Sep	Eleatic Philosophy Parmenides, Zeno & Melissus	<i>The First Philosophers</i> pp. 49–115
16 Sep	The Pluralists: Anaxagoras & Empedocles The Atomists: Leucippus & Democritus	<i>The First Philosophers</i> pp. 116–193
18 Sep	The Sophists & Socrates	<i>The First Philosophers</i> pp. 206–240 Plato, <i>Gorgias</i> (to 481b)
23 Sep	Socrates Ethics	Plato, <i>Gorgias</i> (481b to end)
25 Sep		Plato, <i>Republic</i> I
30 Sep	Theory of Definition	Plato, <i>Euthyphro</i>
2 Oct	On Trial	Plato, <i>Apology</i> Plato, <i>Crito</i> Plato, <i>Phaedo</i> 57a-61e, 114e-118a
7 Oct	Plato Anthropology	Plato, <i>Phaedo</i> 62a-114e
9 Oct	Theory of Forms	Plato, <i>Republic</i> Bks VI–VII (502d–541b <i>only</i>)
14 Oct	Critique	Plato, <i>Parmenides</i> (126a–135d)
16 Oct	The Study of Nature	Plato, <i>Republic</i> 528d-531b

DATE	TOPIC	READING
		Plato, <i>Timaeus</i> (53c–57d)
21 Oct	Aristotle Logic: Categories	<i>Categories</i> I–V VI–VIII (skim) X & XII <i>De Interpretatione</i> I
23 Oct	MID-TERM EXAMINATION	
28 Oct	Logic: Science & Demonstration	<i>Prior Analytics</i> I.1 <i>Posterior Analytics</i> I.1–2 <i>Topics</i> I.1–5 <i>Nicomachean Ethics</i> VI
30 Oct	Physics	<i>Physics</i> I.1 & 7 II. 1–3
4 Nov		<i>Physics</i> II.7–9 II. 1–2 IV.11 VII.1–2
6 Nov		
11 Nov		<i>Generation & Corruption</i> II.1–4 & 7–8
13 Nov	Biology: The Soul & Thought	<i>De Anima</i> I.1; II.1–3 & 5; III.3–5, 7–8
18 Nov	Metaphysics: History; The Four Causes	<i>Metaphysics</i> I.1–4, 10
20 Nov		<i>Metaphysics</i> IV.1–3; V.7–8 & VI.1–3
25 Nov	Categorial Being	<i>Metaphysics</i> VII.1–4, 13, 15, 17
4 Dec	Potential & Actual Being	<i>Metaphysics</i> IX.1–2, 5–6

DATE	TOPIC	READING
6 Dec	The Unmoved Mover	<i>Metaphysics</i> XII.6–9
11 Dec	Stoics	
13 Dec	Epicureans	To Be Announced
13 Dec	Skeptics	To Be Announced
19 Dec	1030–1230 EXAMINATION	