

Phil 003-900: History of Ancient Philosophy Online

Instructors: Devin Curry and Nabeel Hamid

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What is philosophy? How does it differ from science, religion, literature, and other modes of human discourse? This course traces the origins of philosophy as a discipline in the Western tradition in the thinkers of Ancient Greece and Rome. We will examine how "natural philosophers" such as Thales, Anaximander, and Heraclitus distinguished their inquiries from the teachings of poets such as Homer and Hesiod; how ancient atomism had its origins in a response to Parmenides' challenge to the very assumption that things change in the world; how Socrates reoriented the focus of philosophy away from the natural world and toward the fundamental ethical question, "how shall I live?"; how his pupil Plato and subsequently Aristotle developed elaborate philosophical systems that address the nature of reality, knowledge, and human happiness. Finally, we will examine the ways in which later thinkers such as the Epicureans and Stoics transformed and extended the earlier tradition.

Required Texts

- P. Curd, ed., *A Presocratics Reader*, 2nd ed. Hackett Publishing 2011.
- C. D. C. Reeve, ed., *A Plato Reader*. Hackett Publishing 2012.
- Plato, *Timaeus*, translated with introduction by D. Zeyl. Hackett Publishing 2000.
- T. Irwin and G. Fine, ed., *Aristotle: Selections*. Hackett Publishing 1995.
- B. Inwood and L. P. Gerson, ed., *The Stoics Reader*. Hackett Publishing 2008.
- B. Inwood and L. P. Gerson, ed., *The Epicurus Reader*. Hackett Publishing 1994.

Grading Breakdown

- Quizzes: 7%
- Discussion board posts: 18%
- 6-page paper on Plato: 25%
- 6-page paper on Aristotle: 25%
- Exam on Epicureans and Stoics: 25%

Schedule of Readings

Week 1: Presocratics

May 26

- Curd, Introduction
- Curd, chapter on the Milesians (Thales, Anaximander, Anaximenes)
- Curd, chapter on Xenophanes
- Curd, chapter on Heraclitus

May 28

- Curd, chapter on Parmenides
- Curd, chapter on Empedocles
- Curd, chapter on Anaxagoras
- Curd, chapter on Leucippus and Democritus

Week 2: Socrates

June 2

- Curd, chapters on Protagoras and Gorgias

Plato, *Apology of Socrates*

Plato, *Euthyphro*

June 4

Plato, *Meno*

Week 3: Plato's *Republic*

June 9

Plato, *Republic* (Books I, II, III, IV)

June 11

Plato, *Republic* (Books V, 472-end, VI, VII)

Week 4: Plato's *Timaeus*

June 16 (no reading, paper workshop)

June 18

Plato, *Timaeus*

Week 5: Aristotle on Reality and Nature

June 23

Aristotle, *Categories*: chapters 1-5

June 25

Aristotle, *Physics*: Book I chapters 7-9, Book II chapters 1-7

Week 6: Aristotle on Psychology and Theology

June 30

Aristotle, *Physics*: Book II, chapter 8

Aristotle, *De Anima* [*On the Soul*]: Book II, chapters 1-6, 12; Book III chapters 4-5

July 2

Aristotle, *Physics*: Book VIII chapters 1, 4-6, 8

Aristotle, *Metaphysics*: Book XII chapters 6-10

Week 7: Aristotle on Ethics

July 7 (no reading, paper workshop)

July 9

Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*: Book I 1-7, 13; Book II 1-6; Book III 6-7; Book VI 1-3, 5, 13; Book X 6-8.

Week 8: Epicureans

July 14

Epicurus, *Letter to Herodotus*, Letter to Pythocles (pp. 5-28)

Cicero, *On the nature of the Gods*, excerpts from Bk I (pp. 47-58)

Lucretius, *On the Nature of things* (selections) (pp. 65-67)

Epicurus, *Letter to Menoeceus* (pp. 28-31)

July 16

Epicurus, *Principal Doctrines* (pp. 32-36)

Epicurus, *Vatican Sayings* (pp. 36-40)

Cicero, *On Goals* (selections) (pp. 58-64)

Week 9: Stoics

July 21

Diogenes Laertius, *Lives of the Philosophers* (pp. 113-124)

Cicero, *On Goals* (selections) (pp. 151-157)

July 23

Cicero, selections (pp. 101-112)