Course Schedule

The following schedule will almost certainly be modified as the course progresses. Students are responsible for being aware of announcements made in class that reflect changes in the course.

Week 1 (Jan. 13) Introduction, Pre-philosophical thought, the nature of the turn toward philosophy, what philosophy is and how that effects expectations for philosophy students.

Week 2 (Jan. 20) Ionians: Thales, Anaximander, Anaximenes (What is the underlying stuff?), Heraclitus: flux, fire, Logos.


(Thursday, Jan. 29: No class or office hours.)


Week 7 (Feb. 24) The Meno [cont.]

Thursday, Feb. 26: Midterm Exam

Week 8 (March 3) The Phaedo: on the immortality of the soul.

Week 9 (March 9-15) Spring Break

Week 10 (March 17) the Republic: the theory of Forms, the myth of the Cave, Justice and other virtues in society and the individual.

Week 11 (March 24) Aristotle: Substances as basic existents; accidents as modifications of substances. Matter and form in natural beings.


Thursday, April 2: Easter Break

Week 13 (April 7) Virtues of feeling: courage and temperance. Intellectual virtues; education and politics.

Week 14 (April 14) The Skeptics. The Epicureans: their central tenets

Thursday, April 16: Paper Due
Week 15 (April 21). The Stoics: the propositional content of and extirpation of the passions; Neo-Platonism and St. Augustine.

Week 16 (April 28) St. Augustine [cont.]

Thursday, April 30: Last Class Day, Final review study questions given out.

Tuesday, May 12: Ancient Philosophy Final Exam 8:30-11:00 a.m.

Texts

The Presocratic Philosophers, Kirk and Raven (highly recommended). Please note: the later edition, with a third author, is different in content and not the one you want for this course.

Great Dialogues of Plato, trans. W.H.D. Rouse or any translations of Plato’s dialogues Phaedo, Meno, and the Euthyphro. (required)


Aristotle. Politics. [either Loeb or Modern Library edition] (required)

Learning objectives:
The content to be learned is covered in the provisional syllabus. The skills I expect you to show, and to improve in, include: reading ancient texts for philosophical content; recognizing unfamiliar ideas and relating them to more familiar ones; judging the values of different arguments independently of the truth of their conclusions, and vice-versa. You will be expected to read (translations of) ancient texts, evaluate arguments, and be ready to give reasons for your views. I expect you to show (at least) competence in all these skills in the tests and written work

Written work:
1315 students: Two tests (a midterm and the final), and one paper of a minimum of five typewritten pages, due November 25th. I may provide other short assignments for the opportunity of receiving further grades or give unscheduled tests as seems appropriate. There will be a final exam (not take-home).

3315 students: the same requirements as for 1315 students, except that the term paper will be a minimum of ten typewritten pages. Also, 3315 students are required to give a presentation on a topic in Aristotle. (Please come see me to determine your topic and the date of presentation.) 1315 students may choose to make a presentation, but it is not required. (If you choose to do so, please see me about the topic and date.)

Paper Assignment: The purpose of the paper is to demonstrate the student’s understanding and thoughtful analysis of one of the issues considered by at least one of the philosophers studied in this course. The student should choose an issue that the philosopher has developed with reasons to support his conclusion. In the case of a Presocratic, the student should be clear about whose interpretation of the Presocratic philosopher he or she is referring to, including, of course, a precise reference.
The reasons that the philosopher gives for his position must be clearly and completely laid out and the student’s agreement or disagreement with the philosopher’s position (or choice of one philosopher’s view over another’s) based upon understanding of logical concepts such as validity and soundness or any informal fallacies that may pertain to the argument that the student has chosen.

Because these issues (the nature of the soul, for instance) did not become irrelevant with the end of the ancient era, a truly thoughtful paper will include the application of the issue discussed to contemporary thought.

Finally, a successful paper must use university level grammar and correct citations. (Purdue Owl online is a good source for correct citation format.)

A paper copy of the paper is due IN CLASS on April 16th. An electronic copy is due by 11:59 P.M. the same day, turned in to Turnitin.com. Both of these copies must be turned in according to these instructions in order for your paper to have been turned in. Late papers will not be accepted as a matter of policy. Of course, if something out of human control happens, please see me immediately, if possible.

One more thing about papers: please come see me with your early drafts and ideas. Then come see me again and again. I am really happy to help. Although my office hours are Tuesday and Thursday, I am very open to making appointments on other days and at other times. Philosophy is very challenging, but so very worth it! Let’s work together.

Attendance policy:
The university has a strong attendance policy, and I will be passing lists of attendance in class. Moreover, you are unlikely to be able to get a full understanding of the subject from the reading alone. It is important that you attend class as often as possible and that you get notes from other students on those rare occasions that you have to miss.

Determination of final grades:
In-term tests: at least 10%. Term paper: at least 25%. Final test: at least 50%. I shall also bear in mind class participation when giving a final grade. 1315 Students may choose to do a presentation to count as another 10% of the grade. If I see fit to change these proportions, I will inform you.

Presentations:
After the Midterm, presentations will be given (required for 3315 students, optional for 11315 students). The presentation has three parts:

1) 10 minute presentation on the topic. This information MUST come from the Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy online. A written copy of it is turned in to me during class and an electronic copy emailed to me. After I’ve checked it, the electronic copy will be posted to Blackboard for the benefit of the class.

2) A 3-page primary reading that we’ll read together in class (this will be familiar; we’ll do this often in the first part of the course)

3) A class discussion: open for Q & A.
This presentation assignment counts as 10% of the course grade and is graded based upon (if it meets the assignment’s requirements, above) accuracy of information and benefit to the class.

On-line texts and commentaries:
Very many ancient philosophical texts are available on-line, as are some commentaries. I list some that may be of interest:
The Internet Classics Archive http://classics.mit.edu/index.html
The Perseus Project http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/
Project Gutenberg http://promo.net/pg/
Classic Texts in Ethics http://ethics.acusd.edu/books.html
Plato and his Dialogues http://www.plato-dialogues.org/plato.htm

Policy on Academic Honesty
The university’s policies on academic dishonesty and plagiarism are to be found in the undergraduate handbook, online at http://www.stthom.edu/studentaffairs/campus/pdf/handbook.pdf

I am in agreement with these policies. It is important that you realize that I will enforce them. If I discover that a student has plagiarized material for a class assignment, I will give that student an F for the whole course. If the work that you turn in fails to meet basic standards for university work, or if you fail to turn in any work at all, I will only award an F for that piece of work. The university allows me to penalize plagiarism in that way. It is thus in your interest not to plagiarize, but to turn in your own work.
Papers in this course will be turned in through Turnitin.com.
Although I have emphasized plagiarism, procedures for cases of academic dishonesty will be followed for “any conduct which would be recognized as dishonest in an academic setting.” (Policy # A.02.11)

Disabilities
Any student with a disability requiring accommodations in this course is encouraged to contact me after class or during office hours. Additionally, students will need to contact Counseling and Disability Services in Crooker Center. This office can be reached at (713) 525-2169 or 6953