COURSE DESCRIPTION

1315/3315– Ancient Philosophy A study of being, nature, knowledge, man and the state, as developed by the pre–Socratics, Plato, Aristotle, the Epicureans, the Stoics and Plotinus

INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION

Name: Dr. Shannon Holzer
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Office Phone: 310-625-6313
Office Location: by appointment

LEARNING RESOURCES

Course Texts:
Plato, The Laws, translated by Trevor J. Saunders
Plato, Five Dialogues, translated by G.M.A Grube, Hackett Publishing
Aristotle, Nicomachean Ethics, translated by Terrence Irwin, Hackett Publishing
Saint Augustine, The Confessions, Translated by John K. Ryan, Double Day
There will be supplemental reading that I place on blackboard.

Course Objectives:
1. To introduce you to some of the historical understandings of the nature of knowledge.
2. To introduce you to some of the main questions addressed by ancient philosophers.
3. To help you develop some of the skills necessary for thinking and writing critically and clearly about these and other problems.

Participation (10%): This is a reading-based course. It will depend for its success on your reading carefully the assigned readings and discussing them intelligently with the rest of us in class. In order to discuss the reading intelligently with the rest of us, you must prepare. The way to prepare is to read each selection just prior to the time we discuss it in class, working hard at understanding it. Because many of the assigned readings are rather difficult, you may have to read parts of them more than once and you should make notes while you’re reading. These notes will highlight important points, summarize things you understand, inquire about things you don’t understand, and outline the overall argument of the selection. Be careful to check the schedule to see which particular part of the assigned reading is the focus for the day.

Two things will affect your participation grade: attendance and contributing to the class discussion in a way that demonstrates intelligent engagement with the readings. Regarding the first, attendance will be taken each day by circulating a sheet for you to sign. Regarding the second, you don’t need to be a know-it-all to do well here. But you need to show you’ve thought hard about the reading material. A good question can boost your participation grade as much as a good answer. Some of you will find it easier
than others to speak out in class. But each of you should have at least *something* to say in class during the semester.

Any student with a disability requiring accommodations in this course is encouraged to contact Counseling and Disability Services in Crooker Center. Their offices can be reached at (713) 525-6953 or 2169.

**Tests (30%)** There will be biweekly tests over the lessons and assigned readings. I will hand out a schedule for the specific dates.

**Paper (30%)** The term paper topics include:

- The theory of the forms as it appears in Phaedo
- Socrates’s argument for the immortality of the soul
- Plato’s depiction of the city
- Aristotle’s concept of happiness compared to Thomas Jefferson’s declaration that all men have a right to pursue happiness
- Aristotle on the role that politics and the political community play in creating a virtuous citizenry

**Midterm (15%)** This is a cumulative test, which will cover all of the material up to the date of the test.

**Final (15%)** This is a cumulative test, which will cover all of the material from the beginning of the course up to the date of the test.

### Dates and Assignments

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>First Day of Class</th>
<th>8/22/</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Midterm</td>
<td>10/5</td>
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<td>Finals</td>
<td>12/12 1:45-4:15</td>
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<td>Quizzes</td>
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<td>Pre Socratics</td>
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<td>Plato</td>
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<td>Aristotle</td>
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<td>Plotinus</td>
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<td>Augustine</td>
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<tr>
<td>Paper</td>
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*Note: These assignments and dates may be changed at the discretion of the professor.*