

# PHI 307: Ancient Philosophy

Spring 2021

Meetings: MoWe 3:45 pm - 5:05 pm  
Professor: Christopher Noble  
535 Hall of Languages  
Email: cinoble@syr.edu  
Office hours: Mondays 2:00 pm - 3:00 pm, or by appointment

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## REQUIRED TEXT

C. D. C. Reeve, Patrick Lee Miller, and Lloyd P. Gerson (eds.), *Introductory Readings in Ancient Greek and Roman Philosophy*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition (Hackett, 2015). ISBN-13: 978-1-62466-352-9 [henceforth, 'RAGP']

## COURSE DESCRIPTION

In this course we will discuss the ideas and arguments of some of the major ancient Greek philosophers. Topics will include the pre-Socratic origins of cosmological speculation, the beginning of philosophical ethics with Socrates, Plato's moral theory, epistemology, and cosmology, and Aristotle's ethics, philosophy of nature, and metaphysics. The course will end with a survey of philosophical developments in the Hellenistic period and beyond.

## COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND POLICIES

Paper #1 (4-5 pages)	20%	Due Week 5 (Fri. 10/01)
Midterm	10%	In-class Week 8 (Mon. 10/18)
Paper #2 (4-5 pages)	20%	Due Week 9 (Fri. 10/29)
Paper #3 (4-5 pages)	20%	Due Week 13 (Fri. 12/03)
Final Exam	10%	In-class Week 14 (Fri. 12/08)
Attendance and participation	20%	

**Exams:** Exams will consist of short answer and essay questions. Essay questions on the exam will be selected from a list of study questions made available in advance.

**Papers:** This is your chance to engage critically with a topic discussed in course lectures. Papers should be 4-5 pages in length double-spaced with standard margins at a font size roughly corresponding to Times New Roman 12 point. Topics will be assigned approximately two weeks before papers are due. Papers should be submitted in hard copy at my office by 5 p.m. on the due date *and* via Turnitin on Blackboard.

**Attendance policy:** A maximum of 3 unexcused absences are allowed without penalty. (Absences can be excused only in the case of religious holidays, a documented illness, or a documented emergency.)

- 4 unexcused absences will lower the course grade 1/3 of a letter grade (e.g. from B+ to B).
- 5 unexcused absences will lower the course grade 2/3 of a letter grade (e.g. from B+ to B-).
- 6 or more unexcused absences will lead to an F in the course.

**Late submissions and extensions:** Writing assignments submitted after the due date are subject to a penalty of 1/3 of a letter grade (e.g. from B+ to B) on the first day, and an additional 1/3 of a letter grade on each subsequent day. Requests for extensions may be granted on a case-by-case basis, but should be made well in advance of the

due date.

**Class preparation:** Reading assignments should be completed prior to class. Many of the readings for this course are dense and very challenging. Give yourself plenty of time.

**Academic Integrity:** The Syracuse University Academic Integrity Policy will be strictly enforced. The Syracuse policy holds students accountable for the integrity of the work submitted in exams and assignments. *Be aware that serious sanctions, including course failure and academic probation, can result from academic dishonesty of any sort.* For more information and the complete University policy, go to: <http://academicintegrity.syr.edu>

**Special Accommodations:** If you believe that you need accommodations for a disability, please contact the Office of Disability Services (ODS), <http://disabilityservices.syr.edu>, located at 804 University Avenue, Room 309, or call (315) 443-4498 for an appointment to discuss your needs and the process for requesting accommodations.

**Grades:** All grades on assignments as well as the course grade are final and not subject to revision.

## COURSE SCHEDULE

Note: This following schedule is tentative and is subject to revision. Please consult this course's Backboard page for the most up-to-date version.

### ***I. Pre-Socratic Philosophy***

#### Week 1

Mon. (08/30): The Milesians: Thales, Anaximander, and Anaximenes – One Primary Stuff

Reading: *RAGP*, p. 1-4

Wed. (09/01): Heraclitus of Ephesus – The Unity of Opposites

Reading: *RAGP*, p. 9-14

#### Week 2

Mon. (09/06) NO CLASS (Labor Day)

Wed. (09/08) Eleatic Monism I

Parmenides of Elea – The Ways of Being and Seeming

Reading: *RAGP*, p. 14-17

#### Week 3

Mon. (09/13) Eleatic Monism II

Zeno of Elea – Paradoxes of Motion

Reading: *RAGP*, p. 20-22

Wed. (09/15) Post-Eleatic Cosmology I: Separation and Mixture of Being

Empedocles of Acragas – The four ‘roots’

Reading: *RAGP*, p. 22-27

Anaxagoras of Clazomene – Everything is in everything

Reading: *RAGP*, p. 28-30

#### Week 4

Mon. (09/20) Post-Eleatic Cosmology II: Rearrangement of Being and

Non-Being Democritus and Leucippus – Atoms and void

Reading: *RAGP*, p. 30-34

### **II. Socrates**

Wed. (09/22) Plato's *Apology* – Socrates Defends his Life

Reading: *RAGP*, p. 62-78 (= *Apology* [all])

#### Week 5

Mon. (09/27) Plato's *Euthyphro* – Socrates' Search for Definitions

Reading: *RAGP*, p. 52-62 (= *Euthyphro* [all])

Wed. (09/29) Plato's *Meno* – The Paradox of Inquiry and Learning as Recollection

Reading: *RAGP*, p. 91-103 (= *Meno* 70a-86c)

**\*\* Paper #1 due Friday (10/01) \*\***

#### Week 6

Mon. (10/04) Plato's *Meno* – Is Virtue Teachable?

Reading: *RAGP*, p. 103-111 (= *Meno* 86c-end)

### **III. Plato**

Wed. (10/06) Plato's *Republic* – Thrasymachus' and Glaucon's Challenge: Does Justice pay?

Reading: *RAGP*, p. 152-163 (= *Republic* I-II, 362c)

#### Week 7

Mon. (10/11) Plato's *Republic* – Plato's Ideal City

Reading: *RAGP*, p. 171-183 (= *Republic* IV, 427c-end)

Wed. (10/13) Plato's *Republic* – Plato's Theory of Human Motivation and Glaucon's Challenge Answered

Reading: *RAGP*, p. 171-183 (= *Republic* IV, 427c-end)

### Week 8

Mon. (10/18)    **\*\* In Class Midterm \*\***

Wed. (10/20)    Plato's *Republic* – Philosopher Rulers and Platonic Forms

Reading: *RAGP*, p. 193-197, 203-210 (= *Republic* V, 473c-end, VI, 506d-VII-521b)

### Week 9

Mon. (10/25)    Plato's *Timaeus* – The Divine Craftsman of the Universe

Reading: *RAGP*, p. 243-249 (= *Timaeus* 27e-37d)

## **IV.    Aristotle**

Wed. (10/27)    Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics* – Happiness and the Human Function

Reading: *RAGP*, p. 577-585 (= *Nicomachean Ethics* I.1-5, 7, 13)

**\*\* Essay #2 due Friday (10/29) \*\***

### Week 10

Mon. (11/01)    Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics* – Virtues of Character and the Doctrine of the Mean

Reading: *RAGP*, p. 585-592 (= *Nicomachean Ethics* II.1-7)

Wed. (11/03)    Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics* – Friendship

Reading: photocopy to be distributed (= *Nicomachean Ethics* VIII.2-4, IX.4, 8-9)

### Week 11

Mon. (11/08)    Aristotle's *Physics* – Change and the Four Causes

Reading: *RAGP*, p. 476-480, 484-485 (= *Physics* I.5-8 and II.3)

Wed. (11/10)    Aristotle's *Metaphysics* – Aristotle's Philosopher-God

Reading: *RAGP*, p. 573-576 (= *Metaphysics* XII.6-10)

### Week 12

## **V.    Epicureanism**

Mon. (11/15)    Epicurean Physics – Atomism Revived

Reading: *RAGP*, p. 358-365 (= Epicurus' *Letter to Herodotus*)

Wed. (11/17) Epicurean Ethics – The Four-Fold Cure and Tranquillity of Soul



Reading: Reading: *RAGP*, p. 365-370 (= Epicurus' *Letter to Menoeceus* and *Principal Doctrines*)

### Week 13

#### **VI. Stoicism**

Mon. (11/29) Stoic Physics – Everything According to Plan

Reading: *RAGP*, p. 371-374, 379-380 (= Diogenes Laertius' *Lives And Opinions of Eminent Philosophers* 7.39-40, 132-160, and Cleanthes' *Hymn to Zeus*)

Wed. (12/01) Stoic Ethics – Living According to Nature

Reading: *RAGP*, p. 374-379 (= Diogenes Laertius' *Lives And Opinions of Eminent Philosophers* 7.84-131) and photocopy of Epictetus' *Discourse* I.1

**\*\* Essay #3 due Friday (12/03) \*\***

### Week 14

#### **VII. Neoplatonism**

Mon. (12/06) Plotinus – The Neoplatonic Chain of Being

Reading: Reading: *RAGP*, p. 489-495 (= Plotinus' *Ennead* V.1: *On the Three Primary Hypostases*)

Wed. (12/08) **\*\* Final Exam \*\***