

History of Ancient Philosophy

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Course Objectives

This course is designed as an introduction to the history of ancient philosophy from the time of the Presocratics (beginning around 600 BCE) through the end of the Hellenistic period (around 30 BCE). Specifically, we will be making a study of the thought of the Presocratics, the Sophists, Sokrates, Plato, Aristotle, the Epicureans, the Skeptics, and the Stoics.

Texts

The following books, the texts for the course, are available at The Book Stop, the book store located at the corner of 16th Street and 10th Avenue:

Aristotle. *Introduction to Aristotle*. Second edition revised & enlarged. Richard McKeon, ed. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1974.

Long, A. A. *Hellenistic Philosophy: Stoics, Epicureans, Sceptics*, 2nd ed. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1986.

McKirahan, Richard D., Jr. *Philosophy Before Socrates: An Introduction with Texts and Commentary*. Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Co., 1994.

Plato. *The Collected Dialogues of Plato*. Hamilton, Edith, and Huntington Cairns, eds. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984.

If you find yourself wanting more information on any of the philosophers or topics covered in this course, I recommend, first of all, *The Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, Paul Edwards, ed., 8 vols. (New York: Macmillan, 1967). Our library has two copies: one in the reference room and one in the stacks. Frederick Copleston's *A History of Philosophy* (New York: Image Books, 1962) is a very good general work on the history of Western philosophy—including, of course, the history of ancient philosophy. I recommend it highly, but for a good first treatment of almost any subject that might be of interest to you in connection with this course, it's hard to do better than *The Encyclopedia of Philosophy*. Another historical treatment worth mentioning is W.K.C. Guthrie's six volume work: *A History of Greek Philosophy* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1962–81). Guthrie's work, which covers the Presocratics, Socrates, Plato, and a good bit of Aristotle, is much more detailed than anything you'll find in either of the first two works mentioned above, and if detail is what you want, it's very good indeed. Finally, you might find it useful in certain contexts to consult the *Cambridge Dictionary of Philosophy*, Robert Audi, ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1995). Previous dictionaries of philosophy have been rather disappointing affairs. This one's pretty good. Finally, a number of on-line resources, some quite good, are accessible *via* links on the class Web site at <http://www.unco.edu/philosophy/current/260-004.html>.

Course Requirements and Grades

First of all, you're required to have an e-mail account. If you don't have one already, you'll need to arrange to get one by Wednesday. You can get a UNC account in any of the computer labs on campus or at Bear Logic, the computer store in the University Center. Accounts with other national or local ISPs (AOL, Hotmail, Yahoo, Excite, CTOS, etc.) are perfectly acceptable as well.

* And, of course, by appointment.

Reading Assignments and Quizzes:

There will be daily reading assignments (see the course outline), and on these assignments, there will be occasional unannounced quizzes. Make sure you have the assigned readings done before you come to class. You should expect to spend a good deal of time on the readings—they're challenging, serious texts that will require extensive study and reflection.

Class Participation and Contributions to the Class's Online Forum

On most days, meetings of the course will involve a combination of lecture and discussion, and you're required both to attend class regularly and to involve yourself actively in class discussion. Contributions to the class's online forum at <http://www.unco.edu/philosophy/current/forums/>—the main venue outside class for class discussion—can help to at least some extent to make up for any unavoidable absences and can serve to enhance your overall participation grade. Your participation grade will reflect both the quantity and the quality of your contributions to our discussions.

Papers:

You're also required to write two short papers. These are to be philosophical essays on topics of your own choice, the only restriction being that the first is to have to do with one or more of the texts we'll have read by any of the Presocratics or Plato, while the second is to have to do with one or more of the texts we'll have read by Aristotle or any of the Hellenistic philosophers. Your essays should take the form of papers of four to five pages, and they are to be printed on a printer that makes good, legible copy, double-spaced, and in general done in accordance with the applicable guidelines contained in Joseph Gibaldi and Phyllis Franklin, *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers*, 6th ed. (New York: The Modern Language Association of America, 2003). Copies of this book are almost sure to be available at both The Book Stop and Barnes and Noble in the UC. The due dates for the papers will be October 21 and December 5.

Midterm and Final:

Finally, there'll be a midterm and a final examination, each consisting of a combination of objective questions and short essay questions. The midterm, on October 14, will cover the Presocratics and Plato; the final, on December 5, will cover Aristotle and the Hellenistic philosophers.

Determination of Grades and Related Rules and Regulations:

Your grade will be determined by your quiz average (worth 10%), by the quality and quantity of your class participation (worth a total of 30%), by the quality of your papers (worth a total of 30%), and by the grades you receive on the midterm and final (worth a total of 30%). To receive credit for the course, you must submit both papers and take both the midterm and the final. Zeros will be recorded for missed quizzes (which may not be made up if missed). The penalty for late papers will be a reduction by one letter grade for each class day or day of finals week the work is late. The penalty for plagiarism or for cheating on any of the assignments will be denial of credit for the entire course.

Is This Your First Course in Philosophy?

If it *is* your first course, it's going to require your doing two different things at once (which is always a bit tricky): you'll have to master the course content, and while you're doing that, you'll also have to get your bearings with respect to the nature of the philosophical enterprise itself. This is by no means impossible, but it can make the course a very challenging one. I don't teach this course as an introductory course. Instead, I assume that everyone in it already has a reasonably solid working knowledge of what doing philosophy itself involves. If you don't, then early on in the semester, you should plan to spend extra time with me or with other students in the class who have already been around the block talking and thinking about what philosophy is. If you'd like to look at a book on the subject, you might try Jay F. Rosenberg's *The Practice of Philosophy*, 3rd ed. (New York: Prentice-Hall, 1996). If you decide after a few days that you'd do well to take an introductory course first, I'd be glad to try to help you get into one.

Detailed Course Outline

We'll follow this schedule closely. If anything, you should get *ahead* in your reading. *Don't get behind.*

Aug.	M	22	Introduction.	
	W	24	McKirahan, pp. 1–22. Preliminaries. The Beginnings of Greek Philosophy and Science.	
	F	26	McKirahan, pp. 23–78. Thales, Anaximander, Anaximenes, and Xenophanes.	
	M	29	McKirahan, pp. 79–115. Puthagoras and the Pythagoreans.	<i>Add Deadline</i>
	W	31	McKirahan, pp. 116–150. Herakleitos.	
Sept.	F	2	McKirahan, pp. 151–195. Parmenides and Zenon.	<i>Drop Deadline</i>
	M	5	<i>no class</i>	<i>Labor Day</i>
	W	7	McKirahan, pp. 196–231. Anaxagoras.	
	F	9	McKirahan, pp. 232–291. Empedokles.	
	M	12	McKirahan, pp. 292–352. Melissos, Leukippos, Demokritos, and Diogenes of Apollonia.	
	W	14	McKirahan, pp. 353–389. Early Greek Moral Thought and the Fifth-Century Sophists.	
	F	16	McKirahan, pp. 390–413. The <i>Nomos-Phusis</i> Debate.	
	M	19	Aristophanes, on line. <i>Clouds</i> .	
	W	21	Plato, pp. 4-26. <i>Apology</i> .	
	F	23	Plato, pp. 216–228; 170–185; <i>Ion, Euthyphro</i> .	
	M	26	Plato, pp. 309-352. <i>Protagoras</i> .	
	W	28	Plato, pp. 354–384. <i>Meno</i> .	
	F	30	Plato, pp. 527–574. <i>Symposium</i> .	
Oct.	M	3	Plato, pp. 576–623. <i>Republic</i> I–IIa (368c).	
	W	5	Plato, pp. 623-688. <i>Republic</i> IIb-IV	
	F	7	Plato, pp. 688-737. <i>Republic</i> V-VIa (502c).	
	M	10	Plato, pp. 738-772, <i>Republic</i> VIb-VII.	
	W	12	Plato, pp. 772-844. <i>Republic</i> VIII-X.	
	F	14	No assignment.	<i>Midterm Examination / Withdrawal Deadline</i>
	M	17	Aristotle, pp. ix–lii: Introductory.	
	W	19	Aristotle, pp. 122–144; 255–266. <i>Physics</i> II, <i>On the Parts of Animals</i> I, i.	
	F	21	Aristotle, pp. 277–307. <i>Metaphysics</i> , I; on line: <i>Metaphysics</i> VI.	<i>First Paper Due</i>
	M	24	Aristotle, readings on line: <i>Metaphysics</i> VII.	
	W	26	Aristotle, readings on line: <i>Metaphysics</i> VIII-IX.	
	F	28	Aristotle, pp. 308-330. <i>Metaphysics</i> XII.	
	M	31	Aristotle, pp. 346-385. <i>Nicomachean Ethics</i> I-II.	
Nov.	W	2	Aristotle, pp. 385–399; 461-464 <i>Nicomachean Ethics</i> III, i-v; VI, i-ii.	
	F	4	Aristotle, pp. 464-480; 567–581. <i>Nicomachean Ethics</i> VI, iii-xiii.; X, vi-ix.	
	M	7	Aristotle, pp. 155–189. <i>On the Soul</i> I, II, i-iii.	
	W	9	Aristotle, pp. 189–216. <i>On the Soul</i> II, iv-xii.	
	F	11	Aristotle, pp. 216-245. <i>On the Soul</i> III.	
	M	14	Long, pp. 1-74. Epikuros and Early Epicureanism	
	W	16	Epikuros, on line. <i>Principal Doctrines, Letters</i> .	
	F	18	Long, pp. 75-106. Pyrrhonism and Academic Skepticism.	
	M	21	Kleanthes and Epiktetos, on line. <i>Hymn to Zeus; Enchiridion</i> .	
	W	23	Long, pp. 107-147. Early Stoicism: Stoic Logic.	
	F	25	<i>no class</i>	<i>Thanksgiving Vacation</i>
	M	28	Long, pp. 147-178. Early Stoicism: Stoic Physics.	
	W	30	Long, pp. 179-209. Early Stoicism: Stoic Ethics.	
Dec.	F	2	Long, pp. 210-248. Later Developments in Hellenistic Philosophy. Still Later Influences.	
	M	5	Final Class Period: 8:00-10:30	<i>Final Examination; Second Paper Due</i>

Reading Load

This course involves a fairly heavy reading load, but not a killing one. Here's the breakdown, week by week (indeed, day by day) as to how many pages you're going to have to read. My hope is that this information will help you effectively budget your study time.

Week I: 78 pp. [0 + 22 + 56] (McKirahan)

Week II: 112 pp. [37 + 35 + 45] (McKirahan)

Week III: 96 pp. [(Labor Day) + 36 + 60] (McKirahan)

Week IV: 122 pp. [61 + 37 + 24] (McKirahan)

Week V: \approx 177 pp. [\approx 125 + 32 + 29] (*Clouds* (on-line), *Apology*, *Ion* and *Euthyphro*)

Week VI: 157 [78 + 31 + 48] (*Protagoras*, *Meno*, *Symposium*)

Week VII: 162 [48 + 65 + 49] (*Republic* I-VIa)

Week VIII: 107 [35 + 72 + 0] (*Republic* VIb-X)

Week IX: 117 pp. [44 + 35 + 38] (McKeon, *Physics* II, *Parts of Animals* I,i, *Metaphysics* I, VI)

Week X: 91 pp. [38 + 30 + 23] (*Metaphysics* VII-IX, XII)

Week XI: 91 pp. [40 + 19 + 32] (*Nicomachean Ethics* I-III.v, VI, X.vi-ix)

Week XII: 92 pp. [35 + 28 + 30] (*On the Soul* — complete)

Week XIII: \approx 104 pp. [74 + \approx 30 + (Thanksgiving)] (Long plus some on-line readings)

Week XIV: \approx 100 pp. [32 + \approx 27 + 41] (Long plus some on-line readings)

Week XV: 102 pp. [32 + 31 + 39] (Long)

In the table above, the symbol “ \approx ” —used in estimates of the length of on-line texts—should be read as meaning “roughly” or “approximately.”

Bear in mind that because Aristophanes' *Clouds* and Plato's dialogues are dramatic works—works the texts of which represent dialogue—the pages in those works often include a fair amount of white space. Aristotle's texts, on the other hand, make for pretty tough going at least at times, so 90 pages of Aristotle can often take as long to absorb as 120 or 150 pages of Plato if not more.

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

Students who believe that they may need accommodations in this class are encouraged to contact Disability Support Services by dropping by the office in Harrison Hall 159A or by phoning the office at (970) 351-2289 as soon as possible to ensure that accommodations can be arranged in a timely way.