

Philosophy of the Greeks (01:730:208)

Spring 2015

Thursday 10:55am – 1:55pm

Ruth Adams Building, Room 208

Instructor: Brennan McDavid

Email: bmcdavid@princeton.edu

Course Description:

This course is an introduction to ancient Greek philosophy. We will consider methods, important philosophical positions, and the interactions of ideas that shaped this period. Plato and Aristotle are the focus of the class, but we will also read and discuss some Pre-Socratic philosophers.

Course Structure/Expectations:

Each week we will discuss a different issue in ancient Greek philosophy. Our sessions are 3 hours long, and I realize that can be taxing, so we will divide the sessions into a lecture section and a discussion section. I expect every student to do *all* of the assigned reading each week, in advance of the class. There are three primary expectations for the course:

1. Every other week you will write a “shortie” and submit it to Sakai no later than **5:00pm every Wednesday**. A “shortie” is a 1-2 page paper about any of the readings for a given week. In a “shortie,” you should **summarize** the ideas of the paper or chapter and also **ask clarifying and challenging questions**. One half of the class will write shorties one week, and the other half will write shorties the following week. You will be assigned to one group or the other on the first day of class.
2. You will read the shorties written by your classmates in advance of every class session.
3. Your final assignment is a paper final paper will be 5 pages (1” margins, 12 point times new roman font) and must go beyond the level of a shortie. The paper is not a summary; it is an **extended discussion** of an ancient philosophical idea that we have covered in the course. You will be able to choose your topic from several options that I will provide at the second to last class session of the term. The final paper is due to my email no later than **5:00pm on May 7th**.

Grading:

- Bi-weekly “shorties” (1-2 page papers) 40%
- Final paper (5 pages) 40%
- Participation 20%

Required Texts:

- *Plato: Complete Works*. Eds. John Cooper and D.S. Hutchinson. Hackett, 1997.
- *Nicomachean Ethics*. Trans. C.D.C. Reeve. Hackett, 2014.
- **Other Reading materials will be posted on Sakai and occasionally through email**

Course Schedule:

Week 1 – January 22

Introduction to the Course

In Class Reading: Selections from Hesiod and Homer

Week 2 – January 29

Early Natural Philosophy

Reading: Fragments from Thales, Anaximander, Anaximenes, Heraclitus, and Pythagoras. (**on Sakai**)

Week 3 – February 5

Parmenides

Reading: Fragments from Parmenides. (**on Sakai**)

Week 4 – February 12

The Socratic Method

Reading: Plato's *Apology* and *Euthyphro*

Week 5 – February 19

What is Virtue?

Reading: Plato's *Meno*

Week 6 – February 26

Socratic Theory of Motivation: Intellectualism

Reading: Plato's *Protagoras*

Week 7 – March 5

What is Justice?

Reading: Books 1 and 2 of Plato's *Republic*

Week 8 – March 12

Platonic Theory of Motivation: Tripartite Soul

Reading: Book 4 of Plato's *Republic*

March 19 – SPRING BREAK – NO CLASS

Week 9 – March 26

Platonic Theory of the Forms

Reading: Books 5, 6, and 7 of Plato's *Republic*

Week 10 – April 2

Aristotle's Greatest Good

Reading: Book 1 of Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics*

Week 11 – April 9

Aristotelian Virtue Theory

Reading: Book 2 of Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics*

Week 12 – April 16

Choice, Deliberation, and Wish

Reading: Book 3, Chapters 1-4, of Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics*

Week 13 – April 23

Aristotle's Theory of Akrotic Action

Reading: Book 7 of Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics*

****Final paper topics distributed****

Week 14 – April 30

Aristotle on Friendship

Reading: Book 8 of Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics*

May 7 ****Final papers due by email at 5:00pm****

Attendance and Participation

Attendance is extremely important for success in this class. The class is structured around in-class exercises, participation, and discussion; you will not be informed or prepared to complete course assignments without attending. Unexcused absences will count against your participation grade unless you have a legitimate reason for missing class, which you should discuss in advance with your instructor.

Deadlines and Lateness

Written assignments will be due at 5:00pm, on the dates listed above. I will accept late work at the penalty of one full letter grade per day late. After three days, you will receive a 'zero' for the assignment.

Students with Disabilities

Rutgers University welcomes students with disabilities into all of the University's educational programs. In order to receive consideration for reasonable accommodations, a student with a disability must contact the appropriate disability services office at the campus where you are officially enrolled, participate in an intake interview, and provide documentation: <https://ods.rutgers.edu/students/documentation-guidelines>. If the documentation supports your request for reasonable accommodations, your campus's disability services office will provide you with a Letter of Accommodations. Please share this letter with your instructors and discuss the accommodations with them as early in your courses as possible. To begin this process, please complete the Registration form on the ODS web site at: <https://ods.rutgers.edu/students/registration-form>.

Cheating and Plagiarism

Please refer to the Rutgers academic integrity policy available online here: <http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/policy-on-academic-integrity>

If you have any questions about what counts as cheating or plagiarism, please ask. Violations of academic integrity are serious, and will have the following results for your course evaluation:

- The first violation will result in an irreplaceable zero on the assignment.
- The second violation will result in an 'F' in the course.