

Introduction to Ancient Philosophy

Ph 207a A01 Fall 2018

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Class meetings: 10:30-11:20
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Caryatids, supporting the roof of the false south porch of the Erechtheion on the Athens Acropolis (421 - 406 BCE)

Course description

This course introduces central topics in the European philosophical tradition as first introduced by Ancient Greek and Roman philosophers. We explore methods for reflecting on the basic make-up of our world, on what constitutes knowledge, and on the good life. Class discussion centred on course topics is highly encouraged. Students from all faculties are welcome to attend.

Course objectives

- To learn to about the earliest conceptions of our physical world and of ourselves, as developed in Ancient Greece, and how some of those insights may still shape present thinking.
- To acquire an understanding of the first debates on ethics and theory of knowledge, as presented by Plato, Aristotle, their predecessors and those who followed them.
- To sharpen your ability to work with the arguments developed by these philosophers, and to learn to assess their strength and weaknesses.

Texts

Required text: Reeve Miller and Gerson (eds.), *Introductory Readings in Ancient Greek and Roman Philosophy* (Hackett, 2015 or earlier edition). Highly recommended optional: Catherine Osborne, *Presocratic Philosophy: A Very Short Introduction* (OUP, 2004), and Julia Annas, *Ancient Philosophy: A Very Short Introduction* (OUP, 2000). Some additional texts may be assigned throughout the course, to be downloaded through the *Coursespaces* website. Please be attentive to announcements in class and via e-mail.

Graded student activities

1. Participation, including weekly assignments	10%
2. Text analysis project	20%
3. Mid-term test	30%
4. Final take-home exam	40%