

Introduction to Ancient Philosophy

Ph 207a A01 Fall 2018

CRN 12518

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Caryatids, supporting the roof of the false south porch of the Erechtheion (constructed between 421 and 406 BCE) on the Acropolis, Athens

Course description

This course introduces central topics of the European philosophical tradition, as first discussed in Ancient Greece and Rome. 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.

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 arguments by learning to assess their strengths and weaknesses.

Texts

Required text: Reeve, Miller and Gerson (eds.), *Introductory Readings in Ancient Greek and Roman Philosophy* (Hackett). 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, to be downloaded through the *Coursespaces* website, may be assigned throughout the course. Please be attentive to announcements in class and via e-mail.

Course organisation and student engagement

To facilitate class discussion, assigned weekly readings are to be read *ahead of class lectures*. Attendance during class periods, constructive participation and tolerance of the views of others are expected. Students are responsible for materials covered if classes are missed and are expected to ask classmates about any announcements while absent. Everyone is encouraged to be self-reflective about his or her own beliefs, and to constructively contribute to class discussion.

Tips for best performances

1. Do readings do weekly assignments ahead of class periods.
2. Come to class and participate in class discussion with constructive points.
3. Speak to the instructor if failing to understand the material.

Graded student activities

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| 1. Participation, including weekly assignments | 10% |
| 2. Short paper and group presentation | 20% |
| 3. Mid-term test | 30% |
| 4. A final take-home exam | 40% |

1. **Participation.** Assessed on the basis of a) *regular attendance*, b) *constructive participation in class discussion*, c) *weekly assignments* based on the course readings and analysis of the issues under discussion. *Class attendance will be taken, and is particularly encouraged in the case of guest speakers* (justified absences on those days should be discussed with the instructor ahead of time).

Weekly response assignments

You are expected to write up a brief response to a question regarding each week's readings to help you engage with the material and concepts before the lecture. Responses should be brief, and handed in on the first day of classes every week (usually Tuesdays). Your response should be in your own words and **not** be copied from the textbook or other texts.

At the head of the page please state, in this order, a) your last and first name (e.g. JONES, Peter), b) the date assignment is due (e.g. 9 January 2018), c) the particular readings discussed (e.g. Singer and Taylor). Feedback will be given on the first sets of assignments, and occasionally thereafter. At the end of the semester the total of the assignments minus the two with the lowest grades will be graded on a pass or fail basis. Both quantity and quality of assignments will be taken into account in grading.

2. **Short paper and group presentation.** Students choose from a list of possible topics and analyse key arguments in light of their contemporary significance. Students are encouraged to find three fellow students to discuss their analyses before writing 2-3 page individual papers (worth 50% of this grade). By **27 September** individuals choose topic as a group. On **9 November** short individual papers should be handed in. Presentation of group reports on the discussions (worth another 50% of this grade) will be scheduled for the last week of classes. (Presentations can be organised as the group best sees, and not everyone needs to speak as long as work is divided fairly. They will be evaluated on A) knowledge of material, B) development of arguments, C) on clarity of the written version and of presentation to the class.

3. **Mid-term test.** It covers both readings and further points raised in lectures. Both understanding and recall of material covered, and reflective analysis, is expected. Test questions will likely consist of a combination of shorter and longer answer questions.

4. **Final take-home exam.** Comprehensive, comprised of long answer, and possibly also some short answer questions. Handed out on the last day of classes. Completed exams should be printed out and handed in to a specially labelled box at the Department of Philosophy **12:00 a.m. five (5) days after the last day of classes**. Late exams will **NOT** be accepted (they will receive 0%). **Exams should also be submitted through Coursespaces** (unless otherwise indicated). Understanding of material covered and reflective analysis will be expected.

All graded work will be assessed on the basis of (1) care in the explanation of key points, (2) quality of development of points presented, (3) clarity, neatness, and organisation of points.

Grading scale and interpretation

Percentages will convert to a letter grade according to the standard University scheme:

A+ = 90-100	B+ = 77-79	C+ = 65-69	D = 50-59
A = 85-89	B = 73-76	C = 60-64	F = 0-49
A- = 80-84	B- = 70-72		

What the Grading Scale Means:

- A+, A, or A-** Earned by work which is technically superior, shows mastery of the subject matter, and in the case of an A+ offers original insight and/or goes beyond course expectations. Normally achieved by a minority of students.
- B+, B, or B-** Earned by work that indicates a good comprehension of the course material, a good command of the skills needed to work with the course material, and the student's full engagement with the course requirements and activities. A B+ represents a more complex understanding and/or application of the course material. Normally achieved by the largest number of students.
- C+ or C** Earned by work that indicates an adequate comprehension of the course material and the skills needed to work with the course material and that indicates the student has met the basic requirements for completing assigned work and/or participating in class activities.

- D** Earned by work that indicates minimal command of the course materials and/or minimal participation in class activities that is worthy of course credit toward the degree.
- F** Work that is not worthy of course credit toward the degree.

Interpretation of these grade definitions is up to the discretion of the instructor. If you receive a grade during the course that you believe is unfair, please begin by discussing the matter with the instructor (or TA) in a respectful, open-minded manner. Rest assured that if you still believe the grade you received is unfair you can appeal the matter to the chair of the department. For additional information regarding grades, please see pp. 51-53 of the most recent edition of the *Uvic Undergraduate Calendar*.

All evaluations of tests and assignments will be calculated according to *percentage scores*. Letter grades and grade point scores are listed purely for reference. Final examinations are the property of Uvic and are not returned. They are available for viewing at the Records Office according to Uvic procedures and regulations (pp. 49-51 of the calendar).

Late assignments, extensions and plagiarism

Late weekly assignments will **not** be accepted and the test will **not** be rescheduled (no make-up exams). If a test is missed serious, documented, reasons, the final exam will be weighted so as to incorporate the weighting of the missed exam. Documented evidence for having legitimately missed an exam and an explanatory statement in writing have to be received no more than ten days after the deadline or exam missed. Late papers will have 5% subtracted per working day from grade unless documentation is provided of illness or family emergency. Academic honesty will be expected in this course. *Plagiarism (e.g. copying from others or working together on the take-home exam) may lead to dismissal from the course and the university*. Any matters not covered in this handout will be handled in accordance with University and Department policies. Please familiarize yourself with them at <http://web.uvic.ca/calendar2017-05/undergrad/info/regulations/academic-integrity.html>.

Other matters

Transition and inclusivity/diversity

Students who are new to the University, and would like assistance may contact the Transition Office, www.uvic.ca/transition. UVic is committed to providing a safe, supportive learning environment for all members. Further information regarding UVic policies on human rights, equity, discrimination and harassment are located in the Uvic calendar (p. 15), but if you have any particular concerns in our course please do not hesitate to contact me.

Counseling Services

Many, if not most, students experience some difficulties with their mental health during their years as undergraduate students. It is hard to shake the stigma associated with problems like depression and anxiety, but if at any point you can benefit from help with mental health issues, please contact UVic [Counseling Services](#), which is an excellent resource at your disposal on campus. They genuinely want to help, so why not take advantage of this free resource?

Important Dates

Please consult the UVic Calendar's [Academic Year Important Dates](#) for information about last possible dates to withdraw from courses without penalty, examinations period start/end dates, etc.

Technology in Classroom

Some students require laptops or voice recognition apps for their learning strategies, so I do not prohibit their use in the classroom. However, studies demonstrate that multi-tasking reduces the performance of *other nearby students*, so anyone caught on social media, internet surfing, etc. will be asked to leave and potentially subject to disciplinary action.

Academic Advising

For information about declaring a program, academic concessions or interpreting your UVic CAPP report, please visit [Undergraduate Advising](#) or make an appointment with an adviser.

Territory Acknowledgment

The University of Victoria is committed to acknowledging and respecting the Songhees, Esquimalt and WSÁNEĆ peoples on whose traditional territory the university stands and whose historical relationships with the land continue to this day. For information about support for indigenous students and efforts to foster reconciliation, please visit the UVic [Office of Indigenous Academic & Community Engagement](#).

Schedule of lectures and tests

Please note that the schedule is *subject to changes*. Weekly reading assignments will be confirmed during class periods, so please be attentive to announcements in class and on *Coursespaces*. Class time will be divided between lectures and discussion. *Informed* participation in class discussion will be expected, assigned texts should be read *in advance*. Readings are from our textbook unless indicated otherwise.

Week 1 3-9 Sept	Introduction Readings for Friday: Introduction and Maps and Timeline (see Reeve, Miller and Gerson textbook)
Week 2 10-16 Sept	Early Greek Philosophy Tentative readings: Thales, Anaximander, Anaximenes, Pythagoras Explore topics for Reflective Analysis Project
Week 3 17-23 Sept	Early Greek Philosophy Tentative readings: Pythagoras, Xenophanes, Heraclitus, Parmenides, Zeno **Friday 21 September GUEST LECTURE: Dr. Geoffrey Kron, on Ancient Greece** *21 Sept, last day for adding courses*
Week 4 24-30 Sept	Early Greek Philosophy Tentative readings: Parmenides, Zeno, Empedocles, Anaxagoras, Democritus ** Friday 28 September: FIELD TRIP to Greek and Roman Studies. <u>Meet at Clearihue B409</u>** (REQUIRED)
Week 5 1-7 Oct	Socrates and Plato Tentative readings: Euthyphro, Apology, Crito **2 October: Deadline for choice of the topic for short paper/group presentation **
Week 6 8-14 Oct	Socrates and Plato, review and midterm No new readings *Monday 8 October, Thanksgiving Day* **12 October: Mid-term** *12 October: Columbus' Encounter with the Americas Day*
Week 7 15-21 Oct	Plato on love and beauty Tentative readings: Symposium
Week 8 22-28 Oct	Plato on justice and on the first utopia Tentative readings: Republic (selected sections TBA)
Week 9 29 Oct – 4 Nov	Aristotle on the good life (ethics) Tentative readings: Nichomachean Ethics *31 Oct: Last day for withdrawing from courses without penalty of failure*
Week 10 5-11 Nov	Aristotle on what there is (metaphysics) Tentative readings: Metaphysics and Physics (selected sections TBA) **11 November, Remembrance Day** **Friday 9 November: Deadline for short papers to be handed in**

- Week 11
12-18 Nov **Aristotle continued and later schools of philosophy**
Tentative readings: Metaphysics and Physics (selected sections TBA), and Epicurus, Lucretius, Greek Stoics
12-14 November READING BREAK
- Week 12
19-25 Nov **Later schools of philosophy continued**
Tentative readings: Epicurus, Lucretius, Greek Stoics
- Week 13
26 Nov – 2 Dec **GROUP PRESENTATIONS**
- Week 14
3-9 Dec - **Review, *Course Experience Survey* and summary-conclusion**
****Wednesday 5 December: Last day of classes and Final take-home exam handed out****
5 December: National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women
- Week 15
10-16 Dec *****By NOON Monday 10 December: Final exam submission (hardcopy AND Coursespaces)*****