

Introduction to Ancient Philosophy

Ph 207a A01 Spring 2021

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Instructor: Thomas Heyd, Ph.D.
Lectures: TWF 13:30 – 14:20 live
Videos: posted weekly by on Brightspace
Office hours: WF 14:30-15:20 (by Zoom)
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Provisional outline: Given changing circumstances arising from the Covid-19 situation, this outline is subject to changes before start of the course.



Caryatids, Erechtheion (421 - 406 BCE), on the Akropolis of Athens

Lectures

Normally lectures will be conducted over Zoom at the scheduled class time, **13:30 – 14:20 am** Pacific Time. You will find the link to join the meetings on the Brightspace website page. The same link will work for the duration of the course. **All lectures will be recorded and video recordings posted weekly** on the web page, in case that you cannot be present synchronously (no attendance taken). Lecture periods will give you an opportunity to ask questions and engage in discussion. Additional materials, including videos with essential course content, will also be posted on the Brightspace website.

Course description

In this course we consider the earliest reflections in the European philosophical tradition on the structure of the world, the nature of wisdom, the foundations of the good life and the limits of knowledge. Class discussion centred on course topics is highly encouraged. Students from all faculties are welcome to attend.

We begin by respectively reviewing the suggestions that everything is made up of certain basic constituents, such as water, air, atoms or something else, and that the properties of things depend on the proportions of their constituents. We continue by considering classical Greek critiques of traditional religious beliefs, of standard gendered and ethnocentric practices, and of societal structures that allow populists to gain the upper hand in the state.

Furthermore, we consider explanations of how the constantly changing appearances of our world may be related to more stable, underlying, structures and processes, we examine diverse conceptions of justice, and ask whether reason is sufficient to counter the proliferation of unfounded opinions. Throughout the course students are encouraged to develop arguments backed up by reflection and careful reading of the assigned texts.

Technical Help

You'll find a link to the Zoom Help Centre on the Brightspace website along with a link to UVic's Learn Anywhere site. That site is designed to help students navigate all aspects of UVic's online learning environment. Don't hesitate to ask me for help with any technical issues that you run into. If I can't help, I'll find someone who can.

Textbook and additional Readings

Required: Reeve Miller and Gerson (eds.), *Introductory Readings in Ancient Greek and Roman Philosophy* (Hackett, 2015). **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 *Brightspace*.

Course organisation and student engagement

To facilitate comprehension and class discussion, assigned weekly Readings are to be read *ahead of lectures*. Constructive participation and tolerance of the views of others are expected. Everyone is encouraged to be self-reflective about his or her own beliefs, and to constructively contribute to class discussion. Throughout the course, work will be assessed on the basis of A) care in the explanation of key points, B) quality of development of points presented, C) effective and correct use of the English language and clarity, neatness, and organisation of points.

Tips for best performances

- Do readings *ahead of class periods*, read material attentively (by asking questions about the material), and do weekly assignments.
- *Participate* in class discussion with constructive contributions.
- *Contact the instructor* if failing to understand the material.

Graded student activities

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

1. **The final exam** will be a comprehensive take-home exam with short answer and long answer questions. Questions will be handed out on the last day of classes, and the completed exam must be submitted to the Brightspace website **by NOON, five (5) days after the last day of classes**. Late exams will **NOT** be accepted (they will receive 0%). Understanding of material covered and reflective analysis will be expected. Answers to questions will be assessed on the basis of the following three criteria: (1) accurate presentation of the views discussed and explanation of key points, (2) well-developed discussion of points presented, (3) effective and correct use of the English language and clarity, neatness, and organisation of points.

2. **The take-home Mid-Term test** will cover both readings and further points raised in lectures. Both understanding and reflective analysis will be expected. Test questions will likely consist of a combination of shorter and longer answer questions. Same assessment criteria as for the Final Exam.

3. **Group projects**. This component is aimed at **deepening your understanding of Ancient European Philosophy**. Groups of 4 to 6 students choose a topic from a list provided, and develop an insightful approach to a topic from the list provided, grounded in readings, lectures and supplementary research. Each group is to produce a brief group report (worth 50% of the grade) and a 10 minute presentation (worth another 50% of the grade). **In view of Covid-19 precautions, projects should not require face-to-face interactions.**

Schedule: **By the end of the fourth week** groups need to be set up and have selected a topic, and have it approved by the instructor. **By the end of the ninth week** reports are to be handed in. Group presentations will be scheduled in **the last two weeks** of the course. For further information, see the handout on Brightspace.

4. **Participation**. Assessed on the basis of a) *weekly assignments* based on the course readings, b) *constructive* participation in class periods, breakout sessions in group work interactions. Information on weekly assignments can be found on Brightspace.

A grade in the A range will be given if all required assignments were submitted, done with sufficient care to receive a Pass grade, combined with engaged course participation; a grade in the B range will be given if nearly all of the assignments are submitted and course participation was constructive; a grade in the C range will be given if less than 2/3 but more than 1/2 of assignments are submitted, while course participation was constructive; a grade in the D range will be given if 1/2 the required assignments are submitted, while course participation was constructive; any fewer assignments submitted or non-constructive participation, will receive a grade in the F range. As specified below, only in cases of truly extraordinary performance would the participation grade go beyond an A.

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. Answers to questions posed should be in your own words (not copied from the textbook or other sources), and up to half a page long. 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 2021), 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. (All assignments that *pass* will be assigned 85%.) *No late assignments will be accepted.* Further information will be found on Brightspace

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.
- N** An N grade indicates that the student did not complete one or more of the course's essential requirements. "N" is a failing grade and factors into the student's GPA as "0".

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).

Territory acknowledgment

We acknowledge with respect the Lekwungen peoples on whose traditional territory the university stands and the Songhees, Esquimalt and WSÁNEĆ peoples whose historical relationships with the land continue to this day. This acknowledgment entails a commitment to ongoing dialogue and reconciliation with the peoples of these lands. For information about support for indigenous students and efforts to foster reconciliation, please visit the UVic Office of Indigenous Academic & Community Engagement.

Other matters

Late assignment and extensions

Late weekly assignments will *not* be accepted and tests will *not* normally be rescheduled (no make-up exams). If a test is missed for 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 a test and an explanatory statement in writing have to be received *no more*

than ten days after the deadline or test missed. Late assignments will have 5% subtracted per working day from grade unless documentation of illness or family emergency is provided.

Academic integrity and University academic regulations

The University Calendar states that “Academic integrity requires commitment to the values of honesty, trust, fairness, respect, and responsibility and... Any action that contravenes this standard, including misrepresentation, falsification or deception, undermines the intention and worth of scholarly work and violates the fundamental academic rights of members of our community.”

Violations of academic integrity include plagiarism, multiple submissions, falsifying materials subject to academic evaluation, cheating on work, tests and examinations, unauthorized use of an editor, and aiding others to cheat. To avoid plagiarism and cheating please view the Libraries’ plagiarism guide <https://www.uvic.ca/library/research/citation/plagiarism/>. I reserve the right to use plagiarism detection software or other platforms to assess the integrity of student work.

Penalties for violations vary, with first violations generally resulting in a failing grade on the work. Please view https://www.uvic.ca/calendar/undergrad/index.php#/policy/Sk_0xsM_V?bc=true&bcCurrent=08%20-%20Policy%20on%20Academic%20Integrity&bcGroup=Undergraduate%20Academic%20Regulations&bcltemType=policies. Also, please familiarise yourselves with Undergraduate Academic regulations here: <https://www.uvic.ca/calendar/future/undergrad/index.php#/policies>.

Copyright statement

All course content and materials are made available by instructors for educational purposes and for the exclusive use of students registered in their class. The material is protected under copyright law, even if not marked with a ©. Any further use or distribution of materials to others requires the written permission of the instructor, except under fair dealing or another exception in the Copyright Act. Violations may result in disciplinary action under the Resolution of Non-Academic Misconduct Allegations policy (AC1300). Any evidence you are circulating materials without permission will be referred to the Chair of the Philosophy Department for investigation.

Inclusivity/diversity

UVic is committed to providing a safe, supportive learning environment for all members. Information about UVic policies on human rights, equity, discrimination and harassment are available at www.uvic.ca/calendar/undergrad/index.php#/policy/HkQ0pzdAN. If you have any particular concerns about these matters in our course please don’t hesitate to contact me.

Religious accommodation

Information regarding accommodation of religious observance can be located in the UVic Calendar at <https://www.uvic.ca/equity/education/religious/index.php>.

New Student Connect Program

As a critical tool to build student communities and meaningful engagement outside of the learning setting in a predominately online environment, all *new to UVic* students (undergraduate & graduate) will have opportunities to participate in New Student Connect. Participating students will be assigned in small groups by Faculty and/or interest groups to upper year peer mentors who will provide a wealth of knowledge about student life, the UVic student community, available support services, and ways that students can get connected as needed.

More information about New Student Connect can be found at: <https://www.uvic.ca/services/studentlife/initiatives/new-student-connect/index.php>

New Student Mental Health Supports / UVic Support Connect

Many, if not most, students experience some difficulties with their mental health during their years as undergraduate students. This may especially be the case during the present Covid-19 crisis. It is hard to shake the stigma associated with problems like depression and anxiety, but if at any point you believe that you could benefit from help with mental health issues, please contact the new UVic Student Wellness Centre / UVic Support Connect. In addition to providing face to face help, they offer a 24 x 7 phone & online mental health counselling and support program, no matter where you are located, at any time. This is an excellent resource at your disposal on campus. They genuinely want to help, so *do consider taking advantage of this free resource*.

Health Services and Centre for Accessible Learning (CAL)

A note to remind you to take care of yourself, especially in these times. Do your best to maintain a healthy lifestyle by eating well, exercising, getting enough sleep and taking some time to relax. This will help you achieve your goals and cope with stress. All of us benefit from support during times of struggle. You are not alone. The sooner you let any of these on-campus services know your needs the quicker they can assist you in achieving your learning goals. Resources include

- Counselling Services, already mentioned above. See <https://www.uvic.ca/services/counselling/>.
- University Health Services (UHS) provides a full-service primary health clinic for students and coordinates healthy student and campus initiatives. <http://www.uvic.ca/services/health/>
- Students with diverse learning styles and needs are welcome in this course. In particular, if you have a disability/health consideration that may require accommodations, please feel free to approach me and/or the Center for Accessible Learning (CAL) as soon as possible. CAL staff members are available by appointment to assess specific needs, provide referrals, and arrange appropriate accommodations: <https://www.uvic.ca/services/cal/>. Please note that instructors cannot provide CAL-type accommodations without CAL documentation.

Food bank and Community Cabbage

Sometimes students run out of money for food. *Health restrictions permitting*, these two options are available at the Students' Union: 1) "The UVSS Food Bank & Free Store is run by a team of dedicated staff and volunteers and offers all UVic students access to food essentials and free household items", see <https://uvss.ca/foodbank/>. 2) "The Community Cabbage is a student organization at the University of Victoria. We serve a free weekly hot meal to the campus community prepared from reclaimed food – edible but unsellable food donated by grocery stores. A crew of volunteers turn these ingredients into a healthy and delightful vegetarian meal at a community kitchen. Anyone is welcome to come cook with us and/or eat with us!" See <https://uviccommunitycabbage.wordpress.com/about/>.

Religious Accommodation

Information regarding accommodation of religious observance can be located in the UVic Calendar at <https://www.uvic.ca/equity/education/religious/index.php>.

Important dates and academic advising

Important dates for the 2020-2021 Academic Year are found here: <https://www.uvic.ca/calendar/dates/>. Please consult the Important Dates for information about last possible dates to withdraw from courses without penalty, examinations period start/end dates, etc. For information about declaring a program, academic concessions or interpreting your UVic CAPP report, please visit Undergraduate Advising or make an appointment with an advisor.

Tentative schedule of lectures and tests

Please note that this schedule is tentative and will be adjusted as we proceed through the semester. Any changes to the schedule will be announced on the Brightspace website. *Informed* participation in class discussion will be expected, so *please read the assigned texts in advance*. All readings are from our textbook, unless otherwise indicated.

Highly recommended in advance of classes

To get a feeling for what the Ancient texts are like, read the very short texts by Thales, Anaximander and Anaximenes. For a fun video, you could view the film of the play *Symposium (Plato) – The Drinking Party*, found at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Al9u1la6KY&t=2104s>.

Week 1 4-10 Jan	Introduction Readings: Maps and Timeline, Thales **Wednesday 6 Jan: first day of classes**
Week 2 11-17 Jan	Early Greek Philosophy Readings: Anaximander, Anaximenes, Pythagoras, Xenophanes, Heraclitus Explore topics for group projects **Assignments due from this Tuesday, 12 of September, onwards**
Week 3 18-24 Jan	Early Greek Philosophy Readings: Heraclitus (continued), Parmenides, Zeno, Empedocles **Virtual GUEST LECTURE: Dr. Geoffrey Kron, Greek and Roman Studies** *22 January: last date for adding courses*

Week 4 25 Jan-31 Jan	<p>Early Greek Philosophy and introduction to Socrates Readings: continuation of Empedocles, Anaxagoras, Democritus **Friday 29 Jan: final date for groups to form and to select group projects** **31 February: Last Day for Withdrawing without Penalty** **Virtual FIELD TRIP to Greek and Roman Studies, guided by Dr. Alejandro Sinner, Greek and Roman Studies **</p>
Week 5 1-7 Feb	<p>Socrates and Plato Readings: Euthyphro, Apology, Symposium (selections)</p>
Week 6 8-14 Feb	<p>Plato, review and midterm No new readings: Symposium (selections) continued **12 February: Mid-term**</p>
Week 7 15-21 Feb	<p>**READING WEEK** No new readings **22 January: Last day for adding courses**</p>
Week 8 22-28 Feb	<p>Plato on justice Readings: Republic (selections) **28 February: Last Day for Withdrawing without Penalty**</p>
Week 9 1-7 Mar	<p>Aristotle on the good life (ethics) Readings: Nichomachean Ethics (selections) **Friday 5 March: deadline for handing in group reports**</p>
Week 10 8-14 Mar	<p>Aristotle on what there is (metaphysics) Readings: Metaphysics and Physics (selections)</p>
Week 11 15-21 Mar	<p>Later schools of philosophy Readings: Epicurus, Lucretius</p>
Week 12 22-28 Mar	<p>Later schools of philosophy Readings: Greek Stoics (selections)</p>
Week 13 29 Mar-4 Apr	<p>Presentations and <i>Course Experience Survey</i> No new readings *2 April: Good Friday*</p>
Week 14 5-11 Apr	<p>Summary-conclusion and Final Exam **Wednesday 7 April: last day of classes and <u>Final take-home exam questions</u> handed out** ***Exam answers to be submitted on Brightspace by NOON Monday 12 April*** Late answers will not be accepted!</p>