

PHILOSOPHY 350 “Ancient Greek Philosophy”

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General:

Philosophy 350 is a study of Ancient Greek Philosophy starting with the pre-Socratic (i.e., before Socrates) philosophers, discussing Socrates, carrying on with some works of Plato, and finishing with Aristotle. The time span is approximately 650-321 BC. This year we will mostly concentrate on the metaphysics and epistemology of these philosophers, with an eye to understanding, discussing, and describing the development of their style of argumentation...which has become the standard in Western philosophy. Some of the moral and political philosophy of Socrates and Plato will also be discussed. All this will be done in translation. No knowledge of ancient Greek is required; but we will introduce some of the technical terminology employed by these philosophers.

The material to be brought out includes not only the important philosophical points, methodology, presuppositions, and general views of these philosophers, but also two types of more “historical” information will be presented. One type is of the form “who influenced whom, and in what ways?” The second type concerns such matters as dates (of birth/death), other historical events occurring at the time, and some “gossip-y” tales about the ancient thinkers. This last group of facts will not be examined; it is more for your own personal understanding of the field.

The general style of the class will be a lecture, although students are encouraged to ask questions and make comments more or less at any time. Indeed, some portion of your grade is allotted to class participation.

Evaluation:

There will be an essay-style Midterm Exam that everyone must take. Students who want may also submit a term paper (about 10pp long) on the last day of class (paper topics will be passed out later). If you turn in a paper, I will compute a term grade in this fashion: if your midterm exam grade is better than the paper grade, I will count your midterm exam as your term mark; if your paper is better than your midterm exam, then I will weight your paper three times as much as your midterm and then compute your term grade. (So, if you get a 60% on the midterm exam and an 80% on the paper, then your term grade will be $[(80 \times 3) + 60] \div 4$, or 75%.) Your term grade is 40% of your course grade. **Since the paper is not required, NO late papers will be accepted.** Class participation (including attendance) will count for about 10% of your grade. The essay-style Final Exam will be worth 50% of your grade. The final exam may cover some of the material from before the midterm, but will be mostly weighted to the second half of the course.

Required Texts:

I have ordered the following at the University Bookstore:

Marc Cohen & Patricia Curd *Readings in Ancient Greek Philosophy* (Hackett Publishers) ISBN#: 0-87220-538-X.

But the readings we will look at from this anthology are also available in a wide variety of different venues, and if you have them already then there is no compelling reason to get this version of them. (But it is pretty cheap and contains most of what you want to have from Ancient Greece!)

You are expected to have read assigned material before it is discussed in class (you will always be given at least a week's advance notice).