

ANCIENT AND MEDIEVAL WESTERN PHILOSOPHY

PHIL 316 (3 hrs; MWF 10:00-10:50), Manchester College, Fall 2011

Instructor: Dr. Steve Naragon, Office: Ad Bldg., #231c (Phone — *office:* 982-5041; *home:* 982-6033)

Online Syllabus (more detailed): <http://users.manchester.edu/Facstaff/SSNaragon/Online/316-F09/Welcome.html>

Required Texts

- (1) Cohen, Curd, and Reeve, eds., *Readings in Ancient Greek Philosophy: From Thales to Aristotle*, 2nd ed. (Hackett, 2000). [0-87220-538-X] (**NB:** The 1st edition is actually preferable — better paper — if you can find a copy.)
- (2) Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Contra Gentiles*, Book One: *God*, transl. by Anton Pegis (Univ. of Notre Dame Press, 1975). [0-268-01678-X]
- (3) Many brief selections, provided as handouts, from the works of Epicurus, Epictetus, Sextus Empiricus, Plotinus, Augustine, Anselm, Abelard, Ibn-Sina, Ibn-Rushd, Thomas Aquinas, William of Ockham, Meister Eckhart, and Pico della Mirandola, as well as some current secondary literature.

Recommended Texts

- Antony Flew (editor), *A Dictionary of Philosophy*, rev. 2nd edition (St. Martin's, 1979).

Course Objectives

We will read philosophers from the very beginnings of the philosophical enterprise in the west, and then work our way through Plato, Aristotle, and the Hellenists, and end with various medieval thinkers (Jewish, Christian, and Muslim), with a special focus on certain doctrines of Augustine and Aquinas. These texts are quite challenging for most undergraduates — they certainly challenge me at times! — but they will reward your sustained intellectual effort. The readings are multi-layered and well worth your best effort. If you do not try to understand them, of course, then they will strike you as obscure and pointless.

By the end of the course you should have: (1) become acquainted with the nature and early history of Western philosophy; (2) developed your skills for critically evaluating arguments and beliefs; (3) developed a sense of the historiography of philosophy; (4) found the source of a great many of our current beliefs; (5) had ample opportunity to reflect on certain questions confronting us all: How can I know something to be true? What is the good life and how is it attained? What is it to be human?

Some virtues to bring with you into the philosophy classroom: **humility** when comparing your beliefs with those of others; **patience** for listening closely to views that seem foolish or misguided to you; **courage** to advance in the face of adversity what seems to be the correct view; **endurance** for following arguments to their conclusion; **humor** for those moments when you feel the utter futility of your efforts.

Requirements and Grading

Readings. Read the assignments *closely* prior to class, and *always bring the text*. Class discussions and your success in this class depend upon this. If you are not willing to commit yourself to this, then it would be best to withdraw from the course.

Attendance and Participation. A course on philosophy is by its nature aimed at self-examination and discussion; consequently, taking the class requires being there. Being there is the first step, however, but it's not enough. Uninformed talk is worse than silence, so you need to arrive at class having worked through and reflected on the readings for the day. Consequently, part of your participation grade will be based on brief, one-paragraph reflections on some passage in the reading (it can be any passage, so long as it doesn't overlap with the topic of the daily essay. **These pre-class paragraphs are due by 9:00 AM (sent through ANGEL), and late is the same as never.** Each class period will be graded following a 6 pt. rubric (see below).

Almost Daily Essays. An essay topic is provided for nearly every day, and the essays are due **before** class. You will need to complete **fifteen** of these for full credit (that works out to about one essay per week). This flexibility allows you to better fit the requirements of this class to your particular interests and to your overall workload for the semester. These 1-2 page essays should be submitted through ANGEL will be graded following a 5 pt. rubric (below). See the online syllabus for more information.

Exams. There will be three in-class short-essay exams.

Grading. The three exams are worth 15% each of the course grade (3 x 15% = 45%), the set of essays is worth a total of 40%. Participation is 15%.

Plagiarism. Avoid this or perish! *Plagiarism* consists of submitting the statements, ideas, opinions, or findings of another *as if they were your own*. It is *not* plagiarism to copy from or paraphrase a source as long as this is acknowledged and the source is properly cited. See the college *Catalog* for a fuller discussion.

Cell Phones. Please do not bring these to class. If you do bring a cell phone, it needs to be turned off and put away, preferably at the bottom of a very deep pocket or book bag. If you are unable to part company with your cell phone, or are unable to keep it turned off and stowed, then please do not come to class. Thank you.

Participation Rubric (6 points total)

Pre-class paragraph (2 pts)	Quality of contributions (2 pts)	Frequency of participation (2 pts)
2 = Interesting passage, good discussion, helpful questions or worries are raised. 1 = Passage chosen suggests a lack of effort with the text, or else the paragraph lacks enough depth or care.	2 = Comments are relevant and reflect an understanding of the text(s) and previous remarks of other students. 1 = Comments suggest a lack of preparation or lack of attention to the remarks of others.	2 = Active participation at appropriate times. 1 = Occasional participation.

Daily Essay Rubric (5 points total)

Length (1 pt)	Discussion (2 pts)	Mechanics (2 pts)
1 = At least 500 words. 0 = Less than 500 words.	2 = Good grasp of the text/ideas and focused discussion of the topic. 1 = Some unclarity and/or lack of focus.	2 = Good use of topic sentences; no errors of spelling, punctuation, or grammar. 1 = Two or more errors.

READING SCHEDULE

(AGP = *Ancient Greek Philosophy*)

Wed, Aug 31

Introduction to the class

Presocratics & Plato

Fri, Sep 2

Read:

Miletiens

Read: AGP (selections from/about the Miletians).

Mon, Sep 5**Heraclitus and Xenophanes**

Read: AGP (selections).

Wed, Sep 7**Pythagoras**

Read: AGP (selections).

Fri, Sep 9**Parmenides and Zeno**

Read: AGP (selections).

Mon, Sep 12**Pluralists and Atomists**

Read: AGP (selections from Anaxagoras, Empedocles, Leucippus, and Democritus).

Wed, Sep 14**Sophists**

Read: (editor intro + selections from Protagoras and Gorgias).

Fri, Sep 16**Plato: Introduction and Apology**

Read: AGP (editor introduction + dialogue).

Mon, Sep 19**Plato's Euthyphro**

Read: AGP (dialogue)

Wed, Sep 21**Plato's *Meno* (1st half)**

Read: AGP (dialogue)

Fri, Sep 23**Plato's *Meno* (2nd half)**

Read: AGP (dialogue)

Mon, Sep 26**Plato's *Republic*, Bk. I**

Read: AGP (*Republic*, Bk. 1).

Wed, Sep 28**Plato's *Republic*, Bk. I**

Read: (see Sep 30)

Fri, Sep 30**Plato's *Republic*, Bk. II-IV**

Read: AGP (*Republic*, 357a-362c, 368c-376e, 412b-417b, 427d-445e).

Mon, Oct 3**Plato's *Republic*, Bk. VI-VII**

Read: AGP (*Republic*, Bks. 6-7).

Wed, Oct 5**Exam #1**

Aristotle & Hellenism

Fri, Oct 7**Aristotle's *Categories* and *De Interpretatione***

Read: AGP (*Categories*, chs. 1-5; *On Interpretation*, chs. 1-4, 7, 9).

Mon, Oct 10**Aristotle's *Topics* and *Posterior Analytics***

Read: AGP (*Topics*, Bk. 1, chs. 1-2; *Posterior Analytics*, Bk. 1, chs. 1, 3; Bk. 2, ch. 19).

Wed, Oct 12**Aristotle's *Physic***

Read: AGP (*Physics*, Bk. 1, chs. 1, 5-9; Bk. 2, chs. 1-3, 7-8).

Fri, Oct 14**Aristotle's *Generation and Corruption***

Read: (*Generation and Corruption*, Bk. 1, chs. 1, 4; Bk. II, ch. 5).

Mon, Oct 17 — Fall Break**Wed, Oct 19****Aristotle's *Metaphysics***

Read: AGP (*Metaphysics*, Bk. 1; Bk. 4, ch. 1).

Fri, Oct 21**Aristotle's *De Anima***

Read: AGP (*On the Soul*, Bk. 2; Bk. 3, chs. 4, 5, 10).

Mon, Oct 24**Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics***

Read: AGP (*Nicomachean Ethics*, Bk. 1).

Wed, Oct 26**Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics***

Read: AGP (*Nicomachean Ethics*, Bk. 2).

Fri, Oct 28**Epicureanism**

Read: Epicurus, "Letter to Herodotus" (online) and "Letter to Menoeceus" (online).

Mon, Oct 31**Stoicism**

Read: Epictetus, *Handbook* (online).

Wed, Nov 2**Skepticism**

Read: Sextus Empiricus, selection from *Outline of Pyrrhonism* (online)

Fri, Nov 4	Exam #2
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The Middle Ages

Mon, Nov 7**Neo-Platonism — On the Real and Beauty**

Read: Gerson, "Plotinus" (SEP) (online); Plotinus, "On Beauty" (a selection from the *Enneads*) (online).

Wed, Nov 9**Augustine — Basic Doctrines**

Read:

Fri, Nov 11**Augustine — On Creation and Time**

Read: Augustine, *Confessions*, Bk. 11 (online).

Mon, Nov 14**Ibn-Sina (Avicenna) — On the Soul**

Read: Ibn-Sina, *Concerning the Soul* (selection) (online).

Wed, Nov 16**Ibn-Rushd (Averroes) — On Reading Scripture**

Read: Ibn-Rushd, *The Decisive Treatise* (online).

Fri, Nov 18**Moses Maimonides — On Negative Theology**

Read: Moses Maimonides, *A Guide for the Perplexed* (selection) (online).

Mon, Nov 21**Peter Abelard — On Universals**

Read: Peter Abelard, *On Universals* (selection) (online).

...Thanksgiving...**Mon, Nov 28****Aquinas — Faith and Reason**

Read: Aquinas, *Summa Contra Gentiles*, Bk. I, chs. 1-9.

Wed, Nov 30**Aquinas — On Proving God's Existence**

Read: Aquinas, *Summa Contra Gentiles*, Bk. I, chs. 10-13.

Fri, Dec 2 — Class does not meet**Mon, Dec 5****William of Ockham — On Divine Will**

Read: R. J. Snell, "Overcoming Omnipotence" (online).

Wed, Dec 7**Meister Eckhart — On Mystical Awareness of God**

Read: Meister Eckhart, "Sermon #1" (online); Reiner Schürmann, "Meister Eckhart" (online).

Fri, Dec 9**Pico della Mirandola — On Human Beings**

Read: "Giovanni Pico della Mirandola," in the *Catholic Encyclopedia* (online); Pico, "Oration on Man (selection)" (online).

Finals Week	Exam #3
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