

# ANCIENT AND MEDIEVAL WESTERN PHILOSOPHY

PHIL 316 (3 hrs; MWF 2:00-2:50), Manchester University, Fall 2015

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**Instructor:** Dr. Steve Naragon, Office: ACEN 233 (Phone — *office*: 982-5041; *home*: 982-6033)

**Online Syllabus** (more detailed): <http://users.manchester.edu/Facstaff/SSNaragon/Online/316-F15/Welcome.html>

## Required Texts

- (1) Cohen, Curd, and Reeve, eds., *Readings in Ancient Greek Philosophy: From Thales to Aristotle*, 4<sup>th</sup> ed. (Hackett, 2011). [978-1-60384-462-8] (**NB:** Earlier editions are OK, but the 4<sup>th</sup> edition has updated material on the Presocratics.)
- (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.

## 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 attention. 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; and (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 does it mean 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 sense 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 12:00 PM (submitted by email), 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 D2L 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. 0 = Nothing submitted.	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. 0 = Did not actively participate in class.	2 = Active participation at appropriate times. 1 = Occasional participation. 0 = Did not actively participate in class.

**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. 0 = Considerable confusion regarding the text or its explication.	2 = Good use of topic sentences; no errors of spelling, punctuation, or grammar. 1 = Two to four more errors. 0 = More than four errors.

**READING SCHEDULE**(AGP = *Ancient Greek Philosophy*)**Wed. Aug 26**

Introduction to the class

***Presocratics & Plato*****Fri. Aug 28****Miletians**

Read: AGP (selections from/about the Miletians); Curd, "Presocratic Philosophy" (online).

**Mon. Aug 31****Heraclitus and Xenophanes**

Read: AGP (selections).

**Wed. Sep 2****Pythagoras**

Read: AGP (selections).

**Fri. Sep****Parmenides and Zeno**

Read: AGP (selections).

**Mon. Sep 7****Pluralists and Atomists**

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

**Wed. Sep 9****Sophists**

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

**Fri. Sep 11****Plato: Introduction and Apology**Read: AGP (editor introduction + *Apology*).**Mon. Sep 14****Plato's Euthyphro**Read: AGP (*Euthyphro*)**Wed. Sep 16****Plato's Meno**Read: AGP (*Meno*, 70a-86c)**Fri. Sep 18****Plato's Meno**Read: AGP (*Meno*, 86c-100b)**Mon. Sep 21****Plato's Republic, Bk. I**Read: AGP (*Republic*, Bk. 1).**Wed. Sep 23****Plato's Republic, Bk. II**Read: AGP (*Republic*, 357a-362c, 368c-376e)**Fri. Sep 25****Plato's Republic, Bk. III-IV**Read: AGP (*Republic*, 357a-362c, 368c-376e, 412b-417b, 427d-445e).**Mon. Sep 28****Plato's Republic, Bk. VI-VII**Read: AGP (*Republic*, Bks. 6-7).**Wed, Sep 30****Exam #1*****Aristotle & Hellenism*****Fri. Oct 2****Aristotle's Categories and De Interpretatione**Read: AGP (*Categories*, chs. 1-5; *On Interpretation*, chs. 1-4, 7, 9).

**Mon, Oct 5****Aristotle's Topics and Posterior Analytics**

Read: AGP (*Topics*, Bk. 1, chs. 1-2, 5; *Posterior Analytics*, Bk. 1, chs. 1, 3; Bk. 2, ch. 19).

**Wed, Oct 7****Aristotle's *Physic***

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

**Fri, Oct 9****Aristotle's Generation and Corruption**

Read: (*Generation and Corruption*, Bk. 1, chs. 1, 3-4; Bk. II, chs. 3-5).

**Mon, Oct 12 — Fall Break****Wed, Oct 14****Aristotle's Metaphysics**

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

**Fri, Oct 16****Aristotle's *De Anima***

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

**Mon, Oct 19****Aristotle's Nicomachean Ethics**

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

**Wed, Oct 21****Aristotle's Nicomachean Ethics**

Read: AGP (*Nicomachean Ethics*, Bks. 2-3).

**Fri, Oct 23****Epicureanism**

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

**Mon, Oct 26****Stoicism**

Read: Epictetus, *Handbook* (online).

**Wed, Oct 28****Skepticism**

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

**Fri, Oct 30****Exam #2**

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**The Middle Ages**

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**Mon, Nov 2****Neo-Platonism — On the Real and Beauty**

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

**Wed, Nov 4****Augustine — Basic Doctrines**

Read:

**Fri, Nov 6****Augustine — On Creation and Time**

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

**Mon, Nov 9****Ibn-Sina (Avicenna) — On the Soul**

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

**Wed, Nov 11****Ibn-Rushd (Averroes) — On Reading Scripture**

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

**Fri, Nov 13****Moses Maimonides — On Negative Theology**

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

**Mon, Nov 16****Anselm — On God's Existence**

Read: Anselm, *Proslogion* (selection) (online).

**Wed, Nov 18****Peter Abelard — On Universals**

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

**Fri, Nov 20****Aquinas — Faith and Reason**

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

**Mon, Nov 23****Aquinas — On Proving God's Existence**

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

**— Thanksgiving —****Mon, Nov 30****William of Ockham — On Divine Will**

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

**Wed, Dec 2****Meister Eckhart — On Mystical Awareness of God**

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

**Fri, Dec 4****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**