

History of Philosophy I: Ancient and Medieval Philosophy

Philosophy 260

Spring 2007

Dr. Brandon C. Look

Class Meeting Time: TR 11:00-12:15

Class Meeting Place: CB 214

Instructor's Office: 1401 POT

Office Hours: T 1:00-3:00

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Course website: www.uky.edu/~look/260main.htm

Course Description:

The aim of this course is to study the central texts and issues of ancient and medieval philosophy. We will concentrate on the thought of the two dominant figures of Greek philosophy, Plato and Aristotle, and then survey much of medieval philosophical thought. Among the issues to be covered are the following: What can we know? What does the world consist of? What is the supreme good? Or what constitutes the good life? Are human beings free? And does God exist?

As Alfred North Whitehead once wrote, "The safest general characterization of the European philosophical tradition is that it consists of a series of footnotes to Plato." As you will see, there is something very true about this claim.

Course Requirements:

There will be **two mid-term (essay) exams** during the course of the semester, each of which will count for **25% of the final grade**. There will also be a **final (essay) exam**. It will count for the remaining **40% of the final grade**. — **There will be no make-up exams**. Finally, **10% of the final grade** will be determined by **classroom participation and quizzes**. (If you read the required texts and think about them and attend class, you'll be fine.)

By "essay exam" is meant that students will be required to write several short essays in the allotted time. Here are some sample topics: (1) How does Anselm argue for the existence of God? How convincing is this argument? (2) What are the Platonic Forms? And why does Plato posit their existence? (3) How does Aristotle conceive of substance? (4) According to Plato and Aristotle, what are the grounds of our knowledge? (5) According to Augustine, in what sense can human beings be said to be free? (6) Looking at Plato, Aristotle, Augustine and Aquinas, what is the soul, and what is its relation to the body?

Grading:

As should be clear from above, each student's final grade will depend upon the quality of his or her written work – or my estimation of the quality of his or her written work. Does this mean that the grading is "subjective"? Yes. But the grading is neither arbitrary nor whimsical. With each essay, I ask, (1) How well has the student understood the text(s)? (2) Has the student demonstrated that he/she has thought critically about the ideas at issue? and (3) How well has the student argued his or her point? (This question sometimes turns out to be, Does the student have a point at all?)

The exams will be graded on a 100 point scale with the usual corresponding grades (A = 90-100; B = 80-89; C = 70-79; D = 60-69; E < 60). The classroom participation/quiz component of the final grade will work like this: I will give *short* quizzes (usually one question a pop) throughout the semester based on the assigned readings; you will answer the question *on an index card*. The grading scale: 0 points = absent from class; 1 point = attending class but no evidence of having read the text; 2 points = correct answer to the question. At the end of the semester, I will add these points, create a curve and factor it into the final grade.

Class Policies:

- No incompletes will be given in this class, except in *extraordinary* circumstances.
- All work must be the student's own. If a student is caught cheating, he or she will, according to University Regulations, be failed for the course and possibly expelled from the University.

Required Texts:

The following texts are required for the course and are available at both Kennedy's and the UK Bookstores:

- *Readings in Ancient Greek Philosophy: From Thales to Aristotle*, Cohen, Curd, and Reeve (eds.), 3rd edition, Hackett: Indianapolis, 2005.
- *Philosophy in the Middle Ages*, Hyman & Walsh (eds.), 2nd edition, Hackett: Indianapolis, 1986.

Schedule

- 1/11 Introduction, Lecture on the Pre-Socratics
- 1/16 Plato, *Apology*
1/18 Plato, *Protagoras* and *Gorgias* (selections)
- 1/23 Plato, *Phaedo*
1/25 Plato, *Phaedo*
- 1/30 Plato, *Symposium*
2/1 Plato, *Symposium*
- 2/6 Plato, *Republic* (I & IV)
2/8 Plato, *Republic* (V-VI)
- 2/13 Plato, *Republic* (VII-IX)
2/15 Plato, *Parmenides* and *Timaeus* (selections)
- 2/20 **Mid-term exam I**
2/22 Aristotle, *Categories*, *De Interpretatione*, *Topics*
- 2/27 Aristotle, *Posterior Analytics*
3/1 Aristotle, *Physics*
- 3/6 Aristotle, *Physics*
3/8 Aristotle, *Metaphysics*
- 3/13 Spring Break
3/15 Spring Break
- 3/20 Aristotle, *Metaphysics*
3/22 Aristotle, *De Anima*
- 3/27 Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*
3/29 Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*
- 4/3 **Mid-term exam II**
4/5 Augustine, *On Free Will*
- 4/10 Augustine, *On Free Will* and *City of God* (selections)
4/12 Anselm, *Proslogion*
- 4/17 Thomas Aquinas, *On Being and Essence* and *Summa Theologica*
4/19 Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*
- 4/24 John Duns Scotus, *Oxford Commentary* (selections)
4/26 William of Ockham, *Summa, Commentary on the Sentences* (selections)

5/2 **Final Exam: 10:30am**