

Welcome to History of Western Philosophy: Ancient Period

We are going to focus on several of the most influential, profound, provocative, and sometimes beautiful works of Ancient Greek philosophy, by Plato and Aristotle. These works (mostly) focus on ethical questions, but in a manner characteristic of Greek philosophy, they quickly lead to questions about the nature of knowledge, the human soul, and the natural world; we will pursue those questions, too.

Please take time before our first class to read the course policies below.

I look forward to seeing you in class!

History of Western Philosophy: Ancient Period

Assignments and Other Information about the Course

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1. The Teacher

My name is Mathis Koschel. I am interested in the history of philosophy generally. For, I believe, we can learn a lot from it. Originally from Germany, I wrote my dissertation at the University of Chicago, about Kant's and Hegel's conceptions of nature. You can reach me under: koschel@usc.edu

My office hours are Wednesdays, 4-5 p.m. in STO 116 (Stonier building). Please come to office hours if you have any questions—be they about specific material or the course more generally.

2. Course Tools

The main course tool is blackboard. I will put announcements and additional material there.

3. Graded Requirements

Philosophy is a practice of thinking and conversing, not a body of information. In this course you will be learning not only *what* Socrates, Plato and Aristotle said, but *why* they believed those things and why they thought those things *are important*. You will be deciding *for yourself* whether you think their arguments are compelling or whether, even if you don't fully agree, you think they were on to something that matters. And you will be learning how to develop your ideas *in conversation* with your teacher and your fellow students.

The graded assignments for this course are intended to gauge your achievement in this practice of philosophy.

- 3 pp paper—argument analysis (group work, groups of 2-3 students), due Friday, February 10 (20%)
- 5-7 pp paper—due Friday, March 10 (25%)
- Small group video feedback, due by Friday, April 21 (required for credit on video assignment)
- 5-10 minute video explaining an idea and its significance, due Wednesday, April 26 (25%)
 - Selection of topic by Wednesday, April 12
- 30-45 minute group tutorial—sign up for one slot during the quarter (10%)
- Participation (20%)

You must submit all assignments in order to receive credit for the course.

4. Expectations for Class Engagement

Attendance: You are expected to attend all lectures. This gives you the opportunity to participate in group discussions, ask questions, and provide other sorts of feedback.

It is up to you to decide whether some other appointment is more important than attending an individual session of the course. But be aware that every absence creates a hole in your understanding of the material.

Participation: Class participation involves participating in group discussion, asking questions as well as answering them/making comments, and sending in (to koschel@usc.edu) two questions per session *until 5pm the day before the session*. The questions should be one or two lines long each, not more than five. Class participation is necessary in order to receive a quality grade.

5. Requesting Accommodations

I am happy to work with students who have been granted accommodations. Please let me know.

6. Absence Policy

You are expected to attend all lectures. It is up to you to decide whether some other appointment is more important than attending an individual session of the course. But be aware that every absence creates a hole in your understanding of the material.

If it comes to my attention that a student is skipping lecture on a regular basis, then this will lower their participation grade.

7. Extension Policy

Extensions are granted only in cases of serious illness, the death of a close relative or friend, or other traumatic event. You will need to show a message from your doctor, counsellor, or advisor. Otherwise, your grade will be lowered by 1/3 of a letter grade (e.g., A- to a B+) every 24 hours.

8. Required Books

You need the following books. Buy them early.

- Plato, *Five Dialogues: Euthyphro, Apology, Crito, Meno, Phaedo*, translated by G.M.A. Grube, Hackett Publishing, ISBN: 978-0872206335 *
- Plato, *Republic*, translated by G.M.A. Grube, revised by C.D.C. Reeve, Hackett Publishing ISBN: 978-0872201361 *
- Aristotle, *The Basic Works of Aristotle*, edited by R. McKeon, intro. By C.D.C. Reeve, Modern Library, ISBN 9780375757990

*If you prefer, instead of buying individual Platonic dialogues, you may buy *Plato: Complete Works*, edited by J. M. Cooper, Hackett Publishing, ISBN 0-87220-349-2.

9. Other Readings and Videos

Supplementary readings—some by either Plato or Aristotle, others by modern scholars—will be available on blackboard. Unless stated otherwise, these are optional.

10. List of Weekly Assignments

Week 1: January 9-13

Monday 1/9

- Lecture Topic: Introduction
- Required Reading: –

Wednesday 1/11

- Lecture Topic: Who Was Socrates?
- Required Reading: Plato, *Apology* (beginning-24b)

Week 2: January 16-20

Monday 1/16

- MLK day. No lecture

Wednesday 1/18

- Lecture Topic: Elenchus, Death, and Logical Clarity
- Required Reading: Plato, *Apology* (24b-34b)

Week 3: January 23-27

Monday 1/23

- Lecture Topic: Virtue, Honesty, and the Significance of Knowledge
- Required Reading: Plato, *Apology* (34b-end)

Wednesday 1/25

- Lecture Topic: What Is Justice?
- Required Reading: Plato, *Republic* (beginning-336a)

Week 4: January 30-February 3

Monday 1/30

- Lecture Topic: Is Justice Nothing But Power?
- Required Reading: Plato, *Republic* (336b-342e)

Wednesday 2/1

- Lecture Topic: Justice as an Art
- Required Reading: Plato, *Republic* (336b-354c)

Week 5: February 6-10

Monday 2/6

- Lecture Topic: Justice as a Good For Its Own Sake & The Fundamentals of Social Organization
- Required Reading: Plato, *Republic* (357a-372b)

Wednesday 2/8

- Lecture Topic: Decadence and the Origins of War
- Required Reading: Plato, *Republic* (372c-376d)

Friday, 2/10

- 3-pp argument analysis due by 5 p.m. (group work)

Week 6: February 13-17

Monday 2/13

- Lecture Topic: The One Great Thing and How to Achieve It
- Required Reading: Plato, *Republic* (416d-427c)

Wednesday 2/15

- Lecture Topic: Justice in the City
- Required Reading: Plato, *Republic* (427d-434c)

Week 7: February 20-24

Monday 2/20

- President's day. No lecture

Wednesday 2/22

- Lecture Topic: Parts of the Soul & Justice in the Individual
- Required Reading: Plato, *Republic* (434d-444a)

Week 8: February 27-March 3

Monday 2/27

- Lecture Topic: Parts of the Soul & Justice in the Individual (ct'd)
- Required Reading: Plato, *Republic* (434d-444a; 588b-592b)

Wednesday 3/1

- Lecture Topic: Equality of the Sexes
- Required Reading: Plato, *Republic* (444a-457c)

Week 9: March 6-10

Monday 3/6

- Lecture Topic: What is Knowledge?
- Required Reading: Plato, *Republic* (502d-511e)

Wednesday 3/8

- Lecture Topic: The Allegory of the Cave
- Required Reading: Plato, *Republic* (514a-521b)

Friday 3/10

- 5-7 pp paper due by 5 p.m.

Week 10: March 13-17

Monday 3/13

- Spring break. No lecture

Wednesday 3/15

- Spring break. No lecture

Week 11: March 20-24

Monday 3/20

- Lecture Topic: The Concept of Nature—Form, Matter, Goal
- Required Reading: Aristotle, Aristotle, *Physics* II.1-4, 7-9

Wednesday 3/22

- Lecture Topic: Souls and the Nature of Living Things
- Required Reading: Aristotle, *Physics* II.1-4, 7-9; *De Anima* II.1-2

Week 12: March 27-31

Monday 3/27

- Lecture Topic: Is a Corpse Still a Human Body?; Politics
- Required Reading: Aristotle, *De Anima* II.1-4; *Politics* I.1-2 (focus 1253a7-18)

Wednesday 3/29

- Lecture Topic: What Is Happiness?
- Required Reading: Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* I.1-7; *Metaphysics* I.1

Week 13: April 3-7

Monday 4/3

- Lecture Topic: What Is Virtue and How Do We Get It?
- Required Reading: Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* I.13 & II (entire)

Wednesday 4/5

- No lecture

Week 14: April 10-14

Monday 4/10

- Lecture Topic: Courage, Generosity, Good Temper, Virtues of Talking
- Required Reading: Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* II (entire), III.6-9, IV.5-9

Wednesday 4/12

- Lecture Topic: Justice

- Required Reading: Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* V.1-6; *Politics* I.1-2 (again)
- Short video topic due by midnight

Week 15: April 17-21

Monday 4/17

- Lecture Topic: Is Vice Voluntary?
- Required Reading: Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* III.1-5

Wednesday 4/19

- Lecture Topic: Is Virtue Sufficient for Happiness? Is It Even Necessary?
- Required Reading: Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* I.10

Friday 4/21:

- Deadline for small group meeting about short videos

Week 16: April 24-28

Monday 4/24

- Lecture Topic: Friendship, Where Virtue and Happiness Come Together
- Required Reading: *Nicomachean Ethics* VIII.1-6, IX.8

Wednesday 4/26

- Lecture Topic: Why Do We Need Friends In Order To Be Happy?
- Required Reading: *Nicomachean Ethics* IX.9 & 12; X.7-8
- 5-10 minute short video due