PHIL 251H.02: Introduction to Ancient Philosophy

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Philosophy 251: Introduction to Ancient Philosophy

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Course description:

This course will introduce you to some of the central writings of Plato and Aristotle. We will begin with Plato’s early dialogues and proceed to his most famous work, the Republic. Topics covered will include Socratic definition, the examined life, knowledge, the theory of recollection, the theory of forms, the immortality of the soul, eros, challenges to morality, the analogy of city and soul, the tripartition of the soul, education in the ideal city, and the famous metaphors of the sun, line and cave. Turning to Aristotle, we will read selections from his Categories, Physics, De Anima, and Nicomachean Ethics. Topics covered will include substance, change, nature, hylomorphism, the four causes, soul as first actuality, perception, happiness (eudaimonia), virtue, voluntary action, responsibility, friendship, and the place of theoretical study in a happy life.

Required texts:


Note: You must use these translations (no exceptions!). Translations of Plato’s and Aristotle’s works vary widely in quality and the vast majority of them are terrible. The ones listed above are all very good. Moreover, it will be very useful for us all to be using the same translation, since different translators often translate important terms differently.

Plato: Complete Works, ed. John Cooper, has all the right translations of the Platonic dialogues we’ll be reading, so if you have it already there’s no need to buy the individual Hackett editions. If you would prefer to buy the Complete Works rather than the individual editions go ahead and do so, but it’s big and heavy, and so won’t be as easy to bring to class. This book does not, of course, contain the texts we’ll be reading from Aristotle, so even if you have it you’ll still need to get the Aristotle, Selections volume.

Please always bring the text we are reading to class with you!
**Grading and exams:**

There will be three in-class exams, each worth 20% of your grade. The exams will include both short-answer questions and passages to be identified and commented on. I realize identifying passages from memory can be difficult, but the passages that you will be asked to identify will be very central, important passages that we discuss in class at length. Anyone who does the reading, shows up for lecture, and pays attention should have no trouble identifying and commenting on them. Also, you will be allowed to skip a couple questions with no penalty.

The first exam will be on 9/19 and will deal with the *Euthyphro*, *Apology*, *Meno*, and *Phaedo*. The second will be on 10/22 and will deal with the *Symposium* and *Republic*. The third will be on 11/12, and will deal with the *Categories*, *Physics*, and *De Anima*. You must take all three exams to pass the course. If you cannot make an exam date, please let me know as early as possible, at least a week in advance. If an emergency comes up, we can work something out, but please unless you have a genuine emergency try to be considerate and give me ample time to make alternative arrangements for you to take the exam.

There will also be a final exam, worth 40% of your grade. It will consist of six or seven short essay questions, of which you will be asked to respond to three. One of the questions you answer must be about the *Nicomachean Ethics*. I will give you a study guide well in advance. The exam will be held on Thursday, December 11 from 8:00-10:00.

**A note about attendance and etiquette:**

I will not be keeping track of attendance, because I'd like to treat you like adults, but I must warn you: not coming to class regularly will almost certainly lead to you doing poorly in the course. The exams will be very difficult for anyone who has not been around for class discussion.

Also, if you must have your cell phone turned on in class, please remember to silence it, and please don't read or send text messages. Also, please do not have a laptop on during class. If you need to leave early, please let me know at the beginning of class, and sit somewhere where you can leave without causing a commotion.

**Academic misconduct:**

You are strictly held to the University of Montana Student Conduct Code (http://www.umt.edu-SA). The in-class exams are closed-note: you may not consult anything but your own mind in order to answer questions on the exam. You may not use cell-phones, or any electronic devices to aid you, nor fellow students, nor fellow students' answers on exams, etc. You will receive no credit for any exam that you cheat on. Your conduct will also be reported to the Dean.

**Special needs:**
Students with disabilities will receive reasonable modifications in this course. Your responsibilities are to request them from me with sufficient advance notice, and to be prepared to provide verification of disability and its impact from Disability Services. Please speak with me after class or during my office hours to discuss the details. For more information, visit the Disability Services for Students website at www.umt.edu/dss/

**Tentative Schedule:**

This schedule is subject to change; consult Blackboard (https://courseware.umt.edu/) for the most up to date class information, especially if you miss a class. You are held responsible for staying up to date in class even if you were absent. IMPORTANT: I will often tell you to read some parts of the reading especially carefully and/or skip other parts entirely. I will announce such things in class, but I will also post them on Blackboard. (Note: for some reason I am not able to access Blackboard as of the first day of class. I hope to have this resolved very soon. If I need to announce anything in the meantime, I will email the class.)

8/25: Introduction

**Part I: Plato**

8/27: Introduction to Plato, *Euthyphro*

8/29: *Euthyphro* cont.

9/1: Labor Day, NO CLASS.

9/3: *Apology* 17a-28b

9/5: *Apology* 28b-end

9/8: *Meno* 70a-86b

9/10: *Meno* 86b-end

9/12: *Phaedo* 59d-78a (57a-59d optional)

9/15: *Phaedo* 78b-95e

9/17: *Phaedo* 96a-end

9/19: FIRST EXAM

9/22: Symposium
9/24: Symposium cont.

9/26: Symposium cont.

9/29: Republic I

10/1: Republic II

10/3: NO CLASS (I’ll be out of town)

10/6: Republic II cont.

10/8: Republic IV

10/10: Republic IV cont.

10/13: Republic IV cont.

10/15: Republic V

10/17: Republic VI-VII

10/20: Republic VI-VII cont.

10/22: SECOND EXAM

Part II: Aristotle

10/24: Introduction to Aristotle, Categories

10/27: Physics I

10/29: Physics I cont.

10/31: Physics II

11/3: Physics II cont.

11/5: Physics II cont.

11/7: De Anima

11/10: De Anima cont.

11/12: THIRD EXAM
11/14: *Nicomachean Ethics* I
11/17: *Nicomachean Ethics* I cont., II
11/19: *Nicomachean Ethics* III
11/21: *Nicomachean Ethics* III cont.
11/24: *Nicomachean Ethics* VIII-IX
11/26-11/28: Thanksgiving break, NO CLASS.
12/1: *Nicomachean Ethics* X
12/3: *Nicomachean Ethics* X cont.
12/5: catch up and/or review for final