

Ancient Philosophy

Phil 3431, Fall Semester, 2017 (CRN 81305)

Department of Literature and Philosophy
College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences

Georgia Southern University

Location: Newton Building, 1110

Credit Hours: 3

Last Day to Add/Drop: August 17

Last Day to Withdraw without Academic Penalty: October 9

Professor: Dr. Guy Schuh

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Office Phone: 478-8537

Office Location: Newton Building, 3308E

Class Meets: T/TH 12:30-1:45

Office Hours: T/TH, 3:30-5:30; F, 2:30-3:30

Note: I will have to miss one Friday office hours per a month for faculty meetings. I will notify you in advance and will be free to meet later that afternoon by appointment.

Course Description

(Catalogue)

The main ideas of Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, the Stoics, the Epicureans, Plotinus, and St. Augustine and a consideration of how those ideas apply to our lives.

(Instructor)

We will examine two important issues in the tradition of Ancient Philosophy. First: what is the nature of philosophy (*philosophia*)? Does philosophy have a unique subject or goal? What is it? We will examine different answers to this question throughout the Ancient philosophical tradition. Second: what, if anything, is the connection between being a good person and living a good life? This was a topic of great interest in Ancient ethical thought. We will examine several different ways of conceiving the connection (or lack of connection) between the two.

Required Texts

Gorgias by Plato. Translated by Donald J. Zeyl. Hackett. ISBN: 0872200167.

Plato: Five Dialogues: Euthyphro, Apology, Crito, Meno, Phaedo. Hackett. ISBN: 0872206335.

Aristotle: Introductory Readings. Terence Irwin and Gail Fine. Hackett. ISBN: 0872203395.

*All other readings are available through folio. Electronic readings should be printed out and brought to class.

Reading

Students are expected to have done an initial reading of the weekly assigned reading by the start of the first class of that week. They are then expected to do a second, more careful reading of the particular section we will be discussing in the next class. I will let you know what that is at the end of the previous class.

Assignments

- One 2-3 pg. paper (**25%**). There will be two opportunities to do a shorter paper. Students must choose **one** of them. The first opportunity is for a reading in the **first** unit. The second opportunity is for a reading in the **second** unit. Students can either write an exegetical paper, addressing a question or interpretive difficulty in one of the readings, or they can write a critical paper, challenging, or responding to a challenge, directed at a position taken by a philosopher in one of the readings. More information will be provided in class closer to the paper due dates.
- One class presentation (**25%**). All class presentations require an accompanying handout. Both on the handout and in their presentation, students must (a) analyze and outline a section of the reading and (b) present a difficulty or perplexity about that section for the class to discuss. Students should check in with me before-hand to delineate a section of the reading for their presentation.
- Final, 4-6 pg. paper (**40%**). The final paper is on a topic arranged in advance with me. Students are permitted—even encouraged—to expand their short papers into their final paper in light of feedback.
- Participation (**10%**). The participation grade will not hurt you. It will at least match your average from the other assignments. However, excellent participation in class can boost your grade. If, for whatever reason, you have difficulty participating in class, discussing material with me during office hours also counts toward your participation grade.

Attendance

Attendance and punctuality are required and will be reflected in your final grade. Class begins promptly at 12:30. If you are not present when the roll is called, you will be counted as late. Two late arrivals will be counted as one absence. After 3 unexcused absences, every additional absence will result in a 5% deduction in your final course grade.

Academic Integrity

Students are expected to uphold the Academic Honesty Code as published in the *Georgia Southern University Student Conduct Code*. If you do not know the school definitions of cheating and plagiarism, familiarize yourself: <http://academics.georgiasouthern.edu/fye/students/first-year/academic-honesty/>

All instances of plagiarism and/or cheating will be reported to the appropriate university officials. At a bare minimum, the assignment in question will receive a failing grade. Additional penalties will vary with the circumstances.

Technology

Unless you have received permission from me or from the Student Disability Resource Center, please do not make use of earphones, computers, tablets, cell phones, or other electronic devices during class; use of these during class time will result in an absence for that day.

Learning Outcomes

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

- Present and explain the thought of a philosopher—or a philosophical position—accurately and clearly.
- Compare alternative philosophical positions, identifying their strengths and weakness as well as the central arguments for them and their support. Demonstrate an ability to think through complex issues with Clarity.
- Present an independent evaluation of or response to the material. Support one's own philosophical positions with well-reasoned argumentation, providing a thesis that is properly stated, focused, and clear, and defending this thesis in a way that is well-organized and well-supported.

Disability Accommodation Statement

This class complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Students with disabilities needing academic accommodations must:

- (1) Register with and provide documentation to the Student Disability Resource Center (SDRC), and,
- (2) Provide a letter to the instructor from the SDRC indicating what you need may be for academic accommodation.

This should be done within the first week of class. Students with these particular needs should contact the Student Disability Resource Center, Hampton Hall, 912.871.1566.

Note: All information contained in this syllabus, including the course schedule and assignments, is subject to revision as the professor deems necessary.

Schedule

Section 1: What is Philosophy?

Week 1 (Aug. 14-18). Introduction; Selections from the Pre-Socratics

Week 2 (Aug. 21-5). Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, Book 1, Chapters 1-2

Week 3 (Aug. 28-Sept. 1). Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, Book 1, Chapters 3-4; *Physics*, Book 2, Chapter 3

Week 4 (Sept. 4-8). Xenophon, *Memorabilia*, Book 1, Chapters 1-2

Week 5 (Sept. 11-15). Plato, *Apology* (pgs. 22-39)

Week 6 (Sept. 18-22). Plato, *Apology* (rest)

Week 7 (Sept. 25-9). Plato, *Rival Lovers*; *Phaedo* (pg. 134-end).

Week 8 (Oct. 2-6). Finish *Phaedo*; Section Overview

Section 2: Morality and the Good Life

Week 9 (Oct. 9-13). Epicurus, *Letter to Menoecus*; *The Principle Doctrines*

***Tuesday, Oct. 10: First Paper Opportunity**

Week 10 (Oct. 15-20). Thucydides, "Melian Dialogue"; Gorgias, pgs. 1-21

*Tuesday Oct. 16: Thucydides, "Melian Dialogue"

*Thursday Oct. 18: Plato, Gorgias pgs. 1-21

Week 11 (Oct. 23-7). Plato, *Gorgias*, pgs. 21-50 (Socrates and Polus)

Week 12 (Oct. 30-Nov. 3). Plato, *Gorgias*, pgs. 51-113 (Socrates and Callicles)

Week 13 (Nov. 6-10). Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, Book 1, Chapters 1-6

Week 14 (Nov. 13-17). Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, Book 1, Chapters 7-10, 13

***Thursday November 14: Second Paper Opportunity**

Week 15 (Nov. 20-4). Thanksgiving Break

Week 16 (Nov. 27-Dec. 1). Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, Book 10, chapters 6-8; Section Overview

Week 17 (Dec. 4-8). No out of class reading. In-class handout.

***Thursday Dec. 7:** Last class; **Final Papers Due by Thursday Night.**