

Philosophy 3100: Ancient and Medieval Philosophy

Tuesdays 6:30-9:00

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Office: Byrnes 429

Office Hours: Tuesdays 1-2; Wednesdays 10-11; by appointment

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Course Description:

This is a history of philosophy course designed to explore central themes and texts from the philosophical traditions of the ancient and Medieval Worlds. In particular, we will focus on concepts of the Good, the Soul, and the relationship between the two.

Course Objectives:

The successful student will be able to:

1. Identify several key Ancient and Medieval philosophers and locate them in their historical context.
2. Identify key philosophical issues of concern to each of these philosophers and describe the philosopher's contribution to the understanding of these issues.
3. Formulate, write, and defend an argumentative thesis in essay form.
4. Understand and use key terms relevant to competent discourse in Ancient and Medieval philosophy.

Required Texts:

Each of the required texts is available for purchase in the university bookstore, online from Amazon.com and from various booksellers.

1. Plato, *Five Dialogues*, (Hackett Publishing Company, 2004)
2. *The Essential Plotinus* (Hackett Classics, 1975)
3. Boethius, *The Consolation of Philosophy*, (Penguin Classics, 2000)

Other supplemental readings may be posted online throughout the semester.

Course Requirements:

A. Philosophy Café (10%)

On blackboard, I have set up a “Philosophy Café,” where students may ask questions and discuss aspects of the readings with their classmates. Each question or observation is rated on a scale of 1-3. A question like, “What does Aristotle mean by virtue?” will receive 1 point, because the answer can be found easily in the text, while a question like, “Are all virtues a mean? What about something like self-sacrifice? One might think it is a virtue, but it is hard to imagine what might be the second extreme (maybe selfishness is the first)” would receive a 3. Responses to question are graded on a scale of 1-2. Students must post at least one question and one response to a fellow student’s question each week. Students may post more in order to earn extra credit, but may not earn more than 8 points per week. I will address topics raised in the Café during weekly lectures.

B. Timeline (10%)

Students will produce a timeline covering the period of history within which the classical and Medieval philosophers studied in this course lived. Students must include key historical events from this period. Students may be as creative as they like with this project. In fact, the student with the most creative design will receive 5 bonus points (thus, the outlines will be prepared for blind review).

C. Terms Quiz (10%)

Students will be given a list of philosophical terms essential for competent discourse on central topics in classical and medieval philosophy. Students are responsible for finding definitions of these terms using the resources available to them such as philosophical dictionaries and encyclopedias.

D. Papers (60%)

1. 2-3 pg (15%)
2. 4-5 pg (20%)
3. 6-7 pg (25%)

Students will write three papers on topics of their choosing. Each will focus on the philosophy of one of central figures in our course: Plato, Aristotle, Diogenes, Epicurus, the Stoics, or Plotinus. Possible essay topics will be provided for these papers, but students are not limited to those topics. In addition to the written components, students will be asked to share the thesis and main arguments for one

of their papers with the rest of the class at least once during the semester. A hard copy of the paper must be turned in on the date due. Emailed papers will not be accepted without explicit prior permission.

D. Attendance and Participation (10%)

Because this course is largely discussion based, student attendance and participation is critical, not only for each individual student's progress, but for the progress of the entire class. Students are expected to come to class each week having read the material carefully and having prepared comments and questions to share. Students are allowed one absence without penalty regardless of academic privilege. Exceptions to this policy will be made only in cases in which students have a documented good reason for missing class (Examples of good reasons are: serious illness, death in family etc. Examples of bad reasons are: over-sleeping, planned events, trips that are not sponsored by the university, etc.)

Grading Scale:

A	93-100	Student demonstrates exceptional knowledge of the material. Student's work significantly exceeds expectations.
A -	90-92	
B+	87-89	
B	83-86	Student demonstrates solid working knowledge of the material. Student's work exceeds the minimum requirements.
B-	80-82	
C+	77-79	
C	73-76	Student demonstrates a minimum satisfactory knowledge of the material. Student's work meets minimum requirements.
C-	70-72	
D+	67-69	
D	63-66	Student demonstrates a significantly deficient understanding of the material. Student's work comes short of requirements.
D-	60-62	

F	Below 60	Student does not demonstrate significant comprehension of the material. Student's work falls far short of requirements.
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Late Policy:

All assignments are due at the beginning of class on the date indicated in the schedule. Assignments will be counted late 15 minutes after the beginning of class time on that day. Papers will be marked down 5 points for each day past the due date. Students may turn in papers at the professor's office prior to the date due. Exceptions to this policy will be made only in the case of a documented good reason.

Academic Integrity and Classroom Decorum:

Plagiarism and cheating of any kind will not be tolerated in this class. Students found engaging in these activities will receive an automatic 0 on the assignment, possibly an F for the course, and will be reported to the Dean.

A second aspect of academic integrity is respect for both the instructor and fellow students. Ideas may be evaluated and criticized, but the character of the individual defending those ideas may not. Personal insult is never an acceptable form of philosophical argument and certainly fails to accord with the Christian commitment to love of neighbor. Students engaging in this, or any other form of disruption, will be asked to leave the class for the day.

Please turn off all cell phones during class. Lap top computers may be used for note-taking; however, if it becomes clear that they are being used for other purposes that distract from classroom discussion, the instructor may ask that the device be turned off.

Course Schedule:

8/21	Introduction to the course. Review of Syllabus. Topic: Presocratics
8/28	Reading: Plato, <i>Euthypro</i>
9/4	Reading: Plato, <i>Pheado</i>
9/11	Reading Plato, <i>Pheado</i> Due: Timeline
9/18	Reading: Aristotle, Nicomachean Ethics Book: 1
9/25	Reading: Aristotle, On the Soul, Book II

10/2	Reading: Plotinus, The Good; The Three Primal Hypostases DUE: Paper 1
10/9	Reading: Plotinus, The Soul
10/16	Reading: Boethius, The Consolation of Philosophy Book I - II
10/23	Reading: Boethius, The Consolation of Philosophy Book III
11/30	Reading: Boethius, The Consolation of Philosophy Book IV DUE: Paper 2
11/6	Reading: Boethius, The Consolation of Philosophy Book V
11/13	Reading: Ibn Sina, "On the Soul"
11/20	Reading: Aquinas, Summa Theologica Prima Pars, Question 6
11/27	Reading: Aquinas, Summa Theologica, Prima Secundae Partis, Question 1
12/4	Medieval Mysticism DUE: Final Paper