

PHIL301: History of Philosophy, Ancient Period¹

M. Gregory Oakes, Ph.D.

Winthrop University

Spring, 2014 (3 credit hours)

Section 001 (CRN22050), TR, 2-3:15pm, KINA 312; Final Exam, 8am. Fri, May 2

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Course Description

This course introduces the student to major elements of Ancient Greek philosophy, one of the seminal periods in human intellectual development. The course is divided into five parts. First, consider the period of time prior to the first Greek philosophers, a pre-historical era prior to dedicated “philosophical” thought. Our focus here will be on the ancient poet Hesiod and the world-view revealed in his poetry. This study provides us a contrast case for the more distinctively rationalist thought to follow. This thought originates in the what we call Pre-Socratic philosophy, and this then constitutes the second section of the course. This era sees the beginning of philosophy and science – the active pursuit of truth for truth’s sake. It is the origin of the western intellectual tradition. Third, we turn our attention to Socrates, who marks the division between nascent and fully-developed Greek thought. Socrates completes the extension of the rationalist tradition to the human, moral, and divine worlds. Where this was an important trend in the Pre-Socratics, it is Socrates who is most known not simply for rational thought but for rational life. Socrates is followed by the two great Greek philosophers, Plato and Aristotle. Both construct powerful systems of rational thought and both represent the culmination of rationalism in ancient Greek philosophy. We begin here, however, also to encounter apparent limits of rational human thought. These limits are the subject of our fifth and final section, first in the work of the ancient Greek tragedian, Sophocles, and second in the work of a more recent philosopher, Friedrich Nietzsche.

This course has *no prerequisites* but is a junior-level course and will make significant demands on your critical and reading skills.

This course counts towards your *Historical Perspectives* general education requirements. Your Historical Perspectives courses ensure your appreciation and understanding of both commonalities and differences across historical eras, and the light that this sheds on our present condition and direction.² PHIL 301 satisfies this requirement by immersing the student in complex intellectual developments, in moral, political, and scientific settings, across the Ancient Greek period; our efforts to understand Ancient Greek theories of reality and ethics will entail comparison with our present-day understanding of these things.

This course participates in the Global Learning Initiative (GLI).

Course Goals

Department Program Goal: To prepare students for a fulfilling life by equipping them with the

¹ All statements in this syllabus are subject to change. In the event of minor changes to the syllabus – e.g., to a reading requirement – the student will be so-informed by announcement in class. In the event of a more substantive change, the student will be so-informed in writing as well as by announcement in class.

² http://www2.winthrop.edu/universitycollege/Touchstone/gen_ed_program_aug_07.pdf Touchstone Program, pp. 24-27

impetus, skills, and knowledge to ask the most fundamental questions of human existence.³ In addition, this course helps the student to satisfy the following ULCs:

- Competency 1: Winthrop graduates think critically and solve problems.
- Competency 2: Winthrop graduates are personally and socially responsible.
- Competency 3: Winthrop graduates understand the interconnected nature of the world and the time in which they live.
- Competency 4: Winthrop graduates communicate effectively.

Student Learning Outcomes

To be more specific, the student successful in this course will demonstrate the following:

1. Mastery of basic philosophical concepts, in terms of which humans attempt to understand reality and their relationship to it; including:
 - a. The logic of chaos and cosmos;
 - b. Anthropomorphism – understanding a non-human thing in human terms;
 - c. Supernaturalism – the view that the nature of a thing is determined by the acts or nature of supernatural things;
 - d. Rationalism – the view that reality admits of rational (human) understanding;
 - e. Naturalism – the view that the principles of natural order are internal to nature;
 - f. Idealism – the view that the principles ordering reality are ideal;
 - g. The appearance/reality distinction; etc.
2. Understanding and appreciation of the specific efforts of the Ancient Greeks to come to terms with reality and their relationship to it,
 - a. As informed by the above basic concepts;
 - b. As articles of their particular historical position; and
 - c. As illustrative of such human efforts generally.
3. Mastery of effective means of abstract, conceptual analysis and evaluation with an emphasis on logical rigor.⁴
4. Mastery of effective, sophisticated written communication of complex, abstract ideas.⁵

These learning outcomes are the primary points in terms of which the student's work in this course will be evaluated.

Global Learning Initiative

As a course on the culture of another land in another time, this course participates in the Global Learning Initiative (GLI).

Prerequisites

There are no prerequisites for this course. However, the course make-up assumes the capacity for junior-level study and will make significant demands on your capacity for critical thought, speech, reading, and writing.

Texts

Hesiod: *Works and Days – Theogony*, Hackett Publishing Company, 1993

Cohen et al: *Readings in Ancient Greek Philosophy*, 4th ed., Hackett Publishing Company, 2011

Sophocles: *Oedipus Rex* (<http://classics.mit.edu/Sophocles/oedipus.html>)

³ See <http://www2.winthrop.edu/philrelg/goals.htm> for the complete Department Mission Statement.

⁴ These Learning Outcomes help to satisfy the Department's *Critical Thinking Initiative* and in particular its emphasis on logical rigor.

⁵ For relevant rubrics, see pp. 17-18 of the Touchstone Program. These Learning Outcomes help to satisfy the Department's *Effective Communication Initiative*.

Walter Burkert: *Greek Religion* (excerpts, available at Dacus Electronic Reserve)
 Walter Burkert: "Greek Tragedy and Sacrificial Ritual" (available at Dacus Electronic Reserve)
 Nietzsche: *The Birth of Tragedy and other Works*, Cambridge University Press, 1999⁶

Course Requirements

- Preparation for and participation in class: you are of course required to come to class having read and thought assigned materials. You are required to pay attention in class and to participate in class discussion by raising or responding to questions.
- Quiz: there will be a quiz early in the semester on basic course concepts.
- Exams: there will be two exams during the course of the semester plus a final exam. The first two exams will be take-home exams requiring you to characterize key course themes. The final exam will be a standard comprehensive exam of course materials.
- Essay option: you have the option of composing an essay in lieu of the final exam. Majors in the Department of Philosophy and Religious Studies will be required to write the essay rather than taking the exam.⁷

Grading	(% of final grade)
Preparation for and Attendance to Class	15%
Quiz	10%
Exam One	20%
Exam Two	25%
Final Exam/Essay (comprehensive)	30%

Grading Scale

Grading Scale: we shall use the +/- system, as follows:

A	940-1000	C	730-769
A-	900-939	C-	700-729
B+	870-899	D+	670-699
B	830-869	D	630-669
B-	800-829	D-	600-629
C+	770-799	F	0-599

Turnitin.com

- I will use Turnitin.com to mark your essays. You will submit your essays there, electronically.
- So, please enroll in the course on Turnitin.com, as soon as possible:
 - o Course ID#: 7481036
 - o Password: Socrates (with a capital S)

Classroom Conduct and Policies

- The following policies are attempts to define a reasonable standard of conduct in class. I reserve the right to alter or interpret them as conditions require.
- Students wishing to be excepted from any of these policies may consult with me; without my express indication, however, these policies apply to all students at all times without exception. The student's continued presence in this course signals his/her full understanding and acceptance of these policies.
- Personal Conduct Statement: Regardless of your sex, gender, race, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, political persuasion, age, or ability, you will be treated and respected

⁶ Other editions are available, but I don't recommend the earliest translation by Levy (e.g., at Archive.com). The Kaufmann translation available from Vantage Books is fine as is the Penguin edition. This Cambridge edition is the best available.

⁷ The essay requirement is a part of the Department's Logical Rigor program initiative.

in this class as a human being. Your continued presence in this course signals your commitment to act likewise.

- For information regarding Winthrop University policy on student academic conduct, please see “Student Conduct Code Academic Misconduct Policy” in the online *Student Handbook*.⁸
- Disabilities: Students with medical or other recognized disability must contact Gena Smith, Coordinator, Services for Students with Disabilities, at 323-2233, as soon as possible. Once you have your professor notification letter, please notify me immediately (and prior to the first test or assignment) so that I am aware of your accommodations. If your accommodations affect every test/assignment, please remind me prior to each one.
- Attendance: Attendance to class is of course required. For details of the University attendance policy, see here: <http://www2.winthrop.edu/public/policy/fullpolicy.aspx?pid=251>. If you miss 25% of the course meetings or more, you will fail the course.
- Athletics and other University sponsored activities: I am happy to support your school-sponsored event. If you must miss class such activities, you must provide appropriate documentation prior to *each* instance. It will be your responsibility to ensure that you meet course requirements on or before the date/s of your absence/s.
- Plagiarism: It is your responsibility to understand the University’s policy on plagiarism.⁹ If you are found guilty of plagiarism in this course, you will receive *an F for the course and I will report you to the Dean of Students for academic misconduct*. If you are unsure of whether your use of borrowed information counts as plagiarism, consult with me, your English instructor, or the staff in the writing center.
- No food in the classroom. (University policy.)
- No lap-top computers or tablets, except for presentations and other expressly authorized classroom activity.

Cell-Phones

- The use of cell-phones in class is prohibited.
- Please keep cell-phones silenced and put away while in class. (See exception, below.)
- Students using cell-phones in class will be asked to leave the classroom. In this event, an (unexcused) absence will be recorded.
- Further disruption of the class by cell-phone use may, at the instructor’s discretion, result in the student’s failing the course.
- Exception: Students facing emergency medical or family situations requiring cell-phone contact during class may consult with the instructor, prior to class, in order to be excepted from the above policy.

Schedule

(Subject to change; students are responsible for changes announced in class)

- Spring Break: Mar. 17-21 (M-F)
- Last day to withdraw from a Spring semester course: Mar. 12 (W)

Week of	Reading	Topics
Introduction: Chaos, Cosmos, <i>logos</i>		
Jan. 13	Chaos, Cosmos, <i>Logos</i> (on course website) Precursors Study Guide	Course Introduction Basic Conceptual Scheme: Chaos, Cosmos, <i>Logos</i> , Rationalism

⁸ See <http://www2.winthrop.edu/studentaffairs/handbook/StudentHandbook.pdf>.

⁹ See www.winthrop.edu/english/plagiarism.htm.

	Hesiod – Introduction, pp. 1-8, 12-16; Translator’s Preface, pp. 19-20; <i>Theogony</i> pp. 61-65 (through line 136) (see also the notes, pp. 91-103, and glossary, pp. 105-128)	Pre-Philosophical Rationalism
Precursors: the pre-historic, pre-philosophical era		
Jan. 20	Hesiod – Introduction, pp. 1-8, 12-16; Translator’s Preface, pp. 19-20; <i>Theogony</i> pp. 65-90 (see also the notes, pp. 91-103, and glossary, pp. 105-128) Burkert on Zeus (see Dacus Library electronic reserve)	Pre-Philosophical Rationalism Anthropomorphism, Supernaturalism <i>Zeus-logos</i>
The First Philosophers: the rise of rationalism		
Jan. 27	The Milesians, Xenophanes, Pythagoras, Heraclitus RAGP ¹⁰ pp. 1-40	Philosophy, Rationalism Naturalism (Nature), Idealism Metaphysics, Epistemology
Feb. 3	Parmenides, Zeno, Empedocles, Anaxagoras, Democritus, Leucippus, Melissus, Philolaus RAGP pp. 40-99	Quiz (Thursday, Feb. 6)
Socrates: the human world		
Feb. 10	Introduction to Socrates, RAGP pp. 127-134 <i>Euthyphro</i> , RAGP pp. 135-152 (2a- 16a)	Human (Moral) and Divine Order Virtue as Knowledge Rationalism Ascendant
Feb. 17	<i>Apology</i> , RAGP pp. 153-178 (17a-42a)	Exam #1 Due (Thursday, Feb. 20)
Plato and Aristotle: culmination		
Feb. 24	<i>Republic I-II</i> (all) III.412a (“Then the person who achieves ...”)-417b (end) RAGP pp. 369-423, 450-455	Moral Order: (What is Justice?) Epistemology: how do we access truth?
Mar. 3	<i>Republic IV.427d</i> (“Well, son of Ariston ...”)-445b (“... is ruined and in turmoil.”) V.472a (“The more you speak ...”)- 480a (end) VI.504d (“Aren’t these virtues, then ...”)-511e (end)	Moral Order: Justice Epistemology: rationalism (little-r) Metaphysics: Plato’s Theory of Forms (Idealism), Dualism The Apex of Rationalism

¹⁰ RAGP = *Readings in Ancient Greek Philosophy*

Mar. 10	<p><i>Republic VII</i> (beginning of book)-521c (“Indeed.”) RAGP pp. 463-482, 506-514, 534-541, 542-548 <i>VIII</i> (beginning of book)-547c (“... this transformation begins.”) <i>IX</i> (beginning of book)-576c (“... certain, at any rate.”) RAGP pp. 567-571, 594-599 <i>Symposium</i> 201d-205a (pp. 347-351) Burkert, “Philosophical Religion,” 325-332 (Dacus Electronic Reserve)</p>	<p>Metaphysics and Epistemology: Imperfection, Decay Spirits and Demons</p>
Mar. 17	Spring Break	
Mar. 24	<p><i>Categories: Ontology</i> RAGP pp. 683-692 (Introduction) RAGP pp. 694-700 (Chapters 1-5, 1a1-4b19)</p>	<p>Epistemology: Empiricism Idealism and Naturalism</p>
Mar. 31	<p><i>Physics: Causation and Change</i> RAGP pp. 732-739, 745-757 (Book I, Chapters 1, 5, 6, 7; 184a11-184b5, 188a32-188b26, 189a28-189b4, 189b30-191b34), Book II, Chapters 3-9, 194b17-200b8); <i>Meteorologica</i>, IV.12, pp. 785-6</p>	<p>Empiricism, cont. Chance and Luck: Limits to Logic?</p> <p>Exam #2 Due (Thursday, Apr. 3)</p>
Apr. 7	<p><i>Nicomachean Ethics: Human Being</i> RAGP pp. 870-890 (Book I, Chapters 1-9, 13, Book II, Chapters 1-6; 1094a1-1100a9, 1102a5-1107a27)</p>	<p>Human Nature Human Virtue Further limits to logic?</p>
Tragedy and Epilogue		
Apr. 14	<p>Sophocles: <i>Oedipus Rex</i>¹¹ Burkert: “Greek Tragedy and Sacrificial Ritual” (Dacus Electronic Reserve)</p>	<p>Human Limits: reason, logic, hubris, mortality, guilt</p>
Apr. 21	<p>Nietzsche: <i>The Birth of Tragedy</i> §§1-15¹²</p>	<p>Human Nature: Apollo and Dionysus</p>
Apr. 28	x	x
Final Exam, 8am. Fri, May 2 (Final Essays Due – same date and time)		

¹¹ For a text of Sophocles’ *Oedipus Rex*, see here: <http://classics.mit.edu/Sophocles/oedipus.html>.

¹² Other editions are available, but I don’t recommend the earliest translation by Levy (e.g., at Archive.com). The Kaufmann translation available from Vantage Books is fine as is the Penguin edition. The Cambridge edition in our Bookstore is the best available.