

Lingnan University
Department of Philosophy

Course Title	: History of Western Philosophy: Ancient Greek Philosophy
Course Code	: PHI2113
Recommended Study Year	: 2 nd year
No. of Credits/Term	: 3
Mode of Tuition	: Lecture and Tutorial
Class Contact Hours	: 1.5 hours Lecture/week; 1.5 hours Tutorial/week
Category in Major Programme	: History of Philosophy (Western Tradition) Elective
Prerequisite(s)	: N/A
Co-requisite(s)	: N/A
Exclusion(s)	: N/A
Exemption Requirement(s)	: N/A

Brief Course Description

Ancient Greek philosophy is considered as the origin of Western philosophy. It sets western thought on a path of thinking that is called metaphysics. This course traces the development of this thinking from the Presocratics to Aristotle. It focuses on the main themes and concepts that are central to all latter development of Western philosophy.

Aims

To let students be acquainted with the Greek way of thinking and see how this way of thinking has given rise to the themes and concepts that constitute the basic vocabulary of Western philosophy.

Learning Outcomes

On completion of this course, students will:

1. be able to present and explain the basic thoughts of individual Presocratic philosophers as well as those of Plato and Aristotle.
2. understand the Greek provenance of the meaning of some basic concepts in Western philosophy.
3. understand the discussions and debates in ancient Greek thinking that have opened up some of the central issues in Western philosophy.
4. be able to express their ideas clearly and cogently in an academic paper.

Indicative Content

1. The Ionian Philosophers
 - a. Thales
 - b. Anaximander
 - c. Anaximenes
2. The Pythagoreans
3. Heraclitus
4. The Eleatics
 - a. Parmenides
 - b. Zeno
5. Empedocles
6. Anaxagoras
7. The Atomists: Democritus
8. Socrates and the Sophists
9. Plato

- a. Theory of Ideas
 - i. The meaning of *eidos*
 - ii. The structure of Platonic metaphysics
 - b. Theory of Knowledge
 - i. The division of knowledge
 - ii. Knowledge and recollection
 - c. Philosophy and Eros
10. Aristotle
- a. Metaphysics: The meaning of Being
 - b. Natural philosophy: The meaning of *Phusis*
 - c. Moral philosophy: Virtue and prudence

Teaching Method

Lectures and tutorial discussions.

Measurement of Learning Outcomes

1. Tutorial presentation and class participation: (LO1, LO2, LO3)
Students are required to do a presentation on the thoughts of an individual ancient Greek philosopher based on an assigned reading. They should be able to identify the issues discussed, explain the concepts therein, and reconstruct succinctly the arguments put forward by the philosopher for holding a certain view. Students should also participate in class discussions and critically assess plausible objections against that view.
2. Term paper: (LO1, LO3, LO4)
Students are required to write a final paper that demonstrates their understanding of the importance of an ancient Greek philosopher and his influence on Western philosophy. They should be able to discuss critically the thoughts of that philosopher and argue cogently for their own views on him.
3. Final examination: (LO1, LO2, LO3, LO4)
The final examination will test students' knowledge of the philosophies of ancient Greek philosophers, their affinities and differences, as well as how Western philosophy has inherited from them certain of its basic themes of investigation. Students are required to express their ideas clearly and cogently in short essay writings.

Assessment

30% Tutorial presentation and participation in discussions

30% Term paper

40% Final examination

Required Readings

Copleston, Frederick, *A History of Philosophy, Volume I, Greece and Rome*, reprint edn., New York: Image Books, 1993.

Cahn, Steven M. ed., *Classics of Western Philosophy*, 5th edn., Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 1999.

Supplementary Readings

Ackrill, J. L., *Aristotle the Philosopher*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1981.

Aristotle, *A New Aristotle Reader*, ed. J.L. Ackrill, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998.

Barnes, Jonathan, *Aristotle: A Very Short Introduction*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000.

Fine, Gail ed., *Plato I: Metaphysics and Epistemology*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999.

- Fine, Gail ed., *Plato 2: Ethics, Politics, Religion, and the Soul*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999.
- Höffe, Otfried, *Aristotle*, trans. C. Salazar, New York: State University of New York Press, 2003.
- Irwin, Terence, *Classical Thought*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989.
- Melling, David J., *Understanding Plato*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987.
- Nietzsche, Friedrich, *Philosophy in the Tragic Age of the Greeks*, trans. M. Cowan, Indiana: Gateway Editions, 1962.
- Plato, *The Plato Reader*, trans. T. D. J. Chappell, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1996.
- Sallis, John, *Being and Logos: Reading the Platonic Dialogues*, 3rd edn., Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1996.
- Waterfield, Robin, ed. and trans., *The First Philosophers: The Presocratics and Sophists*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000.
- A useful historical survey of the period is
- John Boardman, Jasper Griffin & Oswyn Murray, *The Oxford Illustrated History of Greece and the Hellenistic World*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001.
- A general reference work that should be consulted diligently is
- Hornblower, Simon & Spawforth, Antony eds., *The Oxford Classical Dictionary*, 3rd edn., Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996.

Important Notes

- (1) Students are expected to spend a total of 9 hours (i.e. 3 hours of class contact and 6 hours of personal study) per week to achieve the course learning outcomes.
- (2) Students shall be aware of the University regulations about dishonest practice in course work, tests and examinations, and the possible consequences as stipulated in the Regulations Governing University Examinations. In particular, plagiarism, being a kind of dishonest practice, is “the presentation of another person’s work without proper acknowledgement of the source, including exact phrases, or summarised ideas, or even footnotes/citations, whether protected by copyright or not, as the student’s own work”. Students are required to strictly follow university regulations governing academic integrity and honesty.
- (3) Students are required to submit writing assignment(s) using Turnitin.
- (4) To enhance students’ understanding of plagiarism, a mini-course “Online Tutorial on Plagiarism Awareness” is available on <https://pla.ln.edu.hk/>