

PHIL 301  
Introduction to Ancient Philosophy  
– IIT –  
Spring 2008

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# Special Note

## Special Note

The following course notes regularly draw on Prof. Marc Cohen's course notes available on his web site. I wish to express all my gratitude to him to give me his authorization to use them. The original course notes are copyrighted and available at:

<http://faculty.washington.edu/smcohen/320/index.html>

# Part I

## Presentation and Introduction

# Chapter 1

## Syllabus

### 1.1 Course Information

- Course Number: PHIL 301
- Credits: 3
- Class meets: Monday, Wednesday, 10:00 - 11:15, Room E1 102
- Prerequisites: A 100-level humanities course
- Instructor: Soazig Le Bihan
  - Office Number: SH 234
  - Office Hours: Mondays 2-4pm and by appointment
  - Mailbox: 218 Siegel Hall
  - Email: lebihan@iit.edu
  - Blackboard: <http://blackboard.iit.edu/>
  - Website: [www.soaziglebihan.org](http://www.soaziglebihan.org)

**Note that all current course information (including class hand-outs, homework assignments, announcements, any revision of the schedule, exam questions, links etc.) can be found on the course web site:**

<http://www.soaziglebihan.org/PHI301-Ancient%20Philosophy.php>



## 1.2 Course Description

The “Greek miracle” is the name of the birth and development, within a very short period of time during the fifth century B.C.E., of democracy, philosophy, art (including architecture) and science. Even if the western world view certainly has different historical and geographical roots, there is no doubt that the ancient Greek thought is one of its major building block. An introduction to ancient philosophy course should give the students a taste of how philosophy as well as a great deal of the western culture was born with Socrates, Plato, Aristotle. Note that almost no mention will be made of the Presocratics.

However, this is not the whole story. In studying ancient philosophy, one also encounters and learns to understand worldviews that are radically alien to one’s own. Further, encountering views and methods which are so different from one’s own sheds new light on one’s own views and methods. In the process of analyzing the arguments, of uncovering the hidden assumptions and controversial consequences of these views and methods, one ends up confronting the hidden assumptions and controversial consequences of one’s own views and methods. The course should give the opportunity to question some of what we think is obvious, but which we really assumed without further rational justification.

We will mostly be reading original texts from Plato and Aristotle. It will be important to learn and to understand the major theses of each of these philosophers. Little emphasis will be put on the historical and social contexts: we will mainly analyze and assess the arguments in the texts.

The class is discussion based: you are expected to be an active reader at home, and an active student in class.

Such focus on the analysis of original texts and discussion should allow you to learn how to *do* philosophy, that is, how to analyze, assess other’s arguments and finally formulate valid arguments yourself. If there is something to take away from this course, it should be that philosophy can be defined as an inquiry for truth through argumentative discussion.

## 1.3 Documentation

### 1.3.1 Textbooks

#### Textbooks – required

- S. Marc Cohen (Editor), Patricia Curd (Editor), C. D. C. Reeve (Editor), *Readings In Ancient Greek Philosophy: From Thales To Aristotle* (Paperback), Hackett Publishing Company (RAGP)

Note also that:

- most original texts are available on the web. I will use these resources from time to time when needed.
- I will also put some books on reserve at Galvin Library for the class

#### Textbooks – recommended

Here is a short list of secondary literature *you can trust*. It is not required either to buy or to study these books. That said, if you crave for secondary literature, here are some good books.

- David Sedley, *The Cambridge Companion to Greek and Roman Philosophy*
- Christopher Shields, *The Blackwell Guide to Ancient Philosophy*
- Richard Kraut, *The Cambridge Companion to Plato*
- Jonathan Barnes, *The Cambridge Companion to Aristotle*
- All the volumes of *The History of Greek Philosophy* by W.C.K. Guthrie are also excellent

### 1.3.2 Further Documentation

By no means is this to be considered as an exhaustive bibliography. This list consists on a few classics that you may find useful in studying for the course, and some other references in case you would like to widen the scope of the course and want to know more about the ancient world.

### History and Culture :

- A classic on Ancient Greek education: W. Jaeger, *Paideia : The Ideals of Greek Culture Volume I: Archaic Greece: The Mind of Athens*
- Another old classic on Greek history: Kitto, *The Greeks*

### Philosophy :

- On Plato: Field, Ross
- On Aristotle: Ross, Akrill, Barnes

### Science :

- G.E.R. Lloyd, *Early Greek Science: Thales to Aristotle*, or, from the same author: *Magic, Reason and Experience : Studies in the Origin and Development of Greek Science*
- A very clear and clever short book, especially on Zeno's paradoxes: W. Salmon, *Space, Time, and Motion: A Philosophical Introduction*

### Literature: essays about :

- Lesky, *History of Greek Literature*
- and also : E.R. Dodds, *The Greeks and the Irrational*

### A few classics of Greek literature :

- Homer of course!
- Hesiod *Theogony or Works and Days*
- Aeschylus *Oresteia*
- Aristophanes *Clouds, Frogs, Lysistrata*
- Euripides *Bacchae, Hippolytus, Medea, Heracles*
- Sophocles *Antigone, Philoctetes*

## 1.4 Course Requirements

Your grade will be based on the following:

1. Papers
  - EITHER: Two take-home short papers, 25 points each (more details below);
  - OR: one single, longer, research paper for the semester – 50 points (more detail below)
2. An in-class final exam, 30 points;
3. Attendance and participation, 10 points;
4. Surprise quizzes 10 points.

These will be graded in the following way:

**Attendance** Attendance is required. There will be a lot of material covered in this course and most of it is hard. While the in-class discussion should gradually (and somewhat painlessly) make you acquainted with most of the material, you should expect to be lost very quickly and probably to fail if you are not attending the course.

**You will have three classes that you can be absent for without penalty** (not including the exam classes which you must be present for). Beyond three classes, one absence counts as a zero.

That said, absences may be excused in cases of illness or other extreme circumstances. Relevant documentation is of course required in such cases. However, you will be expected to have worked by yourself on the material covered during the classes you may have missed.

**Participation** You are expected to participate in class. During lecture I will ask basic questions about the readings, and expect you to try to answer them. You will not be penalized for answering incorrectly. If you can't answer the questions I ask, I encourage you to ask questions. Both of these satisfy the class participation requirement. I have found that students learn best when they are asked to contribute to the lecture.

This means that, when reading at home, you have to be an *active* reader. Actively reading the original material will be one of the most important parts of the work you are expected to do for the course. Reading philosophy is hard, and you will sometimes encounter difficulties to understand the material during the semester. I will provide you with study questions to help you get prepared to the discussion in class. That the class is mainly a discussion class also implies that you should have your textbook with you in class.

For very useful guidelines on how to read philosophy, see J. Pryor web site:

<http://www.jimpryor.net/teaching/guidelines/reading.html>

### **Surprise quizzes :**

The surprise quizzes are meant to make sure that you work on a regular basis. They will come into two types:

**Before Class Quizzes** : these will consist on short, simple, multiple choices questions about the readings. The point is to check on your doing your homework.

**Last Minute Quizzes** : these will consist on short, simple, multiple choices questions about the material covered during the class. The point is to check your being attentive during class.

You should expect to have about 10 to 15 surprise quizzes. I will be generous in grading the quizzes. The worse three grades will be dropped at the end.

**Short Papers** You will be assigned two short papers (800 to 1200 words, that is 2 to 4 pages 12 points double spaced) on one topic.

You will be first asked to turn in a prospectus of your paper. A **prospectus** consists in a tentative title and a summary of your argument, between 200 and 300 words. I will give general comments on your prospectuses in class. Then, you will be asked to write a draft of your paper which you will have to bring in class for **peer review**. **Prospectuses and peer reviews are both mandatory. They will count together for 5 points.** You will be penalized if you do not turn in your prospectus or if you do not come with your paper the day of the peer review by **one letter grade each**.

**Research Paper:** You will be given the option to write one single research paper instead of two papers. I will closely check on the advancement of your paper:

The total points for a research paper is 50 points, divided as follows:

1. You will first turn in a proposal, which consists in both a prospectus (see above) and a bibliography – 5 points
2. You will then turn in a 2 to 4 pages progress report – 10 points
3. You will give a presentation of your paper in class – 10 points
4. Finally, you will turn in your 8-10 pages paper – 25 points

**NOTE:** Late Assignments: without prior arrangements being made with the instructor, the grade of any late assignment will be lowered by one letter a day.

**IMPORTANT:** If you encounter difficulties concerning an assignment, it is almost always possible to make arrangements before the assignment is due. No accommodation is possible once the deadline has passed. COME AND TALK TO ME BEFORE IT IS TOO LATE.

For useful guidelines on how to write a philosophy paper, see again J. Pryor website:

<http://www.jimpryor.net/teaching/guidelines/writing.html>

Another very useful document to which you can have a look:

<http://japan.ucsd.edu/Marta/courses/WritingGood.pdf>

**In-class Exam** The final in-class exams will consist in answering short questions, which will be taken out of a list of topics which will be distributed in advance.

The final in-class exam will be *comprehensive*. It is closed books, closed notes.

The final exam is mandatory. Absences may be excused only in cases of severe illness (please provide adequate documentation) or other extreme circumstances. Proof of extreme circumstances is required.

**Academic honesty and Plagiarism** Unless collaborative work is specifically called for, work on assignments and exams is expected to be your own. Plagiarism is taken seriously in IIT. In case of plagiarism, your

assignment will receive a zero. Also, I will report the case to the university. You may be in serious trouble, up to being expelled out of school, in case of recidivism. Please refer to the Code of Academic Honesty in the Student Handbook for details concerning sanctions.

I'll be glad to answer questions you may have about how to document sources properly. Anytime you take a phrase or sentence from someone, you have to quote it. Anytime you take an idea from someone, you have to cite your sources.

**Writing Center** The Writing Center (SH 232-233) provides free one-on-one consultation, both by appointment and as available on a walk-in basis. Consultants Ms. Kraus and Mr. Dabbert are especially trained in working with writers for whom English is a second language. You can help you tremendously in writing assignments.

**Special needs** Adaptation of methods and materials for students with documented disabilities will be made in consultation with the Center for Disability Resources. I will gracefully accommodate any special need.

## 1.5 Grading Policies

### Participation evaluation

- A range: The student is fully engaged and highly motivated. This student is well prepared, having read the assigned texts, and has thought carefully about the texts' relation to issues raised in lecture and section. This student's ideas and questions are substantive (either constructive or critical); they stimulate class discussions. This student listens and responds to the contributions of other students.
- B range: The student participates consistently in discussion. This student comes to section well prepared and contributes quite regularly by sharing thoughts and questions that show insight and a familiarity with the material. This student refers to the materials discussed in lecture and shows interest in other students' contributions.
- C range: The student meets the basic requirements of section participation. This student is usually prepared and participates once in a while but not regularly. This student's contributions relate to the texts

and the lectures and offer a few insightful ideas, but do not facilitate a discussion.

Failure to fulfill satisfactorily any of these criteria will result in a grade of "D" or below.

### **Paper evaluation**

Six criteria for evaluating a paper:

- Substance,
- Thesis and argument structure, including introduction and conclusion,
- Use of supporting material and evidence,
- Quality of analysis, including the crucial distinction between unsupported assumptions, value judgments vs. analysis and argumentation,
- Use of quality sources,
- Quality of writing including grammatical correction, clarity, concision and persuasiveness.

*Objectives for a good paper: rigorous inquiry, critical thinking, effective written argumentation.*

- A range: This paper is outstanding in form and content.
  - The materials covered in class is understood in depth: the student shows that he or she has a command on the materials, including a critical understanding.
  - The thesis is clear and insightful; it is original, or it expands in a new way on ideas presented in the course.
  - The argument is unified and coherent.
  - The evidence presented in support of the argument is carefully chosen and deftly handled.
  - The analysis is complex and nuanced.
  - The sources are original texts or quality scholars' literature.
  - No grammatical mistakes, clear, precise and concise style.



- B range: The argument, while coherent, does not have the complexity, the insight, or the integrated structure of an A range paper.
  - The material covered in class is well understood: the student does not make any mistake on the materials but does not show great depth in critical understanding.
  - The paper's thesis is clear.
  - The argument is coherent.
  - The paper presents evidence in support of its points.
  - The paper is reasonably well written and proofread.
- C range: This paper has some but not all of the basic components of an argumentative essay (i.e., thesis, evidence, coherent structure).

For example:

- a clear misunderstanding of some of the material covered in class, or
- no clear or incoherent thesis, or
- incoherent structure of argument, for example simply repeats points made in class without an overall argument, or
- presents no evidence in support the thesis
- no use of original texts, but only secondary or popular literature (encyclopedia...)
- poorly written and proofread.

A paper will fall below a "C" if it lacks more than one of the basic components of an argumentative essay.

### Sources

- Tips for grading in the humanities, Stanford Center for Teaching and Learning website
  - Introduction to the Humanities Program, STANFORD UNIVERSITY, Information for Faculty, 2005-06  
<http://www.stanford.edu/dept/undergrad/ihum/instructors/>

## 1.6 Course Schedule

*The course schedule is subject to change.*

Important Dates	
Registration Begins	Nov 12
Last Day for Reinstatement	Dec 17
New Student Registration - Orientation Period	Jan 17-18
MLK, Jr. Holiday (No Classes)	Jan 21
Classes Begin	Jan 22
Late Registration Begins	Jan 23
Last Day to Register/Add/ Change Classes	Jan 29
Graduation Application Deadline	Feb 1
Last Day to Drop Classes with Tuition Refund	Feb 5
Last Day to Remove "I" Grades	Feb 29
Spring Vacation (No Classes)	Mar 17-22
Last Day for Official Withdrawal	Apr 4
Advising Period (upcoming semester)	Apr 14-25
Classes End	May 10
Final Exam Period	May 12-17
Commencement	May 17

Date	Topic
1/21	King's day
1/23	No Class
1/28	Presentation – Philosophy and arguments
1/30	Philosophy and arguments
2/4	Logic QUIZ – Intro to Ancient Philosophy
PART I	From Socrates's questions to Plato's answer
2/6-11-13	No Class
2/18	Socrates: Definition of Philosophy
2/20	Socrates: Ethics
2/23	SHORT PAPERS PROSPECTUS DUE
2/25	Socrates: Method of Definition
2/27	Plato: Intro
3/3	PEER REVIEW – RESEARCH PAPERS PROPOSAL DUE
3/5	Plato: Challenge to Justice
3/10	Plato: Ethics – PAPER DUE
3/12	Catch up day
3/17-3/23	SPRING BREAK
	PART II – PLATO'S THEORY OF THE FORMS
3/24	Plato's Forms: Introduction
3/26	Plato's Forms: Paradox of inquiry and doctrine of recollection
3/29	SHORT PAPERS PROSPECTUS DUE
3/31	Plato's Forms: Argument from imperfection
4/2	Plato's Forms: Argument from knowledge
4/7	Plato, Sun, Line and Cave
4/9	PEER REVIEW – PROGRESS REPORTS DUE
	PART III – ARISTOTLE
4/14	Aristotle: Philosophy and Science
4/16	Aristotle: Predication – SHORT PAPERS DUE
4/21	Aristotle: Change
4/23	Aristotle: Nature
4/28	Aristotle: Causes – RESEARCH PAPERS DUE
4/30	Aristotle: Substance, Matter and Form
5/5	Aristotle: The function argument and the doctrine of the mean
5/7	Aristotle, Happiness
	FINAL EXAM: Thursday, 15th. 10:30-12:30 am