

Ancient Philosophy

Instructor: Brad Thames
Email:
Phone:
Office:
Office Hours:
Course Webpage:

Course Number
Time
Location

I. Required Materials:

Annas, Julia. *Voices of Ancient Philosophy*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001.
Other readings will be distributed electronically.

II. Course Description and Objectives:

This course will examine the foundations of Western civilization by surveying the philosophies of the ancient Greek thinkers. We will proceed topically by considering the sorts of arguments and debates the Greeks had about questions of knowledge, the nature of reality, human nature, how we ought to live, and the nature and ideal for of political society. By proceeding in this way, we will look for and examine the ways in which the thinkers' various views on each topic impinge upon their views on others, and see if we can discern some overarching themes within individual thinkers and schools, as well as in the classical world as a whole. We will conclude with Socrates' defense of the philosophical life in the *Apology* as perhaps representative of some such themes, and Pierre Hadot's account of the ancients saw philosophy as a way of life, in contrast to how we often see it today.

Objectives:

1. Attain a textually-based familiarity with some seminal questions and texts in the history of Ancient philosophy;
2. Critically engage the arguments presented in the texts while at the same time appreciating the original contexts in which the texts were written;
3. Identify, refine and articulate your own views clearly in class discussion and engage with the views of your classmates;
4. Craft well-argued, well-written papers that show careful textual exposition as well as original, analytical thought.

III. Course Calendar

Topic

Readings

Week 1: Introduction Date: Intro Date: Overview	“Chronological Sketch of Ancient Philosophy” (VAP xix-xxii); Hadot, “Spiritual Exercises” (E)
Week 2: Knowledge, Belief, and Skepticism Date: The Conditions and Kinds of Knowledge Date: cont’d.	VAP 131-154 VAP 166-205
Week 3: Knowledge, Belief, and Skepticism Date: Relativism and Skepticism Date: cont’d.	VAP 156-158, 207-213 No new reading
Week 4: Metaphysical Questions Date: Plato’s Forms: For and Against Date: cont’d.	VAP 234-254 VAP 254-259
Week 5: Metaphysical Questions Date: Cause and Explanation Date: cont’d.	VAP 259-269 VAP 269-280
Week 6: Fate and Freedom Date: The Homeric view Date: Praise, Blame, and Responsibility	VAP 3-11 VAP 12-33
Week 7: Fate and Freedom Date: Responsibility for the Lives We Lead Date: Divine Foreknowledge of the Future	VAP 35-43 VAP 43-55
Week 8: Fate and Freedom Date: Is the Future Fixed? Date: TBD	VAP 56-70 TBD
Week 9: No Class (Fall Break)	None

PART 2 OF THE COURSE:

<p>Week 10: Reason and Emotion Date: Explanation of Inner Conflict Date: What is an Emotion?</p>	<p>VAP 71-83 VAP 84-96</p>
<p>Week 11: Topic Date: What is an Emotion? Date: A Test Case</p>	<p>VAP 97-110 VAP 110-117</p>
<p>Week 12: How Should You Live? Date: The Starting Point for Ethical Reflection Date: Virtue and Happiness</p>	<p>VAP 297-300 VAP 302-318</p>
<p>Week 13: How Should You Live? Date: The Major Theories Date: cont'd.</p>	<p>VAP 319-350 No New Reading</p>
<p>Week 14: How Should You Live? Date: Different Directions Date: cont'd</p>	<p>VAP 351-372 No New Reading</p>
<p>Week 15: Society and the State Date: Nature or Convention? Date: cont'd.</p>	<p>VAP 373-386 VAP 387-402</p>
<p>Week 16: Society and the State Date: Expertise and the Rule of Law Date: Democracy and the Best Form of Government</p>	<p>VAP 403-426 VAP 427-450</p>
<p>Week 17: Wrap-up Date: Philosophy as a Way of Life Date: Conclusion of Course</p>	<p>Hadot, "Philosophy as a Way of Life" (E) No New Reading</p>