

PHIL 301: Ancient Philosophy Syllabus

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Office hours: Thurs 3-6pm — Use the signup sheet to schedule a meeting with me

Web page: <http://profpam.com/ancient>

Office: HUM 359

Upload work to iLearn: <https://ilearn.sfsu.edu/login/index.php>

Prerequisites

Prerequisites for this course are PHIL 110 and ENG 214 or their equivalents.

Course Objectives

The objectives of this course are:

- to provide exposure to the main texts, figures, and movements in ancient Greek philosophy from the 7th century BCE to the 4th century BCE;
- to understand fundamental philosophical issues and texts in their historical contexts;
- to offer an introduction to philosophical methods of argument and analysis
- to develop student critical reasoning and analytical skills, improve student reading comprehension and writing skills;
- to instill an appreciation of the diversity and richness of the ancient Greek philosophical tradition and its influence on Jewish, Christian and Islamic thought as well as on later philosophical eras.

Learning Outcomes

Upon successful completion of this course, the student is expected to:

To understand the key features, themes, and issues of ancient Greek thought

- To know and distinguish different philosophical traditions and schools within the classical period
- Have experience reading key texts of prominent ancient philosophers
- Better understand philosophy and its various branches

Course Structure and Learning Methods

The course structure is comprised of: lecture, class discussion on lectures and course readings, 10 in class quizzes, one creative project, and three take-home exams (each approx. 4-5 typed, double-spaced pages).

Grading

All course requirements must be completed in order to pass the class. Course grades are determined as follows:

Written Diagnostic Exam: P/NP

Take-home exams: 150 points

There will be three take home essay exams. The precise formats for the exams will be explained prior to distribution of the exams. The page lengths will average four to five pages. You will have one and one half weeks, typically, to complete each exam. There are no rewrites of exams.

Creative Project: 50 points

As a response to one of your reading assignments, I'll ask you to write a short one (1) page synopsis or summary of the reading and produce a creative work. The creative project is due by the end of the semester. The creative project can be done in just about any way you want (see below for exceptions): a poem, a script of a scene for a play, a video, a song on audio tape or CD, a letter to the author or one of the characters in a Platonic dialogue, a science project on one of the Presocratic candidates for an *arche*, a collage, sculpture, web page, a board game, etc. I have only two limitations: NO LIVE or DEAD ANIMALS and NO CONTAMINATED SUBSTANCES. You may work collaboratively on your creative project. However, you must write your own synopsis. WARNING! Do not, I repeat, do not ask me if it's OK to do something for your creative project. If you ask me, you will be forced to watch me perform the Isley Brothers' rendition of " _____!"

Late work: Late work will be accepted for medical reasons, family crisis, or attendance at religious observances. A written excuse is required for any late work or make-up quizzes. Unexcused late work will not be accepted.

Attendance/Participation: Attendance will be taken each class period. Poor attendance will negatively affect your grade. Three absences will be allowed without penalty. Additional absences will be excused at the discretion of the instructor. Please contact me via e-mail as soon as possible if you will be absent.

Plagiarism

"Plagiarism is a form of cheating or fraud; it occurs when a student misrepresents the work of another as his or her own. Plagiarism may consist of using the ideas, sentences, paragraphs, or the whole text of another without appropriate acknowledgment, but it also includes employing or allowing another person to write or substantially alter work that a student then submits as his or her own. Any assignment found to be plagiarized will be given an "F" grade. All instances of plagiarism in the College of Humanities will be reported to the Dean of the College, and may be reported to the University Judicial Affairs Officer for further action." For more details see: <http://www.sfsu.edu/~collhum/plagiarism.html>

Disability - Reasonable Accommodation

Any student requiring more time or any additional help in completing course assignments or taking exams should see me as soon as possible. Every effort will be made to make accommodations for you.

Required texts

At times, required reading assignments will be given for material that will not be discussed in class. You will nevertheless be responsible for the material. Optional reading assignments will be clearly labeled as such. Any supplemental readings will be available either on the course website, through an online SFSU Library database or distributed in class.

Reading Overview

Exam 1. The Presocratics: Thales, Anaximander, Anaximenes, Anaxagoras, Heraclitus, Parmenides, Zeno, Empedocles, and the Atomists (due October 8)

Exam 2. Socrates & Plato: Plato's *Republic* (due November 12)

Exam 3. Aristotle: Categories, De Anima, Metaphysics, Physics (due December 10)