

Ancient and Medieval Philosophy

Phil 30301

Instructor: David Squires

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Office and Hours: Check homepage for location, T 3:30pm-6:30pm or by appointment

Course Description

The aim of this course is to introduce you to a number of authors and topics in ancient and medieval philosophy. Our path will be guided by two principles: First, rather than jump about to a number of important but seemingly disconnected philosophical questions, we will read authors—usually in historical order—who are in dialogue or disagreement with one another on intimately related topics in metaphysics, epistemology, and ethics—often directly responding to one another's work. This method will help to demonstrate the natural development of certain philosophies from others and the unity of the discipline of philosophy around certain kinds of questions. Second, we will cover authors who differ greatly in their time periods—anywhere from 470 BCE to 1270 CE—so that you'll have some idea of what this vast tract of the history of philosophy contains.

Along the way, we'll cover the imaginative Greek debates about being and becoming and watch those debates turn into the philosophical anthropology and theology of the middle ages. We'll encounter some of the topics you might expect to find covered in a philosophy course—e.g. Am I only my body, or do I have a soul?, Is there anything in store for us after death? Does God exist and, if so, what is God's nature?,—but you'll also encounter questions you might not expect to find—e.g. What exactly is change and how is it possible?, What sorts of causes are there in the world?, What does it mean to say that something happened by chance?, What is true happiness anyhow, and how do I acquire it?, What exactly is evil, and why is there any of it in the first place? The English word "philosophy" is from the Greek word "φιλοσοφία"—“the love of wisdom.” At the very least I hope to make you feel a little bit of that love—to develop a taste for thinking carefully, for questioning things that have always seemed obvious to you, and for imagining different worlds. Even the world that you inhabit—perhaps—is stranger and more wonderful than you have yet conceived.

Required Texts

Plato: Five Dialogues: Euthyphro, Apology, Crito, Meno, Phaedo, trans. G. M. A. Grube, Ed. J. M. Cooper, Hackett Publishing Company, Inc.: Indianapolis, 2002 . ISBN-13: 860-1404290442

St. Augustine, *The Confessions*, trans. Maria Boulding OSB, Ed. J. E. Rotelle OSA, New City Press, 2012. ISBN-13: 978-1565484450

Anselm of Canterbury: The Major Works (Oxford World Classics), Oxford University Press: Oxford, 2008. ISBN-13: 978-0199540082.

Aquinas (A Beginner's Guide) by Edward Feser, One World Publications, 2009. ISBN-13: 978-1851686902.

Various other materials will be handed out via email—indicated below with a *

Assignments and Academic Policies

Assignments: there will be three paper assignments over the course of the semester. The papers are weighted equally (20% each). Papers are graded for substance (understanding the prompt, answering the prompt, producing good arguments, etc.), as well as for the quality of writing (grammar, usage, organization, style, etc.). For the sake of fairness, do not exceed the length limit. You should not need to make use of outside sources. Papers are due at the beginning of class, in hard copy, on the Thursday of the week that they are due. **Late papers will be penalized.**

Participation: There are two independent participation assignments each worth 20% of the final grade—viz. **1) Discussion Participation** and **2) Reading Participation**. Participation points are not free points, so read these two sections below carefully.

Discussion Participation: This participation assignment measures your engagement in terms of philosophical discussion. The best scores will go to students who show a sustained pattern of thoughtful contribution and questioning in class, especially if that contribution demonstrates that you have read the assigned material diligently. This can take the form of asking questions to me or other students, answering questions that I ask you by offering your interpretation of a text, producing or analyzing arguments, comparing different texts, etc. You must bring to class the text we are reading each day. If the assignment is from an electronic text that I distribute, you should print it out and bring it to class. Class attendance is an essential part of Discussion Participation. Only university required absences will be excused. Unexcused absences will result in Discussion Participation penalties.

Reading Participation: This participation assignment measures your engagement with the assigned readings. You are expected to read all of the assigned texts carefully and completely. As few as four times this semester or as many as each class period, I will give you a quiz question(s) that you must answer in a short period of time. Your Reading Participation score will be based on your answers to these quizzes, which will receive standard letter grades. If you've done the reading carefully and completely you should not have too difficult a time offering good answers to the questions you'll be asked. These quizzes are not designed to test philosophical expertise, so much as whether you are doing the readings and understanding them at a basic level. In general, think of the readings and class participation as an act of citizenship, through which each individual and the collective body is responsible for the class experience.

“The Chain”: The Chain is a string of emails that I'll send you throughout the semester (chained together so as not to gum up your inbox—hence the name). Each email in The Chain will have three parts—1) the Afterthought: a brief summary of the latest reading, which should be very handy when it comes time to review ideas before writing a paper, 2) the Forethought: a few guiding comments or questions for the next reading, and 3) a Funny Thought: a place for me to

post philosophical memes, videos, articles, and, in all likelihood, pictures of my cat, Alice. If there are readings to be handed out, they will be attached to The Chain. Reading/viewing the Chain is entirely optional, but reading the attached assignments is not optional. If you find yourself struggling with the readings, consider at least reading the Forethought. Additionally, asking questions about the readings or commenting intelligently on them by replying to the Chain will increase your discussion participation score.

Summary: Papers count for 60% of your grade (20% each), discussion participation for 20%, reading participation for 20%. **Rubric:** A: 93%, A-: 90%, B+: 87%, B: 83%, B-: 80%, C+: 77%, C: 73%, C-: 70%, D+: 67%, D: 63%, D-: 60%

Disabilities: The university's policies regarding disabilities can be found at: <https://dulac.nd.edu/academic/disabilities/> Information concerning Sara Bea Disability Services can be found at: <http://sarabeadisabilityservices.nd.edu/>

Academic Integrity: Don't Cheat! This includes plagiarism of any variety, including having others do your work for you or merely syntactically or terminologically altering the work of others (e.g. plugging in a few different words into a paragraph written by someone else). Any instances of cheating discovered will be dealt with swiftly according to university policy.

Laptop and Mobile Device Policy: Laptops and Mobile devices should **not** be used during class. The results are in: scientific studies show that screens mean less glean. Science giveth the iPhone X Plus and science taketh it away!

Schedule:

“Every more thorough thinker, every more earnest artist still regenerates himself in the eternal youth of the Greeks.” — Søren Kierkegaard

“He that breaks a thing to find out what it is has left the path of wisdom.” — Gandalf the Grey

Week 1: Intro; The One Unmoving

Class 1 (1/16) Introduction to Ancient and Medieval Philosophy; A Primer: the Milesians

Class 2 (1/18) Parmenides: *Fragments and Testimonies*, Plato: *Meno* *

Week 2: Everything in Everything; The Many in Motion

Class 3 (1/23) Anaxagoras: *Fragments and Testimonies* *

Class 4 (1/25) The Atomists: Leucippus and Democritus: *Fragments and Testimonies* *

Week 3: The Categories of Being; Aristotelian Criticism of Predecessors

Class 5 (1/30) Aristotle: *Categories* Chapters 1-8 *

Class 6 (2/1) Aristotle: *Physics* Book 1, Chapters 1-4*

Week 4: Motion Explained; Nature and the Four Causes

Class 7 (2/6) Aristotle: *Physics* Book 1, Chapters 5-9 *

Class 8 (2/8) Aristotle: *Physics* Book 2, Chapters 1-3, G.E.M Anscombe: “Causality and Determination” *

Week 5: Chance and the *Telos* of Nature; Immortality of the Soul

Class 9 (2/13) Aristotle: *Physics* Book 2, Chapters 4-9 *

Class 10 (2/15) Plato: *Phaedo* 57a-77a

Week 6: Immortality Cont.; Socrates’s Death

Class 11 (2/20) Plato: *Phaedo* 77a-95a

Class 12 (2/22) Plato: *Phaedo* 95a-118a

First Paper Due (2/22)

Week 7: The Predecessors’ Accounts of the Soul; Aristotle’s Hylomorphic Account of the Soul

Class 13 (2/27) Aristotle: *De Anima* Book 1 *

Class 14 (3/1) Aristotle: *De Anima* Book 2, Chapters 1-6 *

Week 8: Aristotle’s *Nicomachean Ethics*: Happiness is an Activity; Virtue is a Mean

Class 15 (3/6) Aristotle: *Nicomachean Ethics* Book 1 *

Class 16 (3/8) Aristotle: *Nicomachean Ethics* Book 2 *

Spring Break

“*We miserable ones, why do we love you, fleeting world?*”—Alcuin of York

Week 9: A Saint’s Beginnings; Seeking Truth

Class 17 (3/20) St. Augustine: *Confessions* Books 1-2

Class 18 (3/22) St. Augustine: *Confessions* Books 3-5

Week 10: Platonism & Conversion; The Will and Evil

Class 19 (3/27) St. Augustine: *Confessions* Books 6-8

Class 20 (3/29) St. Anselm: *On the Fall of the Devil* Chapters 1-14

Week 11: How Evil Befell the Devil; The Ontological Proof of God’s Existence

Class 21 (4/3) St. Anselm: *On the Fall of the Devil* Chapters 15-28

Class 22 (4/5) St. Anselm: *Proslogion*

Second Paper Due (4/5)

Week 12: The Five Ways; God’s Simplicity & Perfection

Class 23 (4/10) St. Thomas/Feser: *Summa Theologica*: Q.2, Feser’s Commentary on Way 1 & 2 *

Class 24 (4/12) St. Thomas: *Summa Theologica*: Q.3 & Q.4 *

Week 13: God’s Goodness & Infinity; God’s Immutability & Eternity

Class 25(4/17) St. Thomas: *Summa Theologica* Q.5 – Q.7 *

Class 26 (4/19) St. Thomas: *Summa Theologica* Q.8 – Q.10 *

Easter Break

Week 14: The Names of God; The Essence of the Human Soul

Class 27 (4/24) St. Thomas: *Summa Theologica* Q.11 – 13*

Class 28 (4/26) St. Thomas: *Summa Theologica* Q.75*

Week 15: The Union of the Soul with the Body

Class 29 (5/1) St. Thomas: *Summa Theologica* Q.76*

Third Paper Due (12:00pm, last day of finals)