

Ancient Philosophy (Phil. 241): Spring 2010

Instructor: Dr. Arash Naraghi

Office location: Zinzendorf 201

Email: anaraghi@moravian.edu

Phone: (610) 625-7835

Office Hours: Monday 10:30am-11:30am; Wednesday 10:30am-11:30am; and by appointment.

Lectures: MW 11:45am- 12:55pm, Main St. Campus, Zinzendorf, 103.

Course Description:

This course is an introduction to Ancient (Greek) Philosophy. Western philosophy is deeply rooted in ancient Greek philosophy, and the thinking of ancient Greece continues to influence the way we think today. The major goal of this course is to acquaint you with some of the major philosophical writings and ideas in ancient philosophy. In this course, we focus on four major philosophies and schools that arose during the Classical and Hellenistic periods: those of Plato, Aristotle, Epicurus, and the Stoics.

One of the major themes in ancient philosophy is the question of ‘happiness’ or *eudaemonia* as the ultimate goal in human’s life. To attain happiness, we should know what happiness is, and through what process we can attain it. This is the major topic in this course. We will see how those four philosophies understand happiness, and how they attempt to answer the two following related questions: ‘How should we live?’ and ‘How do we become good?’ In our journey to understand ‘happiness’ in Greek philosophy, we will explore some major questions of human life as understood in ancient philosophy: questions of love, friendship, death, and the idea of harmony with the nature.

Course Objectives:

- To develop an ability to read, interpret, analyze and evaluate philosophical texts.
- To introduce students to ancient Greek philosophy.
- To facilitate thoughtful and respectful dialogue on important philosophical, moral, and religious issues.
- To understand the relevance of ‘fundamental questions’ to everyday life concerns.
- To learn how to distinguish between good and bad pieces of reasoning.
- To diminish the dogmatic assurance which closes our mind against speculation.
- To enrich our intellectual imagination.
- To learn how to think and write things explicitly, clearly, and succinctly.
- To think creatively, and to be able to imagine alternatives about the nature of the human condition.

Required Texts:

- *Five Dialogues*, Plato, Translated by G.M.A. Grube and Revised by John M. Cooper, Hackett Publishing Company, Second edition, 2002. ISBN13:978-0-872220-633-5.
- *The Symposium*, Plato, Edited by M.C. Howatson and Frisbee C.C. Sheffield, Cambridge University Press, First edition, 2008. ISBN: 978-0-521-68298-5.
- *The Nicomachean Ethics*, Aristotle, Translated by David Ross, Oxford University Press, ISBN: 978-0-19-921361-0.
- *The Essential Epicurus*, Translated by Eugene O’Connor, Prometheus Books, ISBN: 978-0-87975-810-3.
- *The Stoics*, F.H. Sandbach, Hackett Publishing Company, Second edition, ISBN:0-87220-253-4.

Note 1: These books are available at Moravian College Bookstore.

Note 2: Some additional material will be posted on Blackboard. Please make sure to register in the course blackboard.

Note 3: You will find that you get the most out of the course if you read each assignment before lecture and then re-read the assignment after the lecture.

Lecture attendance:

It is not possible to perform well in the course without attending lecture regularly. We will cover substantial amounts of material in lecture not included anywhere in the readings. It is highly unlikely that you will learn this material adequately by, e.g., borrowing your friend’s lecture notes. You have two class sessions you can miss with no questions asked. Beyond those two class sessions, any further missed classes without a really good excuse (involving a note from your doctor, psychiatrist, parole officer, etc.) will cost you 2% of your final grade.

Academic honesty:

Students are required to honor academic integrity. The course imposes the application of Moravian College’s Academic Honesty Policy. The policy is to be found at Moravian College’s *Student Handbook*.

Course requirements:

A regular final exam, scheduled for, **Thursday, May 6th, at 1:30pm**, plus a midterm (tentatively scheduled for **Wednesday, Feb. 24th**), and two short papers (500-700 words) due throughout the semester, and some very short reflective papers. Papers should be typed, double spaced, and spell-checked. You are responsible to submit a hard copy of your paper. In some exceptional cases, you may be allowed to submit your papers through email. If so, you must receive a confirmation email from me, otherwise, you must assume that I have not received your paper.

If a paper is turned in late without prior permission, the grade will be adjusted downwards by a third of a grade for each day the paper is late (e.g., A to A-, A- to B+, B+ to B, etc.). Make up midterm and final exams will be administered only under the most extraordinary of circumstances, and only in light of appropriate supporting documents.

Although the papers are rather short, you will find that they require an amount of effort far disproportionate to their length. You are required to discuss the draft of your paper with me before you submit the final version of your paper. You may also want to show a draft to your friends, roommates, or classmates so as to solicit feedback.

Important note: *All two papers, plus the midterm and the final must be completed in order to pass the course. If you miss at least one of them, you will automatically fail the course.*

Grading:

- Each paper- 15% (Total 30%)
- Midterm exam-30%
- Final exam-30%
- Participation including reflective papers- 10%

You will be provided with a study guide for the midterm and for the final prior to the exams.

The grading scale is as follows:

Points	Grade	4-point conversion
95-100	A	4
90-95	A-	3.7
87-90	B+	3.3
84-87	B	3
80-84	B-	2.7
77-80	C+	2.3
74-77	C	2
70-74	C-	1.7
67-70	D+	1.3
64-67	D	1
60-64	D-	0.7
0-60	F	0

Tentative Lecture Schedule:

Introduction:

Jan. 18: General Remarks on Philosophy and Argument

Part I: Plato and Socrates: *The Symposium & Apology*

Jan. 20 & 25: Philosophical Background

Jan. 27 & Feb 1 & 3: *The Symposium*

Feb. 8 & 10: *Apology*

Part II: Aristotle: *The Nicomachean Ethics*

Feb. 15 & 17: Philosophical Background

Feb 17: Study Guide for the Midterm Exam

Feb. 22: Review session for the midterm

Feb 24: Midterm Exam

March 1 & 3 *Eudaimonia* or the fulfilled life (*The Nicomachean Ethics*: Book I, Chs.18 and Book X, Chs.6-9.)

March 8 & 10: Spring Recess

March 15 & 17: Moral Virtues and Moral Training (*The Nicomachean Ethics*: Book II, Book X, Ch.9.)

March 22 & 24: Friendship and Relationships with Others (*The Nicomachean Ethics*: Book VIII, IX, V.)

March 24: First Paper Assignment

Part III: Epicurus: *The Life of Pleasure*

March 29 & 31: Philosophical Background

April 5: Easter Recess

April 7 & 12 & 14: Facing Death (*The Essential Epicurus*, "Letter to Menoeceus", pp.61-76, and also recommended, pp.77-101.)

April 7: *First Paper Due.*

April 14: Second Paper Assignment

Part IV: The Stoics: *Following Nature*

April 19 & 21 & 26: (*The Stoics*, Chs. 3 & 6.)

April 21: Study Guide for the final exam

April 26: *Second Paper Due*

April 28: Review Session for the final

Final Exam: Thursday May 6th, at 1:30pm, Zinzendorf 103.

Important Note: Students who wish to request accommodations in this class for a disability should contact Mr. Joe Kempfer, Assistant Director of Learning Services for Disability Support, 1307 Main Street (extension 1510).