

Ancient Philosophy (Phil. 241): Spring 2012

Instructor: Dr. Arash Naraghi

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Office Hours: Tuesday 10 am-11am, Wednesday 4pm-5pm and by appointment.

Lectures: MW 2:35pm- 3:45pm, Main Street Campus, Comenius Hall, 105

Course Description:

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 Greek philosophy. In this course, we mainly focus on four major topics of ancient Greek Philosophy during the Classical and Hellenistic periods: Love, Justice, Happiness, and Death.

However, to explore these ideas, we discuss them in the context of some of the great works of Greek philosophy.

The course is divided in four major parts, and each part focuses on one major topic:

(1) The first part is devoted to the topic of love in Plato's *Symposium*.

(2) The second part is devoted to the topic of justice in Plato's *Republic*.

(3) The third part is devoted to the topic of happiness in Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics*;

(4) And finally, the last part is devoted to the topic of death in Epicurus's essential writings.

Course Objectives:

- To develop an ability to read, interpret, analyze, and evaluate philosophical texts.
- To introduce students to major themes of 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 human condition.
- To exercise scholarly fairness, sympathy, and tolerance toward different conflicting views, and expand our intellectual horizon.

Required Texts:

- *Ancient Ethics: A Critical Introduction*, Susan Sauve Meyer, Routledge, 2008.

- *Symposium*, Plato, (Cambridge Texts in the History of Philosophy), Edited by M.C. Howatson and Frisbee C. C. Sheffield, Cambridge University Press, 2008.
- *Republic*, Plato, (Cambridge Texts in the History of Political Thought), Translated by Tom Griffith, Edited by G. R. F. Ferrari, Cambridge University Press, 2001.
- *The Nicomachean Ethics*, Aristotle, Translated by Terrence Irwin, Hackett Publishing Company, 2nd edition, 1999.

(Some additional material will be posted on Blackboard. Please make sure you have access to Blackboard.)

All the required books are available at Moravian College Book Store.

Note: 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 lectures regularly. We will cover substantial amounts of material in the lectures not necessarily 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 question 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.

Important Note: Please turn off your cell phones before walking into class! If you are having an emergency that requires you to have your cell phone on, please tell me at the beginning of class. No text messaging is allowed during the class, and the use of computers should be strictly confined to the things directly related to the class.

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:

- (1) A regular final exam, scheduled for **Thursday, May 3, 2012, 1:30pm**, plus a midterm (tentatively scheduled for **Wednesday, February 29, 2012**). You will receive a Study Guide for the Midterm and Final Exams prior to the exams to know what kind of questions you should expect on the Midterm and Final Exams. Make up final exam will be administered only under the most extraordinary of circumstances, and only in light of appropriate supporting documents.
- (2) One paper (1500-2000 words). On March 23, 2012, the paper topic will be posted on Blackboard. The paper due is **Wednesday, April 4, 2012**. Paper 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 paper through email. If so, you must receive a confirmation email from me, otherwise, you must assume that I have not received your paper. If the 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.). It is always helpful to discuss the draft of your paper with your friends, roommates, or classmates so as to solicit feedback.

- (3) You will be required to write weekly short paragraphs (not more than two pages) consist of your critical evaluation of the material to be discussed in the class. In the paragraphs, you should concentrate on a specific concept, theme or question. You are required to complete 10 assignments of this sort by the end of the semester, that is, you have the option of choosing 10 out of roughly 12 assignments I am to assign throughout the semester. Every week, by the end of our Wednesday class, the assignments should be submitted.
- (4) Starting April, you would be divided into four groups, and each group is required to present one of the topics indicated on “Tentative Lecture Schedule”, section VI. The details would be announced in the class and on the Blackboard.

Important note: *By the end of the semester, all five above-mentioned requirements (midterm exam, final exam, weekly assignments, paper, and class presentation) must be completed in order to pass the course. In order words, if you miss at least one of the above requirements, we will fail the course automatically.*

Grading:

Final Exam: 30% - Midterm Exam: 20%- Paper: 20% - Weekly Paragraphs: 20%- Class Presentation: 10%.

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:

I. Weeks 1 and 2 (January 16, 18, 23, 25)

Socrates: Preliminary Remarks:

- (1) Definitions
- (2) The Love of Wisdom
- (3) Intellectualism

Reading:

- “What is ancient ethics?” From *Ancient Ethics*, pp. 1-5.

II. Weeks 3, 4, (January 30, February 1, 6, 8)

Plato (1): Love

- (1) Plato: An overview: (a) The Theory of Recollection; (b) The Theory of Forms; (c) The Tripartite Theory of Soul
- (2) Plato’s on Love

Reading:

- “Plato and the Pursuit of Excellence”, From *Ancient Ethics*, pp. 6-49.
- *Symposium* (Entire book)

III. Weeks 5, 6, 7(February 13, 15, 20, 22, 27)

Plato (2): Justice

Reading:

- (1) *Republic*, Books 2, 3, 4, 8, 9.

* On February 24, the Study Guide for the Midterm Exam will be posted on Blackboard.

* **The Midterm Exam will be held on Wednesday February 29, 2012.**

IV. Weeks 8, 9 10 (March 12, 14, 19, 21, 26, 28)

Aristotle: Happiness

- (1) Aristotle: An overview: (a) The Function Argument; (b) Theoretical Wisdom; (c) Practical Wisdom.
- (2) Happiness in *Nicomachean Ethics*

Reading:

- (1) “Aristotle and the pursuit of happiness”, from *Ancient Ethics*, pp. 50-94.
- (2) *Nicomachean Ethics*, Book I (Chs. 1-8) , Book II, Book X (Chs. 6-9).

* On March 23, the paper topic will be posted on Blackboard.

V. Weeks 11, 12, 13 (April 2, 4, 9, 11, 16)

Epicurus: Death

- (1) Epicurus: An overview: The fourfold remedy
- (2) Fear of Death in Epicurus’ writings

Reading:

- (1) “Epicurus and the Life of Pleasure”, from *Ancient Ethics*, pp. 95-133.
- (2) Some of his original writings also will be posted on Blackboard.

*** The paper due is on Wednesday April 4, 2012.**

VI. Weeks 13, 14 (April 18, 23, 25)

Class Presentations

(1) Socrates' Intellectualism

Reading: "Socratic Intellectualism" by Alexander Nehamas (Will be posted on Blackboard)

(2) On *Symposium* (The Tension between Socrates and Alcibiades's views)

Reading: "The Speech of Alcibiades", by Martha Nussbaum. (Will be posted on Blackboard)

(3) On *Republic* (Thrasymachus' Arguments)

Reading: "Unraveling Thrasymachus' Arguments in *"The Republic"*, by P. P. Nicholson. (Will be posted on Blackboard)

(4) On *Nicomachean Ethics* (Moral Failure)

Reading: *Nicomachean Ethics*, Book VII (Chs. 1-10)

Study Guide for the Final will be posted on Blackboard on April 26.

The Final Exam will be held on Thursday May 3, 2012, Main Street Campus, Comenius Hall, 105

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).
- The Writing Center is located in a building that is not accessible to persons with mobility impairments. If you need the services of the Writing Center, please call 610-861-1392. The Writing Center tutors will make arrangements with the student who needs tutoring services to meet in an accessible location, such as the library or a study/conference room in PPHAC.