

Philosophy 213: History of Ancient and Medieval Philosophy

Course Description and Objectives

This course explores some of the most significant philosophical ideas in the ancient and medieval world. Beginning with the pre-Socratic philosophers (c.600 BC) and ending with Aquinas (c.1270 AD), we will be reading the works of a number of major philosophers on a diverse set of topics: morality, happiness, society, knowledge, creation, God, causality, the origin of the universe, free will, and others. The readings cover the period from the birth of systematic philosophy, to the flowering of philosophy in ancient Greece, to the universalist philosophies which flourished in the Hellenistic world and the Roman Empire, to the encounter of philosophy with monotheism (in its three major incarnations: Christianity, Islam, and Judaism), to the synthesis between Greek philosophical thought and monotheistic religion. By the end of this course, you should be able to:

- Grasp some of the central concepts and themes of philosophy in the ancient and medieval world.
- Understand the development and progression of the ancient and medieval philosophical traditions.
- Evaluate some of the main problems and issues put forward by ancient and medieval philosophers and compare their theories to one another.
- Analyze and critique the theories and ideas addressed by ancient and medieval philosophers.
- Appreciate the legacy of the ancient and medieval philosophical traditions and understand the influence of these traditions on modern and contemporary philosophy.

Course Requirements

You will be required to do the readings mentioned on the next page before the class in which the relevant text will be discussed in class. Every two weeks, short assignments will be distributed in order to make sure that all students are doing the required reading for the course. In case some students are not doing the required readings, occasional in-class quizzes will be administered for the same purpose. In addition, you will be required to sit for one mid-term exam and one final exam. You will also be required to write a short term paper (5-6 pages). The term paper will be an analytic paper and will not require you to do any additional reading or research. It will give you the opportunity to pursue in somewhat greater depth one of the issues encountered in the readings and discussed in class. Paper topics will be distributed well in advance; you may also choose your own topic provided you clear it with me first. You will be expected to participate in class by asking questions, raising objections, and engaging in discussion. Class participation may also be fulfilled by seeing me during office hours or by sending me e-mails to the above address. Another important medium of participation is WebCT; participation on the online discussion boards is *highly recommended*. The distribution of grades is as follows: in-class assignments (10%), class participation (15%), mid-term exam (25%), final exam (25%), term paper (25%).

Required Texts

The readings for this course will be included in two course packets available at the AUB Bookstore. Some of these readings will also be posted on WebCT if they are available in electronic format (pdf).

Reading Schedule

WEEK	READING
Week 1	Pre-Socratics (selections)
Week 2	Plato, <i>Euthyphro</i> (entire)
Week 3	Plato, <i>Meno</i> (entire)
Week 4	Plato, <i>Republic: Book I</i>
Week 5	Plato, <i>Republic: Book IX</i>
Week 6	Aristotle, <i>Ethics: Books I and II</i>
Week 7	Aristotle, <i>Ethics: Book X chs.6-9</i>
Week 8	Aristotle, <i>Politics: Book I chs.1-6 and 13</i>
Week 9	Aristotle, <i>Metaphysics: Book I chs.1-7</i>
Week 10	Aristotle, <i>Metaphysics: Book XII chs.1-5 and 10</i>
Week 11	Sextus Empiricus, pp.370-384
Week 12	Marcus Aurelius, selections
Week 13	Plotinus, <i>Enneads</i> , selections
Week 14	Averroes (Ibn Rushd)-Ghazali, <i>Incoherence of the Incoherence</i> , selections
Week 15	Averroes (Ibn Rushd)-Ghazali (cont'd.)
Week 16	Aquinas, selections

Course Policies

Attendance is *strictly required*; if a student misses one-fifth or more of all classes during the first 10 weeks of the semester he or she may be dropped from the course.

Cheating and plagiarism are serious offenses. Please familiarize yourselves with the AUB policies on cheating and plagiarism, and please talk to me if you have any questions about them, particularly if you are unsure of the definition of plagiarism. Note that both cheating or plagiarism will lead to serious consequences, including a Dean's warning or suspension from the university.