

Boğaziçi University—Summer Term 2024
PHIL111.01
INTRODUCTION TO ANCIENT & MEDIEVAL PHILOSOPHY

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Course Description

This course aims to familiarize the students with the basic figures, premises, problems and questions of Ancient and (or, up to) Medieval & Byzantine Philosophy. The course will begin with the Presocratics and lay considerable focus on Plato and Aristotle. Ensuing a briefer overview of Hellenistic Philosophy (Epicureans, Stoics, Skeptics, Neo-Platonists), a comprehensive introduction to Western Medieval Philosophy will be offered, leading to a study of early Byzantine philosophical thought and its problems. The study of passages from our primary sources will comprise an important aspect of this course, as will the engagement with the particular philosophical issues addressed therein and, to a certain extent, their relevance today.

Course Readings

All required readings will be announced beforehand. In general, the three first volumes of the *Routledge History of Philosophy (From the Beginning to Plato, From Aristotle to Augustine & Medieval Philosophy)* will be the primary reference books on all aspects of the course except Byzantine Philosophy.

Other resources:

Presocratics—<http://www.philosophy.gr/presocratics/index.htm>

Plato's works in translation. <http://classics.mit.edu/Browse/browse-Plato.html>

Aristotle's works in translation. <http://classics.mit.edu/Browse/browse-Aristotle.html>

From Aristotle to Augustine (Routledge History of Philosophy, Vol. 2)

Basil Tatakis: *Byzantine philosophy*. Hackett Pub., 2003. This book is available in the library.

Please do not borrow it (but only study them in situ), so that it remains available in the library throughout the course!

Sotiris Mitralaxis: *Ever-Moving Repose*. Cascade, 2017.

Henry Chadwick: *Augustine of Hippo: A Biography*. Oxford University Press, 2009.

Gerard O'Daly: *Augustine's Philosophy of Mind*. University of California Press, 1987.

Grading

Grading is comprised of three components:

1/3 Class attendance and participation 25%

This factor will be of great importance in this course—please take heed!
The instructor will occasionally ask students questions on both previous and current material. These questions have the value of “oral quizzes” and will play a considerable role in grading.

2/3 Presentation 40 %

Each student is required to perform a 20-minutes presentation/seminar paper of a particular philosopher in class, to his fellow students and to the instructor. This presentation will be the most significant component of the student’s grade, comprising its 40%. (A discussion on the contents of the presentation in class will follow.)

In this 20-minutes presentation/seminar paper, the student is expected to briefly but accurately present the philosopher’s life and historical presence (~10 mins) as well as his core philosophical ideas/contributions (~10 mins). The presentation can be extended to up to 30 minutes in total, should the student require so. **The use of powerpoint** (or a projected PDF) for highlighting main points **will be greatly appreciated**. The critical thinking applied by the student in order to condense his/her material into a short presentation, i.e. what the student chooses to present and what to omit, will be an important aspect in the student’s evaluation.

Once mutually agreed upon, the date of the presentation cannot be changed by the student and the presentation itself cannot be cancelled or postponed. The instructor may—depending on the particular presentation—provide the student with additional appropriate reading material for the purposes of the presentation’s preparation.

3/3 Final exam 35%

The final exam will consist of multiple choice questions and two short essay-type questions

Class Schedule and Topics

i. Introduction to the course. Philosophy: the Basics.

Presocratics

ii. Presocratics—with a focus on Heraclitus.

[Presentation: 1 Heraclitus]

iii. From the Presocratics to Socrates. Plato's *Protagoras*.

[Presentations: 2 Sophists. 3 Socrates.]

Plato

iv. Plato, introduction. The theory of *Forms* and *Ideas*. Allegory of the Cave (*The Republic*, 514a–520a).

[Presentation: 4 Plato.]

v. Plato's *Symposium*.

[Presentation: 5 Plato's *Symposium*—plot, characters, main ideas.]

vi. Plato's *Symposium*.

[Presentation: 6 *Eros* in Plato's *Symposium*]

vii. Plato's *Republic*.

[Presentation: 7 The three classes in Plato's *Republic*. 8 Plato's adventures in Syracuse.]

Aristotle

viii. Introduction. Aristotle's *Categories*, *Physics* and *Metaphysics*.

[Presentation: 8 Aristotle—Introduction to his life and work, with mention of the *Categories*. 9 Aristotle's Theory of Motion]

ix. Aristotle's *Categories*, *Physics* (esp. theory of time) and *Metaphysics*.

[Presentation: 10 Aristotle's *Physics* & *Metaphysics*]

x. Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics*.

[Presentation: 11 Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics*]

xi. Aristotle's *Politics* and *Rhetoric*.

[Presentation: 12 Aristotle's *Politics*. 13 Aristotle's *Rhetoric*.]

From Aristotle to Medieval Philosophy

xii. Epicureans, Stoics, Skeptics, Neo-Platonists (esp. Plotinus and Proclus)

[Presentation: 13 Epicureans, 14 Stoics, 15 Skeptics, 16 Neo-Platonists: Plotinus. 17 Neo-Platonists: Proclus. Emphasis on their ideas and major contributions.]

Medieval & Byzantine Philosophy

xiii. The Cappadocians. Basic notions, distinctions, categories.

[Presentation: 18 Basil the Great 19 Gregory of Nyssa 20 Gregory of Nazianzus. These presentations must focus on *philosophical ideas*.]

xiv. Augustine of Hippo, Progenitor of Western Thought: *Confessions*

[Presentation: 21 Augustine's Theory of Time.]

xv. Augustine: Philosophy of Mind & *City of God*.

[Presentation: 22 Intr. to Augustine's life and his *Confessions*. 23 Augustine's City of God -OR- Augustine's Philosophy of Mind.]

xvi. The centre of Byzantine Philosophy: Maximus the Confessor

[Presentation: 24 Maximus the Confessor on the Freedom of Human Will. 25 *Microcosm and Mediator* in Maximus.]

xvii. Boethius, Avicenna and Averroes, John Scottus Eriugena

[Presentation: 25 Boethius, 26 Avicenna and Averroes, 27 John Scottus Eriugena.]

xviii. Scholasticism: Thomas Aquinas

[Presentation: 28 Scholasticism]

xix. Thomas Aquinas (cont.) & William of Ockham

[Presentation: 29 Thomas Aquinas, 30 William of Ockham. These presentations must focus on *philosophical ideas*.]

xx. Recapitulation & Discussion

Final Exam