

Ancient Philosophy (Philosophy 25A)

Richard Lawrence

Summer Session 2015, first six weeks

1 Course Description

This course is an introduction to the philosophical thought of ancient Greece. We will approach a broad range of philosophical questions by examining and writing about the philosophy of Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, and other ancient authors. Among the questions we will ask are: What does reality consist in, and how do we know about it? What is the nature of knowledge? What is the structure of the soul? What is virtue, and how does one acquire it? And what is required to lead a good life? We study these foundational questions of metaphysics, epistemology and ethics through the eyes of ancient philosophers because they were the first to ask these questions, and the first to devise methods for answering them which are continuous with our philosophical practice today. For this reason, the course serves as a good introduction to philosophical thought and method generally.

Course learning objectives

By the conclusion of the course, the student will:

- understand the concept of form or definition which appears in the philosophy of Socrates, Plato and Aristotle, and be able to explain the criteria that definitions satisfy
- understand the ancient Greek project of explaining natural phenomena, and be able to explain how Plato and Aristotle used the concept of form to advance that project
- be able to articulate and compare Socrates', Plato's, and Aristotle's theories of motivation, the nature of the soul, and the definition of virtue
- practice analysis, reconstruction, and evaluation of philosophical arguments from ancient Greek texts, including texts in dialogue form

Contact information

	Instructor	GSI
	Richard Lawrence richard.lawrence@berkeley.edu	Lindsay Crawford ljcrawfo@berkeley.edu
Office hours:	Thursdays, 1PM–3PM 233 Moses	Fridays, 12:45PM–2:45PM 301 Moses

Meeting Times

	Day	Time	Location
Lecture:	Tuesday–Thursday	10AM–12:30PM	103 Moffitt
Section:	Friday	10AM–12:30PM	223 Dwinelle

2 Texts

The texts for the course are available at the University book store. Supplementary material will be provided in class and posted on the course web site.

1. Plato, *Five Dialogues* (Hackett: tr. Grube, Cooper) and *Protagoras* (Hackett: tr. Lombardo, Bell); alternatively, Plato, *Complete Works* (Hackett: ed. Cooper).
2. Plato, *The Republic* (Cambridge: tr. Griffith, ed. Ferrari).
3. Aristotle, *Introductory Readings* (Hackett: ed. Irwin, Fine).

3 Course Requirements

	Due date	Length	Weight in final grade
Essay 1	<i>Tuesday, June 2</i>	1–2 pages	15%
Essay 2	<i>Wednesday, June 17</i>	4–5 pages	25%
Essay 3	<i>Monday, June 29</i>	3–4 pages	20%
Final exam	<i>Thursday, July 2</i>	2 hours	20%
Participation in discussion			20%

3.1 Essays

You will write three essays in this course. You generally have two tasks to complete in the essays: first, to **reconstruct one or more philosophical arguments** from the texts we have read; and second, to **present your own philosophical argument** in response, saying why the author’s arguments are correct or incorrect, whether you agree with their conclusions, and why. Your analysis of arguments in the readings, the structure of your own argument, and correct spelling, grammar, and citations are all important.

When citing the readings, please cite the author, work, and the relevant location in the text using the standard pagination, which appears in the margins of the texts.¹ Examples:

Tell me then what this form itself is, so that I may look upon it and, using it as a model, say that any action of yours or another’s that is of that kind is pious, and if it is not that it is not. (Plato, *Euthyphro*, 6e)

Intelligence is a state grasping the truth, involving reason, concerned with action about what is good or bad for a human being. (Aristotle, *NE* VI.5, 1140b5–7)

Note that writing these essays **does not require any outside resources** or additional research. You should focus solely on reading, and discussing, the texts assigned for the course. Searching for interpretations of the text online or elsewhere is more likely to lead you astray, or worse, to plagiarize. If you are having difficulty understanding how to write the essays, please see one of the instructors—we are happy to help!

3.2 Final Examination

There will be a final examination in this course, scheduled during the last day of lecture. **The exam will cover material from the entire course**, and will include both short-answer questions and a longer essay.

¹In Plato’s work, this pagination is known as *Stephanus* numbering; in Aristotle’s work, it is *Bekker* numbering.

3.3 Discussion Sections

Discussion section meets once a week, and **attendance is required**. You are expected to be an **active participant** in both discussion and lecture. Participating in discussion does not simply mean sharing a thought once per class. Rather, you are expected to:

- be an active listener
- ask clarificatory questions when you do not understand something
- answer questions posed by your classmates and instructors
- raise objections when you do not think that proposals made by others are true

You can take the characters in Plato's dialogues as models for how to participate in discussion. Different types of participation are appropriate for different people at different times; whether you are listening or speaking, the important thing is that you are not merely a bystander.

3.4 Academic honesty

It is your responsibility to ensure that your work in this course accords with the University's standards for academic honesty. Students found to have plagiarized will be reported to the Center for Student Conduct and may fail the course, at the determination of the instructor. For further information on plagiarism and how to avoid it, see: <http://sa.berkeley.edu/cite-responsibly>.

4 Schedule

4.1 Nature and Knowledge

	Nature, causes, and explanation
<i>Tuesday, May 26</i>	Fragments from Pre-Socratic philosophers Parmenides, fragments Plato, <i>Phaedo</i> (96a–100a)
	The <i>elenchus</i> and the search for definitions
	Plato, <i>Apology</i> (17a–24b) Plato, <i>Euthyphro</i> Plato, <i>Meno</i> (70a–80d)
<i>Tuesday, June 2</i>	Plato, <i>Republic</i> I
	Form as the object of knowledge
	Plato, <i>Republic</i> V (473b–end) Plato, <i>Republic</i> VI Plato, <i>Republic</i> VII (to 534e) Plato, <i>Meno</i> (80a–86c) Plato, <i>Phaedo</i> (72e–77a)
	Form as cause in nature
<i>Tuesday, June 9</i>	Plato, <i>Republic</i> X (595a–602c) Plato, <i>Phaedo</i> (100a–103a) Aristotle, <i>Categories</i> 1–5 Aristotle, <i>Physics</i> I.1, I.7–8 Aristotle, <i>Physics</i> II.1–3, II.7–9
<i>Monday, June 15</i>	Discussion Section (rescheduled from <i>Friday, June 12</i>)

4.2 Virtue and the Constitution of the Soul

Socratic intellectualism	
<i>Tuesday, June 16</i>	Plato, <i>Apology</i> (24b–end) Plato, <i>Crito</i> Plato, <i>Phaedo</i> (115a–end) Plato, <i>Protagoras</i> (to 335d, 349a–end)
The definition of virtue and the structure of the soul	
<i>Tuesday, June 23</i>	Plato, <i>Republic</i> II Plato, <i>Republic</i> IV Plato, <i>Republic</i> VIII (555b–562a), IX (to 580c) Aristotle, <i>De Anima</i> II.1–3 Aristotle, <i>Nic. Ethics</i> I.1–2, I.7 (1097b20–end), I.13 Aristotle, <i>Nic. Ethics</i> II.1–7
<i>Tuesday, June 30</i>	Aristotle, <i>Nic. Ethics</i> III.2–4 Aristotle, <i>Nic. Ethics</i> VI.1–2, 5
<i>Wednesday, July 1</i>	Review session; final thoughts
<i>Thursday, July 2</i>	Final exam