Ancient Philosophy (PHIL10181)

**Course Organiser:** Dr Damian Caluori  
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**Office Hours:** TBA (information about how to book office hours will be provided on Learn).  
**Location:** Microsoft Teams

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1. **Course Aims and Objectives**  
The aim of this course is to gain an understanding of, and to critically evaluate, the major ethical theories of antiquity.

2. **Intended Learning Outcomes**  
On completion of this course, students will be able to:
   - identify and understand the main approaches to ethics in ancient philosophy.  
   - understand and evaluate the differences between the different approaches.  
   - think carefully and systematically about the relation between human nature and the good life, as conceived of by the ancients.  
   - think carefully and systematically about the role of reason, emotion, and character in a good life, as conceived of by the ancients.  
   - think carefully and systematically about the possibility of ethics and of a good life, as conceived of by the ancients.

3. **Structure**  
The course involves a weekly lecture recording on Learn and a weekly tutorial (starting in Week 2). The lecture recording will be available at the latest at the beginning of the corresponding week. In tutorials, we will discuss material from the previous week’s lecture. Tutorials will be run by Dr Damian Caluori and by Dr Inna Kupreeva.

   **Tutorials (start in Week 2):**
   - Tuesday, 12:10-13:00  
   - Tuesday, 16:10-17:00  
   - Thursday, 13:10-14:00  
   - Thursday, 14:10-15:00

   At least one tutorial will be online. Information about which other tutorials, if any, will be online, about how to access online-tutorials and the place of in-person tutorials will be announced on Learn.
4. Assessment
1,500-word midterm essay (40%), due 25th February, at noon; 2,500-word final essay (55%), due 15th April, at noon. Essay topics to be distributed via Learn.

Participation (5%): 6 quizzes on Learn. Each quiz must be completed by Friday at 17:00 of the week of the corresponding lecture. Quizzes will test your understanding of the content of the lecture. I will drop the least successful quiz and count only the top 5.

5. Course Description
In this course, we will discuss the beginnings of ethics in the Western tradition: Plato, Aristotle and the Hellenistic schools: Stoics, Epicureans, and Sceptics. We will ask (and try to answer!) questions such as the following: What is Socratic ethics? What role do Platonic Forms play in a good Platonic life? What is human nature according to Aristotle, and what does this mean for ethics? Is a good life a life of Epicurean pleasures, or is it a virtuous life of reason? What role do emotions play in a good life? Ought we to worry about death or is it nothing to us? And finally: is it possible at all to answer any of these questions? The sceptics had their doubts. They even doubted that we can have reasons for preferring one way of life to another. This leads to the question of whether the sceptics can live their scepticism.

6. Schedule of Lectures
In preparation of each class, please read all the Core Readings in advance of watching the recordings. Secondary readings are recommended but not required. If you have time to read one piece beyond the core readings, read the first recommended reading (etc.). For your essays, I recommend you read all recommended readings about your topic. All texts are available via Resource List. Further readings may be recommended during the course.

Week 1. Introduction; the Socratic life
   • Core Reading
      o Plato: Apology.

   • Secondary Readings
      o T. Irwin: T. Irwin: Plato’s Moral Theory, ch. 2 (‘The Background’).
      o C. D. C. Reeve: Socrates in the Apology.
      o T.C. Brickhouse & N.D. Smith: Socrates on Trial.

Week 2. Socrates: The unity of virtue and why there is no ‘weakness of will’ (akrasia)
   • Core Readings
      o Plato: Protagoras 317e-334c; 345c-362a.
      o Plato: Gorgias 466a-468e.
      o Plato: Meno 77b-78c.

   • Secondary Readings
Week 3. Plato: The benefits of being bad and justice in the city

- **Core Readings**
  - Republic I.
  - Republic II, 357a-362c; 368a-376c.
  - Republic IV, 427c-434d.

- **Secondary Readings**

Week 4. Plato: The human soul, its virtues, and happiness

- **Core Readings**
  - Republic IV, 435a-444e.
  - Republic IX, 577c-end.

- **Secondary Readings**
  - B. Williams, ‘The analogy of city and soul in Plato’s Republic’.
  - G. R. F. Ferrari, *City and Soul in Plato’s Republic*.

Week 5. Plato: The Form of the Good and the life of a philosopher

- **Core Readings**
  - Republic VI, 484a-497a; 502e-511e.
  - Republic VII, 514a-521b.

- **Secondary Readings**

Week 6. Aristotle: The Human Good

- **Core Reading**
  - Nicomachean Ethics I, 1-5, 7-10, 13.

- **Secondary Readings**
Week 7. Aristotle: Character Virtue and the Doctrine of the Mean

- **Core Readings**
  - *Nicomachean Ethics* II.
  - *Nicomachean Ethics* III, 6-9.

- **Secondary Readings**

Week 8. Aristotle: Deliberation, Intellectual Virtue and Contemplation

- **Core Readings**
  - *Nicomachean Ethics* III.1-5; VI, 1-7, 9, 12-13.
  - *Nicomachean Ethics* X, 6-8.

- **Secondary Readings**

Week 9. Epicurus and the Cyrenaics: A life of pleasure and why death is nothing to us

- **Core Readings**

- **Secondary Readings**

Week 10. Stoics: A life of reason and the place of emotions in reason

- **Core Reading**

- **Secondary Readings**
  - B. Inwood & P. Donini: ‘Stoic Ethics’ in K. Algra et al. (eds.): *The Cambridge History of Hellenistic Philosophy*.
  - T. Brennan: *The Stoic Life: Emotions, Duties, and Fate*. 
Week 11. A Sceptical Way of Life

- **Core Reading**

- **Secondary Readings**

7. Readings

For how to cite ancient sources, see section 8. This will also explain how you find references that are cited in the lectures.

7.1. Primary texts

The primary texts are listed in section 6 (Schedule of Lectures).

- J. Cooper (ed.): *Plato. Complete Works*.
- A. A. Long & D. Sedley: *The Hellenistic Philosophers*.
- Diogenes Laertius: *Lives of Eminent Philosophers*.
- Sextus Empiricus: *Outlines of Pyrrhonism*.

7.2. Background readings

7.2.1. Ancient Philosophy

- C. Meinwald: *Plato* (2016).

7.2.2. Ancient Ethics

- J. Annas: *The Morality of Happiness*.
- B. Reis (ed.): *The Virtuous Life in Greek Ethics* (2006).

7.2.3. Podcast

- https://historyofphilosophy.net/classical

7.2.4. Socrates and Plato

- T. Brickhouse & N. Smith: *The Philosophy of Socrates*.
7.2.5. Aristotle

- S. Broadie: *Ethics with Aristotle*.
- G. Hughes: *Routledge Guidebook to Aristotle on Ethics*.
- G. Anagnostopoulos (ed.): *A companion to Aristotle*.
- J. Urmson: *Aristotle’s Ethics*.

7.2.6. Hellenistic Schools

- K. Algra et al. (eds.): *The Cambridge History of Hellenistic Philosophy*.
- A. Long: *Hellenistic Philosophy*.
- J. Rist: *Epicurus: An Introduction*.
- F. Sandbach: *The Stoics*.
- R. Sharples: *Stoics, Epicureans and Sceptics*.

8. Referencing style for your essays

8.1. In-text citing of ancient sources

If you quote from a work, set the quotation in quotation marks and give a reference to the text you quote. Example:

“It is not the purpose of a juryman’s office to give justice as a favor to whoever seems good to him” (Pl. *Ap*, 35b).

If you quote a primary text, you need to refer to the passage quoted. Unfortunately, there are different ways of doing this, depending on the author. Here are instructions on how to correctly cite the authors discussed in this course.

**Plato**: A typical reference to a passage in Plato looks like this: *Ap*. 23a3 or *Rep*. 520a5. “*Ap*.” is a standard abbreviation for “*Apology*”, and “*Rep*.” is a standard abbreviation for “*Republic*”. The number after the abbreviation of the work (e.g. 23a3 or 520a5) is called Stephanus number. You can find this number in the margins of any good translation of Plato’s works. For our purposes, it is fine to give references as follows: *Ap*. 2a or *Rep*. 520a, because the line number (the number after “a” in these examples) refers to the line of the Greek text and is often difficult to determine in a translation. “Plato” can be abbreviated as “Pl.”. So, a full reference for our purposes would be Pl. *Rep*. 520a. If all references to primary texts in your essay are to Plato, there is no need to add “Pl.”.

**Aristotle**: A typical reference to a passage in Aristotle looks like this: *EN* 1094a3. *EN* is the standard abbreviation for “*Nicomachean Ethics*” (*EE* is the standard abbreviation for “*Eudemian Ethics*”). The number after the abbreviation of the work title is called Bekker number. You can find it in the margins of any good translation of Aristotle’s works. For our purposes, it is fine to give references as follows: *EN* 1094a. For the line number (the number after “a” in this example) refers to the line of the Greek text and is often difficult to determine in a translation. “Aristotle” can be abbreviated as “Ar.”. So, a
full reference for our purposes would be Ar. *EN* 1094a. If all references to primary texts in your essay are to Aristotle, there is no need to add “Ar.”.

**Long & Sedley:** Most texts about Hellenistic Philosophy that we are going to discuss can be found in Long & Sedley. Please cite as in the following example: LS 21A. “LS” stands for “Long & Sedley”. “21” stands for the section in LS, in this example, the collection of fragments on pleasure. “A” refers to the specific fragment cited in section 21.

**Diogenes Laertius:** Please cite as in the following example: DL 2.87. “DL” stands for Diogenes Laertius. “2” stands for the book, namely book 2. “87” refers to the corresponding section/paragraph in book 2. These numbers can be found in the margins of your translation.

**Sextus Empiricus:** Please cite as in the following example: SE PH 1.2. “SE” stands for Sextus Empiricus. “PH” stands for *Outlines of Pyrrhonism*. “1” stands for book 1. “2” stands for the section of the passage in book 1. These numbers can be found in the margins of your translation.

For more details, see the separate document on Learn: *How to cite ancient philosophical texts*.

**8.2. In-text citing of secondary literature**

Put the quotation in quotation marks and cite it as in the following example:

Ferrari (2005, 37) states: “An analogy between city and soul is in fact already implicit in the metaphor of self-guardianship.”

In this example, “2005” refers to the year of publication and “37” refers to the page-number. You can also add the reference after the quotation:

“An analogy between city and soul is in fact already implicit in the metaphor of self-guardianship” Ferrari (2005, 37).

**8.3. Bibliography**

There is no need to add ancient primary sources to your bibliography. For secondary literature, there are different styles, and you can choose any style you like as long as you apply it consistently. Typical examples:


