Philosophy Honours: Ancient Philosophy
Spring Semester 2019

Course Organiser: Dr Andrew Mason
Email: A.S.Mason@ed.ac.uk
Telephone: (0131) 6511843
Office Hour: 2.00-3.30 Monday (6.10, DSB – Adam Smith Room)

Course Secretary: Ms Anne-Marie Cowe
Email: philinfo@ed.ac.uk

Description

The course each year provides a systematic introduction to some central concepts and arguments developed by ancient philosophical schools, starting from the early Greek thinkers, proceeding to the major figures of Plato and Aristotle, and devoting an appropriate amount of time to the main Hellenistic schools such as the Epicureans, Stoics, and Sceptics. The focus of the course will be on a major philosophical theme developed by these schools.

This year the course introduces the ethical thought of leading ancient philosophers, focusing on questions about virtue and happiness, the relation between them, and the place of philosophy in the good life. We will consider in turn the views of Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, Epicurus and the Stoics.

The course consists of two weekly lectures, starting in week 1 (11.10-12.00 and 2.10-3.00 on Tuesdays), and a weekly tutorial, starting in week 2 (1.10-2.00 Wednesday, and 10.00-10.50, 11.10-12.00, and 1.10 -2.00 Thursday). Tutorials will move a week behind lectures, covering material that was discussed in lectures in the previous week. In tutorials, students will be invited to give brief introductions of passages from the reading; a list of tutorial readings will be published at the start of the semester.

Reading

The primary reading consists of selected passages from Plato’s Socratic dialogues and Republic, Aristotle’s Nicomachean Ethics, and extracts from Epicurus and the Stoics, found in A. Long and D. Sedley, The Hellenistic Philosophers. For Epicurus see also B. Inwood and L. Gerson, edd., An Epicurus Reader.

Works of Plato and Aristotle and other relevant philosophers may be found online at:
http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/
and
http://classics.mit.edu/Browse/
Relevant secondary reading:
T. Irwin, *The Development of Ethics*.
G. Vlastos, *Socrates, Ironist and Moral Philosopher*.
T. Brickhouse and N. Smith, *The Philosophy of Socrates*.
T. Irwin, *Plato’s Ethics*.
N. Pappas, *Plato and the Republic*. (There are several other guides to the Republic including *An Introduction to Plato’s Republic* by J. Annas and *A Companion to Plato’s Republic* by N. White.)
A. Mason, *Plato*.
D. Bostock, *Aristotle’s Ethics*.
G. Hughes, *Aristotle on Ethics*.
S. Broadie, *Ethics with Aristotle*.
A. Long, *Hellenistic Philosophy*.
R. Sharples, *Stoics Epicureans and Sceptics*.
F. Sandbach, *The Stoics*.

All should do the recommended primary reading. Secondary reading is optional (but recommended especially for those planning to write an essay on a topic, or to focus on it for the take-home test). Many of the books listed above have relevant chapters on the various topics discussed; where these are obvious they will not be specifically pointed out. Additional reading may be recommended during the course.

**Assessment**

Assessment consists of a midterm essay of 1500 words (40%) and an end-of-semester take-home test (60%).

Suggested topics for the midterm essay will be posted on Learn at the beginning of Week 2: students may write on other topics with the approval of the course organiser. The essay is due on Thursday 28th February at 12.00 noon.

The take-home test will be issued on Monday 15th April 2019 and is due on Thursday 18th April 2019 by 12pm.

**Schedule of Lectures.**

In general the lectures in each week will focus on one topic or closely-connected group of topics,

**Week 1 (Morning) – Introduction to Ancient Ethics**

No required reading.

**Week 1 (Afternoon) – Socrates: Virtue and Happiness**
Plato, Apology 28a-31a; Crito 47d-49e; Euthydemus 278d-282d, 287d-292d; Gorgias 474c-480e

T. Irwin, Plato’s Ethics chapters 4 and 5.

Week 2 – Socrates: Virtue and Knowledge
Plato, Protagoras, 329b-334c, 349a-end; Meno 70a-79e, 86b-89c
T. Irwin, Plato’s Ethics chapters 6 and 9.

Week 3 – Plato: What is Justice?
Republic IV, 427e-end; VI, 484a-487a; VII, 519c-521b

Week 4 – Plato: Justice and Happiness
Republic II, 357a-369b; IX, 577c-end.

Week 5 – Plato: The Form of the Good; Philosophy and the Good Life
Republic VI, 487a-end; VII, 514a-519b
C. Bobonich, Plato’s Utopia Recast, chapter 1 sections 10 ff.

Week 6 – Aristotle: The Human Good
Nicomachean Ethics I, 1-5, 7-10, 13
Irwin TDOE, 6-7.
Week 7 – Aristotle: Ethical Virtue and the Doctrine of the Mean

_Nicomachean Ethics_ II and III, 6-9

Irwin TDOE 8.

Week 8 – Aristotle: Intellectual Virtue and Contemplation

_Nicomachean Ethics_ VI, 1-7, 12-13: X, 6-8

R. Kraut. _Aristotle on the Human Good_, Ch. 1.
G. Richardson Lear. _Happy Lives and the Highest Good_, Ch. 8.

Week 9 – Epicurus: The Ethics of Pleasure

Long and Sedley, _The Hellenistic Philosophers_, 21-2, 25.

Annas TMOH 7, 16.
Irwin TDOE 11.

Week 10 – The Stoics: The Ethics of Reason

Long and Sedley, _The Hellenistic Philosophers_, 57-61, 63.

Annas TMOH 5.
Irwin TDOE 12-13.

Week 11 (Morning) – The Impact of Ancient Ethics on Modern Thought

No required reading

Week 11 (Afternoon) – Question period for revision