Course Guide

PHIL10049: Ancient Theories of Existence 2017/18

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1. Course Aims and Objectives

The course will examine different ancient theories of existence. We discuss some Presocratic approaches to the problem of being; Plato's theory of Forms; and Aristotle's theory of substance.

2. Course description

The topics discussed in this course include the concepts of ontological principle; causes and causation; substances - their identity criteria; matter; universal, form; unity of particulars.
3. Intended Learning Outcomes

By the end of the course, students should have acquired an understanding of some major issues in ancient theories of existence; an understanding of how these issues relate to continuing debates; and an ability to read closely, analyse and criticise ancient philosophical texts. They should also have further developed written skills, and the ability to take part in group discussion and defend arguments.

4. Seminar Content

Week 1. Thales; Anaximander

Week 2. Anaximenes

Week 3. Heracleitus and Parmenides 1;
   Waterfield, *The First Philosophers*, ‘Heracleitus’; ‘Parmenides of Elea’;

Week 4. Parmenides 2 (Zeno of Elea); Empedocles;
   Waterfield, *The First Philosophers*, ‘Zeno of Elea’; ‘Empedocles of Acragas’

Week 5. Atomism; Anaxagoras

Week 6. Anaxagoras
   ‘Anaxagoras of Clazomenae’

Week 7. Socrates – Plato: Definitions; Theory of Recollection; Knowledge and Belief
   Plato, *Republic* 477a-478e; 507b; 596a

Week 8. Plato: Further Arguments for the Theory of Forms; Criticisms of the Theory of Forms;
   Criticisms of the Theory of Forms
   Plato, *Phaedo* 74-76; 79a; 79d; 80a-b; 100c; Plato, *Parmenides* 130-134
Week 9. Plato: Criticisms of the Theory of Forms; Aristotle: *Categories*  
Aristotle, *Categories* Chapters 1-5

Week 10. Aristotle on Change and the 4 Causes  
Aristotle, *Physics* Book I, Chapters 2, 7, 8. *Physics* Book II Ch. 3

Week 11. Aristotle - Substance, Substratum, Change  
Aristotle, *Metaphysics* Book V Ch. 2; Book VII Ch. 17.

5. Readings

The primary readings are the metaphysical works of the philosophers under examination in the course, which are available in:


http://pm.nlx.com.ezproxy.webfeat.lib.ac.uk/xtf/view;jsessionid=7FDAC6468CFDB6AD4E424F6CD5A07F4?docId=plato/plato.00.xml;chunk.id=div.plato.pmpreface.1;toc.depth=1;brand=default

http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/searchresults?q=plato

http://plato-dialogues.org/links.htm

http://pm.nlx.com.ezproxy.webfeat.lib.ed.ac.uk/xtf/view?docId=aristotle/aristotle.00.xml;chunk.id=div.aristotle.pmpreface.1;toc.depth=1;brand=default

http://classics.mit.edu/Browse/index-Aristotle.html

http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/searchresults?q=aristotle

http://archive.org/details/worksofaristotle512aris

http://onlinebooks.library.upenn.edu/webbin/book/lookupname?key=Aristotle

Useful Discussion of the ancient metaphysical themes: Adamson History of Philosophy:
http://www.historyofphilosophy.net/home

Further reading on the Presocratics from the following:

General:
Stanford encyclopedia of philosophy: http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/presocratics/

More specific:


**Further reading on Plato from the following:**

General:


More specific:


**Further reading on Aristotle from the following:**

General:


Stanford encyclopedia of philosophy:
http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/aristotle-categories/
http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/aristotle-metaphysics/
http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/aristotle-causality/
http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/aristotle-natphil/

More specific:

6. Assessment Information

Assessment will be by 2-hour examination in the May diet (100%).