Greats: From Plato to the Enlightenment
19/20
Semester 2

An introduction to some of the great texts in the history of philosophy.

Course Organiser:
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Lecture Times and Location

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<tr>
<th>Day</th>
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<tr>
<td>Monday</td>
<td>10:00–10:50</td>
<td>Gordon Aikman Lecture Theatre</td>
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<td>Wednesday</td>
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<td>Friday</td>
<td>10:00–10:50</td>
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Lecture Topics and Readings

After an introductory lecture by Dr. Jonny Cottrell (13/1/20), the course will be divided into four sections, in the following order. The final lecture of the semester (3/4/20) will be devoted to revision for the final exam.

I. Plato, Apology and Republic

Lecturer: Dr. Damian Caluori

We will first examine Socrates’ life, presented in the Apology as a paradigmatic philosophical life, uncompromisingly devoted to the pursuit of truth. We will ask: why should we devote our lives to the pursuit of truth? We will then turn to the Republic, where Glaucon challenges Socrates with the common-sense view that morally bad people are perfectly capable of having happy and successful lives. Indeed, often it may be advantageous, it appears, not to do what morality requires. To meet this challenge, Socrates develops a rich and complex account of justice in both society and individual, proposes a theory of motivation, dives into metaphysical questions, and gives reasons to think that an ideal society ought to be ruled by philosophers.
Apology
Lecture 1: The life and death of Socrates, part I.
Lecture 2: The life and death of Socrates, part II.

Republic
Lecture 3: Conceptions of justice and the benefits of being bad.
Lecture 4: Why humans live in communities and building a just city.
Lecture 5: Education and the four virtues of the just city.
Lecture 6: The tripartite soul and why it is good to be good.
Lecture 7: What is a philosopher and why must the just city be ruled by philosophers?
Lecture 8: The theory of Forms and the Form of the Good.

Reading
Core
There are many translations of both works. I recommend the translations in J. Cooper (ed.) Plato. Complete Works (available online). Less easily accessible but excellent is P. Shorey’s translation of the Republic in E. Hamilton & H. Cairns (eds.), Plato. The Collected Dialogues and in the old Loeb edition of Plato’s Republic.

If students prefer to buy the Apology and the Republic as separate volumes, I recommend: G. M. A. Grube (ed.) Plato. Five Dialogues (Hackett) and C.D.C. Reeve (ed.) Plato. Republic (Hackett).

Note: The page numbers below (e.g. 367e) are given according to the so-called Stephanus-pagination, found in the margins of all decent translations of Plato. They do not refer to the page numbers of Cooper’s edition.

Lecture 1: Apology
Lecture 2: Apology
Lecture 5: Republic, book III 400c-404d; 410a-412b; book IV beginning-434d.
Lecture 8: Republic, book VI 504a-end; book VII beginning-519b.

Secondary
Plato
A. S. Mason, Plato.
C. Meinwald, Plato.

Apology
T. C. Brickhouse, N. D. Smith: Socrates on Trial.
M. F. Burnyeat, ‘The impiety of Socrates’.
C. D. C. Reeve, Socrates in the Apology.
Republic
J. Annas, *An Introduction to Plato's Republic* (a bit dated, but still of interest).
M. F. Burnyeat, *Culture and Society in Plato's Republic*.
G. Ferrari (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Plato's Republic*.

II. Aristotle, *Eudemian Ethics*

Lecturer: Dr. Damian Caluori

In this work, Aristotle provides an answer to the question of what it means for a life to be good. In order to answer this question, Aristotle thinks, we need an account of what a human being is – for when we ask what a good life is, we ask what a good *human* life is (whatever a good life for gods or goats may be). There are some crucial aspects of human life that need to be considered to this end: responsibility, pleasure, friendship, and virtue are, in Aristotle’s view, among the most important.

Lecture 1: Happiness
Lecture 2: Function and Virtue
Lecture 3: Justice
Lecture 4: Wisdom and Pleasure
Lecture 5: Voluntary action, responsibility, and decision
Lecture 6: Friendship

Reading
Core

Lecture 1: *Eudemian Ethics*, book I.
Lecture 2: *Eudemian Ethics*, book II.1-5; book III.
Lecture 3: *Eudemian Ethics*, book IV.
Lecture 6: *Eudemian Ethics*, book VII.

Secondary
Aristotle
J. Ackrill., *Aristotle the Philosopher*.
J. Lear, *Aristotle. The Desire to Understand*.
W. D. Ross, *Aristotle*.
C. Shields, [https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/aristotle/](https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/aristotle/)

Ethics
S. Broadie, *Ethics with Aristotle*.
A. Rorty (ed.), *Essays on Aristotle's Ethics*. 
III. Descartes, *Meditations on First Philosophy*; Descartes and Elisabeth, *Correspondence*

Lecturer: Dr. Jonny Cottrell

The seventeenth century was a time of exciting and rapid intellectual change: philosopher-scientists such as Galileo Galilei, René Descartes, and Isaac Newton sought to overthrow the centuries-old Aristotelian worldview that had dominated late medieval Europe, and laid the foundations for our modern, mathematical science of the physical world. In the *Meditations on First Philosophy*, Descartes asks how scientific knowledge is possible. Pursuing this question leads him into a wide-ranging inquiry concerning knowledge, certainty and doubt; the existence of God; the nature of the self; and the nature of the physical world. Princess Elisabeth of Bohemia read Descartes’s *Meditations* and wrote to him with powerful objections to his philosophical views; Descartes replied; and thus began a philosophically rich correspondence about the nature of human beings, the passions, and happiness. We will study the *Meditations*, together with selections from this correspondence.

Lecture 1: Introduction to Descartes and the *Meditations*
Lecture 2: Knowledge, Certainty and Doubt
Lecture 3: *Cogito, Sum*, and *Sum Res Cogitans*
Lecture 4: The Existence of God
Lecture 5: The Possibility of Knowledge
Lecture 6: The Nature of Material Things
Lecture 7: Minds and Bodies
Lecture 8: The Physical World
Lecture 9: Human Beings

**Core Reading:**

Lecture 1:
- *Meditations*: Dedicatory Letter, Preface to the Reader, Synopsis
Lecture 2:
- *Meditations*: First Meditation; Objections and Replies on the First Meditation
Lecture 3:
- *Meditations*: Second Meditation; Objections and Replies on the Second Meditation (for now, skip the Objections and Replies on The Piece of Wax at pp.92–94 in Cottingham edn.)
Lecture 4:
- *Meditations*: Third Meditation; Fifth Meditation; Objections and Replies on the Third Meditation; Objections and Replies on Whether God’s Essence Implies His Existence (pp.121–29 in Cottingham edn.)
Lecture 5:
- *Meditations*: Fourth Meditation; Fifth Meditation; Objections and Replies on the Fourth Meditation; Objections and Replies on Clear and Distinct Perception and the “Cartesian Circle” (pp.130–35 in Cottingham edn.)

Lecture 6:
- *Meditations*: Second Meditation; Fifth Meditation; Objections and Replies on The Piece of Wax (pp.92–94 in Cottingham edn.)

Lecture 7:
- *Meditations*: Sixth Meditation
- Descartes, *Principles of Philosophy*, selection 1 (available on Learn)
- *Women Philosophers of the Early Modern Period*, selection from the correspondence between Descartes and Princess Elisabeth of Bohemia (available on Learn)

Lecture 8:
- *Meditations*: Sixth Meditation
- Descartes, *Principles of Philosophy*, selection 2 (available on Learn)

Lecture 9:
- *Meditations*: Sixth Meditation
- Descartes and Elisabeth, Correspondence, selection (available on Learn)

Secondary Reading:
- On Descartes:
- Introductory commentaries on the *Meditations*:
- Advanced (but very rewarding) commentaries on the *Meditations*:
IV. Hume, *Dialogues concerning Natural Religion*

Lecturer: Dr. Jonny Cottrell

The “new science” of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries revealed a vast and awe-inspiring physical universe which seemed, to many thinkers, to show signs of being intelligently designed. Thus, scientific developments seemed to provide support for traditional beliefs about God. David Hume’s *Dialogues concerning Natural Religion* critically examine this “design argument.” The *Dialogues* ask: What, if anything, can we know about the cause of the universe, based on empirical observation and the kinds of reasoning that we use in ordinary life and science? The dialogue form allows Hume to explore how friendship is possible among people who deeply disagree about important religious matters.

Lecture 1: Introduction to Hume’s Philosophy
Lecture 2: Conceptions of God; the Design Argument
Lecture 3: Criticisms of the Design Argument
Lecture 4: Criticisms of the Design Argument, continued
Lecture 5: The Cosmological Argument
Lecture 6: God and Evil
Lecture 7: Theism and Atheism
Lecture 8: The Natural History of Religion

Core Reading:
  - Also available online: <https://davidhume.org/texts/a/>

Lecture 1: *An Abstract of a Book Lately Published*
Lecture 2: *Dialogues*, Pamphilus to Hermippus; Parts 1–3
Lecture 3: *Dialogues*, Parts 4–8
Lecture 4: *Dialogues*, Parts 4–8 (re-read)
Lecture 5: *Dialogues*, Part 9
Lecture 6: *Dialogues*, Parts 10 and 11; Fragment on Evil (in Coleman edn. of the *Dialogues*, pp.109–12)
Lecture 7: *Dialogues*, Part 12
Secondary Reading:

- **On Hume:**

- **On Hume’s philosophy of religion and the Dialogues:**

Lecture notes and other materials will be available on Learn.

**Further advice on Readings**

Encyclopaedias are a very good source of extra reading. Avoid Wikipedia (it is often inaccurate on philosophy) but there are good internet encyclopaedias that can be useful:

- *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (SEP)
- *The Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (IEP)

**Websites**

We also recommend the following as starting points for your research:

- PhilPapers
- Philosophy Compass
- *The Diversity Reading List*

You will need to know how to track down sources, including electronic journals, using the library search engine DiscoverED.
**Tutorials**

In addition to three course lectures per week, you will have weekly tutorials. These give you a chance to further discuss topics and issues in the course and its lectures. Tutorials will take place, at times and places to be arranged, during weeks 2 through 11 of the semester.

Attendance at tutorials is compulsory for all students on this course. The class tutor will maintain a register of attendance. Unexplained absences will be brought to the attention of your Personal Tutor.

You will be allocated a suitable tutorial group by the Timetabling Department based on your timetable. Should you wish to change the group you have been allocated to, you will need to fill in the *Tutorial Group Change form* on the Timetabling Department’s webpage.

Please inform your tutor and the Teaching Office of any absences. Students who miss tutorials may be required to do additional written work.

**Assessment**

This course will be examined based on two pieces of assessed work:

**Mid-term coursework essay**
The essay counts for 25% of the overall assessment mark.

**End-of-semester examination**
The exam counts for 75% of the overall assessment mark.

**Coursework essay (due at noon on Tuesday, 25 February)**
The coursework essay is a single 1500 word essay answering a question from an assigned list of questions.

**Word count**
The word count of your essay, including footnotes but excluding bibliography, must not exceed the specified word limit. The precise word count must be written on the coversheet. Overlong essays will be penalised according to the following rule: 1% of the maximum obtainable mark will be deducted for every 100 words, or part thereof, over the word limit. So, exceeding the word limit by 1–100 words incurs a deduction of 1%; exceeding by 101–200 words incurs a deduction of 2%; and so on.

**End-of-semester examination**
The examination is a two-hour examination given under exam conditions at a date, time and place TBA.

Detailed information concerning essay titles, readings, submission procedures and the Examination will be available on Learn.
**Resits**
For those failing or missing the exam, a resit examination is held in late August. It is the student’s responsibility to check the resit timetable on the Student Administration website, find the time and location of the resit exam and ensure they are present for that resit. No formal registration is necessary and students will not be individually notified of the resit date and location of resit exams.

**Visiting undergraduates**
The assessment arrangements for visiting undergraduates are the same as for other students.

**Mark Schemes**
For Philosophy-specific marking guidelines go here:
- Grade-related marking guidelines for Philosophy

For the University’s general marking scheme go here:
- Common Marking Scheme

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**Learning Resources**

**Learn**
You should regularly check your university email and check for announcements on the course Learn page.

The course Learn page will provide information concerning:
- General information and announcement about the course
- Lecture notes and slides
- Tutorial arrangements
- Information about assessment arrangements

**University of Edinburgh Library**
The library’s hard-copy and online resources can be searched online via DiscoverEd.

**Exemplar essays**
Anonymised exemplar essays will be on the Learn pages. These are essays written by past students that they have kindly agreed for us to use. We encourage you to read these essays in conjunction with the Philosophy-specific marking guidelines. In doing so think about the strengths and weaknesses of the essay, why the essays fell into their grade-band, and how they could have been improved.

There are many ways for an essay to fall into a particular grade-band. The Philosophy-specific marking guidelines provide explanation of the many, diverse, ways in which
an essay can be a 1st, 2.i, 2.ii, and so on. The exemplar essays only show one way to achieve a certain grade; it is not the only way.

**Autonomous Learning Groups**
Each course has dedicated Autonomous Learning Groups. It is up to you, the members of the ALG, to organise the meetings. You decide how often to meet and what to do in your ALG. ALGs are designed to help you learn and get to know your classmates; they are not a formal requirement of the course. It is important to note that assessment in your courses is non-competitive: you aren’t competing against your classmates, only against the general grade criteria. It is in your interests to help each other.

You could use ALG meetings to:

- Read and discuss the papers together
- Discuss essay-writing and time-management techniques
- Constructively critique draft essays or plans
- Work on presentations or discussion posts that the class may involve
- Share tips on career advice

Please email the Course Organiser if you feel that it would be useful for the group if they joined one of your sessions. Please contact the course secretary if you find it necessary during the semester to transfer into a different group.

**Getting in Touch**
If you have a question regarding lecture content you should ask it in your tutorial group and/or visit the relevant lecturer to discuss it during their office hour.

For other specifically academic matters you can contact the Course Organiser.

If you have questions not specifically about lecture content, you should contact the Course Secretary.

**Prizes**
Students who perform with excellence in Greats are eligible for the James Seth Prize.

[11/12/20]