Ancient Philosophy (PHIL10181)

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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 consists of a weekly lecture (starting in Week 1) and a weekly tutorial (starting in Week 2). As opposed to usual practice, we will discuss material from the same week’s lecture in the tutorials. For example, in the tutorials in week 3 we will discuss the material from the lecture in week 3. In week 2 tutorials we will discuss the materials from the lectures of week 1 and week 2. Tutorials will be run by Dr Damian Caluori and by Dr Inna Kupreeva. Unless there is a change of university policy, both lectures and tutorials will be in person.

Lecture (starting in Week 1):
   Monday, 14:10-16:00.

Tutorials (starting in Week 2):
   Thursday, 12:10-13:00.  
   Thursday, 13:10-14:00.  
   Thursday, 15:10-16:00.  
   Thursday, 16:10-17:00.
4. Assessment
1,500-word midterm essay (40%), due 3rd March, at noon; 2,500-word final essay (55%), due 21st 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, the Hellenistic schools (Stoics, Epicureans, and Sceptics), and Plotinus. 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? 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. Finally, we will turn to Plotinus to explore whether a good life is perhaps a life in the world beyond.

6. Schedule of Lectures
In preparation of each class, please read all the Core Readings in advance of attending the lecture. Secondary readings are recommended but not required. For your essays, I recommend you read all recommended readings about your topic. Most texts are available online via Resource List. The rest can be found in the library. Further readings may be recommended during the course. Secondary Readings marked with an asterisk are particularly recommended.

Week 1. Introduction; the Socratic life
- Core Reading
  - Plato: Apology (Since we read the Apology in Greats, I will only focus on the main points. That said, it's a text well worth rereading!)
  - Plato, Crito
  - Plato, Phaedo 115a-118a (Socrates’ final hour).

- Secondary Readings
  - * C. D. C. Reeve: Socrates in the Apology.
  - T. Irwin: Plato’s Moral Theory, ch. 2 (‘The Background’).

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

• Secondary Readings
  • D. Devereux: ‘The Unity of the Virtues in Plato’s *Protagoras* and *Laches*.

**Week 3. Plato: The soul, virtue, and happiness; the life of a philosopher**

• Core Readings
  • *Republic* IV, 435a-444e.
  • *Republic* VI, 484a-497a; 502c-509c
  • *Republic* VII 514a-521b.

• Secondary Readings

**Week 4. Plato: Unjust souls; the pleasures of human lives**

• Core Readings
  • *Republic* VIII
  • *Republic* IX

• Secondary Readings
  • * J. Annas: An Introduction to Plato's Republic*. Ch.12.
  • * D. Russell: Plato on Pleasure and the Good Life*, ch. 4.: ‘Pleasure and Moral Psychology in *Republic* IV and IX’
  • T. Irwin, *Plato’s Ethics*, ch. 17 (on injustice)
  • D. Frede: ‘Die ungerechten Verfassungen und die ihnen entsprechenden Menschen’, in Höffe: *Platon. Politeia*. (In German, I’m afraid. But I will use it in my lecture and give you the gist of it. If you know German and want to read it, get in touch.)

**Week 5. Aristotle: The Human Good**

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

• Secondary Readings
Flexible Learning Week: no lectures or tutorials

Week 6. Aristotle: Character Virtue and the Doctrine of the Mean
  • Core Readings
    o * Nicomachean Ethics II.
    o * Nicomachean Ethics III, 6-9.
  • Secondary Readings

Week 7. Aristotle: Deliberation, Intellectual Virtue and Contemplation
  • Core Readings
    o * Nicomachean Ethics III.1-5; VI, 1-7, 9, 12-13.
    o * Nicomachean Ethics X, 6-8.
  • Secondary Readings

Week 8. Epicurus and the Cyrenaics: A life of pleasure and why death is nothing to us
  • Core Readings
    o * Long & Sedley: The Hellenistic Philosophers 21, 24-25.
  • Secondary Readings

Week 9. Stoics: A life of reason and the place of emotions in reason
  • Core Reading
    o Long and Sedley: The Hellenistic Philosophers, 57-61, 63, 65.
  • Secondary Readings
Week 10. A Sceptical Way of Life
• **Core Reading**

• **Secondary Readings**

Week 11 Plotinus: The good life and the world beyond
• **Core Reading**
  - Plotinus, *Ennead I.4: On Happiness*

• **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*.
- Plotinus: *Ennead I* (Loeb)
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*.
   - T. Irwin: *Plato's Ethics*.
   - G. Vlastos: *Socrates, Ironist and Moral Philosopher*.

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*.

7.2.7 Plotinus
   - E. K. Emilsson: *Plotinus*.
   - D. J. O'Meara: *Plotinus. An Introduction to the Enneads*.
   - J. M. Rist: *Plotinus. The Road to Reality*.
   - If you want to read something by your CO: D. Caluori, *Plotinus on the Soul*. 
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.

**Plotinus**: Please cite as in the following example: Plot. *Enn*. I.4.2. “Plot.” stands for Plotinus. “*Enn.*” stands for Ennead. “*Enn*. I” stands for the first of six Enneads. “4” indicates that this is the fourth treatise of *Enn*. I. “2” stands for chapter 2 of this treatise.
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 are different styles, and you can choose any style you like as long as you apply it consistently. Typical examples:

