

## EARLY GREEK PHILOSOPHY

The exam will be designed to take two and a half hours, but you may take the full time customary for our seminar (3:00–5:45) to complete it. The exam will not be open-book. Exam booklets will be provided. Please write everything legibly in them.

The exam will have three sections: (1) Greek Terms (30 minutes); (2) Essay on Early Greek Philosophy (1 hour); (3) Essay on German appropriations of Early Greek Philosophy (1 hour). Grade totals will be proportional to time allotted.

## 1. Greek Terms

At least five of the Greek terms listed on the next page will appear on the exam. (There will be five questions, but sometimes two or more Greek words may be grouped together because their meanings are linked.) You will be asked to provide for each term an English translation—or, where appropriate, a range of English meanings—and then discuss its significance so far in this course, mentioning the Greek authors to whom it is most relevant, and then discussing briefly its particular meaning for these authors. Occasionally it will be appropriate to supplement this discussion by mentioning the term's significance to a German philosopher, but never to the exclusion of its significance to the Greeks. Here is a model answer for *λόγος*:

This term has many English meanings. It is the nominal derivative of the verb *λέγειν*, to speak, and so its primary meaning concerns something spoken: a word, statement, speech, or story. Thanks to these meanings it also means account, argument, and reason; and from these, in turn, it means measure or ratio. Apparently drawing on all of these meanings, Heraclitus began his book by writing that the *λόγος* holds always. Was the *λόγος* his particular *account* of the cosmos? Was it the *reason* of the cosmos? Or was it the cosmos itself? After all, according to Heraclitus and the *λόγος* he spoke about, all is one. Heidegger wrote an essay on Heraclitus's use of Logos in this one fragment, B50, arguing that it needed to be understood once again as a derivative of *λέγειν*, which he translated not as 'to speak' but as 'to lay before'. The notion was also important to Parmenides, who precluded speech of non-being.

γνώθι σαυτόν	γένεσις	ἀρχή	τετρακτύς	ἐπιστήμη	Μοῖρα
κόσμος	φθορά	ὔδωρ	ἁρμονία	δόξα	Ζεῦς
οὐρανός	αἰτία	ἄπειρον	ψυχή	ἀλήθεια	Ἔρις
λόγος	ἕλη	πέρας	μετεμψύχωσις	λήθη	Πόλεμος
λέγειν	μορφή	ἀήρ	κάθαρσις	ἔστιν	
φύσις	κινεῖν	αἰθήρ	λύσις	εἶναι	
φυσικός	τελός	γῆ	φιλοσοφία	νοεῖν	
φυσιολόγος		πῦρ	ἐν	νόημα	
δίκη			πάντα	τὸ αὐτό	
θεός					
θεοδίκη					

## 2. Essay on Early Greek Philosophy

The aim of this section is to lead you deeper into the thought of the early Greek philosophers we have discussed so far in this course. In your answer, therefore, you may appeal to scholarship of whatever sort—Greek, German, or English—whenever it helps to make your case about these philosophers. Indeed, you must do so whenever you are explicitly asked to do so. But the focus of your answer should be the Greeks. The exam will present you with one, and only one, of the following questions:

1. Greek philosophy seems to have emerged first in Miletus. What was the background—mythological, historical, political, and economic—from which it emerged? (You may wish to discuss the following: Homer and Hesiod; India and Persia; Milesian religion, politics, and economics.) How did the Milesians preserve traces of this background in their philosophies? How did they nonetheless distinguish themselves from it? Answer these questions by precise discussions of particular doctrines and true generalizations about the whole ‘school’.
2. What is an *ἀρχή*, according to Aristotle? Also according to him, what are the four *αἰτίαι*? How do these notions—*ἀρχή* and *αἰτία*—lead him to construe the primary task of Milesian philosophy? Present in succession the *ἀρχαί* he attributed to Thales, Anaximander, and Anaximenes. As you proceed, discuss also a few of the arguments both he and subsequent scholars have attributed to them. In light of these arguments, and the testimony of other sources, how did Aristotle’s notions force him to misunderstand the Milesians?
3. Xenophanes is sometimes called the father of Greek monotheism, at other times the father of Greek skepticism. What were five of his criticisms of traditional Greek polytheism? What, by contrast, were five tenets of his positive theology? Are there any arguments for these tenets in his extant fragments? If there are, present and evaluate them. If there are no such arguments, or if the ones implied are weak, how well do his theological statements accord with his epistemological statements?
4. According to Aristotle, what is “the firmest principle of all,” and what is his ‘argument’ for giving it this privileged status? Is this argument valid, sound, persuasive? “Some people take Heraclitus,” he then writes, to have contradicted this principle. What three Heraclitean fragments, for example, might have led them to interpret him this way? Explain each in turn. Was Aristotle (or for that matter Hussey) right that these people misunderstood Heraclitus, “the riddler”; or was it rather Aristotle (and Hussey) who misunderstood him?
5. *ἔστί*: explain. In other words, recount Parmenides’ arguments: (1) “that it is and that it is not possible for it not to be”; and (2), “that being ungenerated it is also imperishable, whole and of a single kind and unshaken and complete...now, altogether, one, continuous.” What appear to be three internal contradictions of this poem? Does it nonetheless anticipate some or all of these objections? How?

### 3. German Appropriations of Early Greek Philosophy

The aim of this section is likewise to lead you deeper into the thought of the early Greek philosophers, but this time via the scholarship that students have been presenting after our seminar break. These questions try, whenever possible, to synthesize the presentations of each week, so you may wish to consult the presenters for the questions about their particular presentations. As with the previous section, the exam will present you with one, and only one, of the following questions:

1. Heidegger complains that the standard translation of the Anaximander fragment is inadequate in many ways, not the least of which is the translation of *δίκη* as “justice” or “penalty,” which Heidegger prefers to translate as (*Ruch*) “reck.” What is the meaning of this adjustment, and why does Heidegger think it does more justice to Anaximander’s thought? Is he right? In order to justify your answer to this question, compare and contrast the *δίκη* of Anaximander with that of Heraclitus and Parmenides.
2. What seem to have been the principal doctrines of fifth-century Pythagoreans about the cosmos and the soul? Speak about the history of the transmission of these doctrines, naming specific figures—on the one hand, those many who likely supplemented them with their own later views, and on the other, Aristotle and Philolaus, who take us behind these later accretions to the pristine Pythagoreanism of the fifth century. Hegel did not make this distinction as carefully as scholars do now, but he nonetheless relies on Aristotle for most of his account. Despite the differences in their philosophies, how does Hegel agree with Aristotle about the most serious problem of Pythagorean cosmology?
3. Heraclitus was known in antiquity as “the obscure.” Not surprisingly, of the philosophers we have read, or read about, he has provoked more widely various interpretations. One student in our class called him a Rorschach test for the Germans, all of whom praise him in the highest terms. In as much detail as time permits, present the interpretations of Hegel, Nietzsche, and Heidegger, highlighting their similarities and differences. What does each prize most highly in Heraclitus? Whose ‘Heraclitus’ is most accurate? What can we learn from this example about the Germans’ approach—both singly and as a group—to early Greek philosophy?
4. One translation of Parmenides’ fr. 3 reads “For the same thing is for thinking and for being.” This seems plausible on both textual and philosophical grounds. Textually speaking, it agrees with fr. 6.1, “that which is there to be spoken and thought of must be” (as well as fr. 8.35–36). Why is it also plausible, philosophically speaking? The other translation of fr. 3, “For thinking and being are the same,” appears far less philosophically plausible, at least when it is read in isolation. What objections might be raised against it, if you were to read it on a fortune cookie? That said, however, when it is read in the broader context of the Way of Truth, Nietzsche thinks Parmenides had to mean this. Why? If this be Parmenides’ meaning, what three mistaken interpretations has the Western philosophical tradition given it, according to Heidegger. How does he interpret it instead?