

Final Study Guide

The final will have four sections, whose points will be apportioned according to the recommended times. Bring your own blue books.

1. Greek Terms (20 minutes)

Five terms in total. A handout with the possible terms to be tested will be distributed in class the final day.

2. Doctrines (15 minutes)

One column will list some of the major doctrines we have studied this semester; another column will list the twenty philosophers who proposed them; you will be asked to match each listed doctrine with a philosopher.

3. Chronology (5 minutes)

You will be given a list of ten philosophers and will then be asked to put them in chronological order. You will not be asked to order roughly contemporaneous philosophers, such as Zeno and Empedocles; rather, the list will contain the names of ten philosophers easily ordered by anyone who understands the broad developments of Greek philosophy from the 6th c. BC to the 2nd c. AD. A chronological list of the philosophers we studied this semester – and several more – is available on Blackboard, under “Course Documents”.

4. Essays (140 minutes)

As on the midterm, these are intricate questions that require analytic and synthetic thought; they typically require several pages in order to be answered fully. The final exam will ask four of the following sixteen questions. You must answer all four:

1. Each of the Milesians (Thales, Anaximander, and Anaximenes) proposed a different candidate for the *archē* of the *kosmos*. What were these candidates, and what were the arguments that each thinker offered, or at least seems to have offered, for his own? In other words, recount the *development* of Milesian thought. How was each successive thinker an improvement upon his predecessor?

2. No philosopher has had more influence on Western culture than Plato. As we have seen, however, he himself was influenced by at least the following assortment of peculiar thinkers: Pythagoras, Xenophanes, Heraclitus, Parmenides, Hippocrates, Herodotus, the Sophists and Thucydides; not to mention Socrates. First, show as many of these influences upon Plato’s *Republic* as you can. Secondly, would you say that in the end Plato reconciles the tensions among these disparate thinkers, creating a tenable synthesis of their best ideas? Or would you say instead that his philosophy – and thus, in a way, our own – is but a patchwork of oddities?

3. What are Plato's motives for the theory of Forms? In other words, which two questions (one ontological, the other epistemological) do Forms seem to answer? How do Forms seem to answer these questions? Specifically, what are four features of the Forms that Plato develops in his middle dialogues in order to answer these questions? Now present one of Plato's criticisms of this theory of Forms (from the *Parmenides*): the Third Man critique, or the critique which objects that Forms cannot help explain knowledge. Now describe Aristotle's theory of form. (Be sure to describe his theory of the four *aitiai*.) How might this theory be seen as an attempt to answer the questions that originally prompted Plato to develop the theory of Forms, while nonetheless avoiding the criticisms raised in the *Parmenides*?

4. What is Plato's epistemology? Use his analogy of the Line to explain each of the stages he imagines in an ascent from ignorance to knowledge. Be sure to use an example that will make clear what is gained for the knower at each step upward. Now describe Aristotle's epistemology in his *Posterior Analytics*. (Be sure to mention *epagōgē*, *apodeixis*, and *archai*.) Which problem does he recognize for our knowledge of these *archai*, and thus for any knowledge we demonstrate using them? What is his solution to this problem? Is it tenable? How different is this solution, and the epistemology it bolsters, from Plato's epistemology in Book 6 of the *Republic*? What critique of this sort of epistemology did Sextus Empiricus make?

5. By exploiting a stark distinction between being and nothingness, Parmenides argued that change is impossible. What was his reasoning? Which distinction between two types of change did Aristotle introduce to thwart this paradoxical reasoning? Did he succeed? Next, by exploiting a stark distinction between knowledge and ignorance, Meno argued that learning is impossible. What was his reasoning? Which distinction between two types of knowledge did Aristotle introduce to thwart this paradoxical reasoning? Did he succeed? Whether or not he does, either in this epistemological case, or in the earlier ontological case, what pattern can we observe in Aristotle's method? From whom and from where might he have learned this method?

6. Explain by use of an example Aristotle's notion of "focal homonymy". Next, explain his related notions of "priority" (especially priority in being and priority in knowledge). Show how he uses these notions to develop sophisticated approaches to the following two difficult questions: What is cause (*aitia*)? What is substance (*ousia*)? Indeed, show how these two approaches are related.

7. How many parts does the human soul have, according to Plato? What are these parts and what is his argument for this division? According to Aristotle, how many parts does the human soul have? For his division of the soul, what are the parts and the argument? (In Aristotle's case, the argument draws upon several points from elsewhere in his philosophical corpus, as well as *De Anima*; in Plato's, it is largely restricted to Book 4 of the *Republic*, although Books 9 and 10 provide helpful analogies.) Which assumptions do these rival accounts share, especially about the relationship between our rational part and the rest of us? Which account is superior – that of Plato, or that of Aristotle? Why?

8. What role does *Nous* play in Anaxagoras' cosmology? How does the character of Socrates in Plato's *Phaedo* recount the disappointment he experienced when he learned how limited this role was? What did he seek from Anaxagoras' philosophy that it did not provide? How may the Form of the Good, developed in Books 6 and 7 of the *Republic*, be understood as Plato's attempt to fulfill the hopes that Socrates mistakenly placed in Anaxagoras? Once you have answered these questions, now describe the shortcomings of the *separate* Forms, and thus also of the Form of the Good, noticed first by Plato in his *Parmenides* and later by Aristotle in his *Metaphysics*. Explain Aristotle's new doctrine of *immanent* form. Do immanent forms achieve the benefits ascribed to Plato's Forms, without incurring their problems? Finally, explain the theology that emerges from this new metaphysical doctrine. How can Aristotle's God be understood as a renewed attempt, at a higher level of philosophical sophistication, to fulfill Socrates' dashed hopes in Anaxagoras?

9. What is Plato's account of *hēdonē*, or pleasure, in Book 9 of his *Republic*? (Be sure to describe the main arguments as well as the concepts related to it.) What role does this account play in the overall argument of this work? What is Aristotle's account of *hēdonē* in Book 10 of his *Nicomachean Ethics*? What role does this account play in the overall argument of this work? Which aspects of the Platonic theory does Aristotle implicitly criticize? Does this critique succeed? Is Aristotle's theory of *hēdonē* superior to his teacher's? Why or why not?

10. Very often Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics* and *Politics* are read independently of his other works. As a critique of this approach, reveal the importance to his ethics and politics of concepts, theses, or arguments developed more fully in his epistemology, metaphysics, and psychology (especially the *Organon*, *Physics*, *Metaphysics*, and *De Anima*). Describe and illustrate two examples of each: i.e., two metaphysical, two epistemological, and two psychological contributions to either the *Ethics* or the *Politics*.

11. Compare and contrast the categorical logic that Aristotle develops in the *Prior Analytics* with the propositional logic developed by the Stoics. Describe each in detail, with examples, and then isolate the advantages and disadvantages of each system.

12. Democritus lived, taught, and wrote at the same time as Plato. But you would never know it from Plato's dialogues, which never once mention Democritus by name. Begin by describing Democritus' atomistic natural philosophy. Show what Plato would have found anathema in this natural philosophy – as an ontology, an epistemology, but especially an ethics. Democritus wrote many works on many subjects, including ethics, but none of these survive. What would be some of the problems we should expect him, as an atomist, to have addressed in ethics? More writings survive from Democritus' belated followers, the Epicureans. How did they address these ethical problems? How successful were their answers, in your estimation?

13. Freedom and Responsibility: Gorgias, Aristotle, the Stoics. (1) What argument did Gorgias adduce to the effect that Helen did not leave her husband by her own free-will? Moving ahead three generations, (2) what argument did Aristotle consider in the *De Interpretatione* to the effect that all events are determined by *anankē* (necessity)? Why does he reject this argument? What is the account of *tuchē* (chance) that he develops in his *Physics*? In Book 3 of the *Nicomachean Ethics*, he developed an account of responsibility according to which there are two types of ignorance: culpable and non-culpable. What were the several facets of this distinction, and what problem did we pose for it in class, a problem that forced us to conclude that all our actions are determined by events beyond our control? Finally, (3) the Stoics believed in Fate, but wished also to hold people responsible for their actions. What distinction did they draw between principal and proximate causes in order to render free-will compatible with fatalism? Which analogy did Chrysippus use to illustrate this distinction? Present a critique of Stoic compatibilism.

14. What are the similarities of Epicureanism and Stoicism in physics, psychology, epistemology, and ethics? What are their main differences – in theology, but especially in ethics? How do the Skeptics cleverly exploit these similarities *and* these differences in order to subvert both schools of ‘dogmatic’ philosophy?

15. We began our study of Greek philosophy with Thales, who successfully predicted a solar eclipse and also claimed confidently that all is water. We ended our course with Pyrrho, who made no claims to knowledge but instead sought to suspend judgment about everything. Describe the Milesians and the Skeptics by introducing their main arguments. Now, who were the faithful successors of the Milesian optimism about knowledge and its advance through inquiry, and who the genuine predecessors of Pyrrhonian skepticism? (For the first, discuss at least Hippocrates, Plato, Aristotle; for the second, Xenophanes, Heraclitus, Democritus, Protagoras, and the *Dissoi Logoi*.) Which tradition best characterizes ancient philosophy: the Milesian or the Pyrrhonian? If Socrates is the central figure in the history of ancient philosophy, to which tradition did he belong?

16. Show the importance to ancient philosophy of the following major developments in ancient history: (i) the encroachment of the Persian empire into Asia Minor in the 6th century B.C.; (ii) the repulsion of the Persians by the Athenians and their allies, the growth of the Athenian empire, and the Peloponnesian War between Athens and Sparta during the 5th century B.C.; (iii) the growing supremacy of Macedon over Greece, the accession of Alexander, and his conquest of the East during the 4th century B.C.; (iv) the dominion of Rome over the Mediterranean basin, including Greece, during the 2nd and 1st centuries B.C.; (v) the rise of Christianity in the 2nd and 3rd centuries A.D., and its toleration by Rome in the 4th century; (vi) the collapse of the Western Roman Empire under pressure from the “barbarians,” during the 5th century A.D.; (vii) and finally, the 6th century A.D. accession of Justinian to the throne of the Eastern Empire in Constantinople.