

## Ancient Philosophy (56)

Summer II, 2004  
MTWRF 9:45-11:15  
Murphey 111

### Teacher

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### Texts

*TP = Theban Plays*  
*TS = The Trials of Socrates*  
*S = Symposium*  
*P = Philebus*  
*HP = Hellenistic Philosophy*  
*EP = The Essential Plotinus*  
*EA = The Essential Augustine*

### Important Dates

First Paper: June 28<sup>th</sup>  
Midterm Exam: July 9<sup>th</sup>  
Second Paper: July 20<sup>th</sup>  
Final Exam: July 22<sup>nd</sup>, 8am.

### Evaluation

Quizzes and Participation.....10%  
Papers (2).....40%  
Midterm Exam .....20%  
Comprehensive Final Exam.....30%

Ancient Philosophy began in the 6th century B.C.; although the date of its demise is more controversial, arguably it lasted until the 6<sup>th</sup> century A.D. In other words, more than a millenium. This course offers an introduction to the subject, but does not pretend to be a survey—that would be altogether impossible in the five weeks ahead. In order to appreciate its major developments, however, as well as some of its most colorful characters and most impressive arguments, we will read a few of its exemplary texts.

These texts are often obscure and will require diligence in order to be understood, let alone criticized. We must nevertheless read enough of them to raise our introduction above mere tourism. Accordingly, the average reading assignment for each class is 38 pages. Do it. There will be frequent quizzes to ensure that you have. There are two papers (6-8 pages in length), a midterm and a final exam.

Chief among these exemplary texts will be some of Plato (who needs no introduction), Sextus Empiricus (the great Skeptic), Plotinus (the great Neoplatonist), and Augustine (the great Church Father). By sampling accounts of Epicureanism and Stoicism, moreover, we should also gain an introduction to these two influential schools. We must omit Aristotle, except for a few pages, because his system takes a month to begin to understand. In one brief lecture, and in comments along the way, I will try to give some sense of his contribution. Likewise for our other major omission: the Presocratics.

Here is a brief outline of the course. After considering the birth of philosophy, and especially its challenge to traditional religion, we will consider Sophocles' tragic diagnosis of this challenge: the *Oedipus Tyrannus*. Next, we examine the synthesis of philosophy and religion forged by Pythagoras and popularized by Socrates. Once we have seen this synthesis matured by Plato, rejected by the Hellenistic schools, and altogether subverted by the Skeptics, we will see how it is reconfigured by the Neoplatonists, and eventually Christianized by Augustine.

In the end, therefore, we will have traced a genealogy of the philosophical theology that ultimately fostered modern Europe, and thereby modern philosophy. Before concluding, however, we shall return to Sophocles and read his prophetic *Oedipus Colonus*. Prefigured there is the return to religion that will be dramatized by the history of ancient philosophy, and perhaps also the philosophy of modernity.

Along the way we will discuss at least the following topics raised by our readings: self-knowledge, love, the good life, being, pleasure, and knowledge more generally; as well as logic, fate, time, the soul, and God. As always, the discussion of these philosophical topics also provokes a discussion of Philosophy

itself: what are its goals, and can it achieve them? The ancient answers to these questions, and the ancient discussions of these topics, are occasionally still entertained; more often than not—and more important still—the boundaries of debate described by the ancients are still respected by philosophers who tread the very same ground, albeit unawares.

			June 17 <sup>th</sup> Introduction General survey of Ancient History and Philosophy Specific survey of “Presocratic” Philosophy	June 18 <sup>th</sup> Oedipus Pythagoreanism Sophocles’ <i>Oedipus Tyrannus</i> <i>TP</i> : 61-124 63 total pages
June 21 <sup>st</sup> Socrates <i>Plato’s Apology, Phaedo</i> (death scene) <i>TS</i> : 26-61, 79-83. 39	June 22 <sup>nd</sup> Plato <i>Symposium</i> <i>S</i> : 1-44. 43	June 23 <sup>rd</sup> Plato <i>Symposium</i> <i>S</i> : 45-77. 32	June 24 <sup>th</sup> Plato <i>Philebus</i> <i>P</i> : 1-38. 37	June 25 <sup>th</sup> Plato <i>Philebus</i> <i>P</i> : 38-83. 45
June 28 <sup>th</sup> <b>First Paper Due</b> Survey of Plato and Aristotle Introduction to Hellenism and Hellenistic Philosophy	June 29 <sup>th</sup> Epicureanism <i>HP</i> : 3-19, 64-65, 28-40, 53-63, 89 (Simplicius), 94 (Lactantius). 41	June 30 <sup>th</sup> Stoicism <i>HP</i> : 103-110, 132-141, 175-178, 257-260, 190-203, 243, 247-252. 41	July 1 <sup>st</sup> Skepticism <i>HP</i> : 285-297, 302-325, 63-64. 36	July 2 <sup>nd</sup> Skepticism <i>HP</i> : 362-385, 388-393. 28

<p>July 5<sup>th</sup></p> <p>INDEPENDENCE DAY</p>	<p>July 6<sup>th</sup></p> <p>Logic</p> <p>Aristotle Stoicism Skepticism</p> <p>website or handout <i>HP</i>: 118-124, 341-362.</p> <p>35</p>	<p>July 7<sup>th</sup></p> <p>Fate</p> <p>Aristotle Epicureanism Stoicism Augustine</p> <p>website <i>HP</i>: 46-49, 179-188. <i>EA</i>: 183-185.</p> <p>20</p>	<p>July 8<sup>th</sup></p> <p>Time</p> <p>Aristotle Epicureanism Stoicism Augustine</p> <p>website <i>HP</i>: 87 (Simplicius), 88-89 (Sextus), 166-167, 385-387. <i>EA</i>: 228-245.</p> <p>23</p>	<p>July 9<sup>th</sup></p> <p><b>MIDTERM EXAM</b></p> <hr/> <p>Introduction to Late Antiquity</p>
<p>July 12<sup>th</sup></p> <p>Plotinus</p> <p><i>EP</i>: 33-43, 46-57, 62-70, 73-88.</p> <p>44</p>	<p>July 13<sup>th</sup></p> <p>Plotinus</p> <p><i>EP</i>: 91-104, 106-108, 110-117, 119-124.</p> <p>27</p>	<p>July 14<sup>th</sup></p> <p>Plotinus</p> <p><i>EP</i>: 126-160, 163-175.</p> <p>46</p>	<p>July 15<sup>th</sup></p> <p>Augustine</p> <p><i>EA</i>: 47-66, 100-110, 123-137, 151-161.</p> <p>53</p>	<p>July 16<sup>th</sup></p> <p>Augustine</p> <p><i>EA</i>: 67-97, 23-27, 33-42.</p> <p>49</p>
<p>July 19<sup>th</sup></p> <p>Oedipus, reprise</p> <p>Sophocles' <i>Oedipus at Colonus</i></p> <p><i>TP</i>: 126-207.</p> <p>81</p>	<p>July 20<sup>th</sup></p> <p><b>Second Paper Due</b></p> <p>Review Conclusions</p> <p>Legacy of Ancient Philosophy</p> <p>Evaluations</p>	<p>July 21<sup>st</sup></p>	<p>July 22<sup>nd</sup></p> <p>8am-11am <b>FINAL EXAM</b> (comprehensive)</p>	