Philosophy 381  
Ancient Philosophy

Instructor: Dr. Aimée Koeplin
Classroom: Pereira 120
Office: UHALL 3614
Times: TTH 9:25 – 10:40
Office Hours: MW 2 – 3; Th 11 – 3
No Class: 10/18, 11/8, And by appointment And University Holidays
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Course Description:
The project of this course is to critically examine ancient Greek philosophical texts and to develop philosophical interpretations of these texts. Some key questions we will ask for each philosopher include:

- What is the understanding of reality that is being promoted?
- Can we know anything about the natural world? And if so, how can we know it?
- How is the divine related to the natural world? How is the divine related to day-to-day life for human beings? and
- What is the good life for human beings?

We will see an intellectual trend away from capricious gods affecting the natural world and the lives of human beings in arbitrary and unpredictable ways towards more abstract and rational, less anthropomorphic gods and a systematic, organized, and generally predictable natural world (or ultimate reality).

Some Warnings:
The reading assignments for this course may appear to be shorter than reading assignments for other courses. Do not be fooled! The readings are difficult, require thoughtful interpretation, and may require more than one reading. You are expected to come to class prepared to discuss and engage with course materials.

Required Text:
Cohen, Curd, and Reeve, Readings in Ancient Greek Philosophy 2nd Ed.  
(referred to as RAGP)

Recommended Text:
Ring, Beginning with the PreSocratics 2nd Ed.  
Shields, The Blackwell Guide to Ancient Philosophy
Useful Internet Resources:
- S. Marc Cohen’s Website provides great information and analysis of topics we are covering: http://faculty.washington.edu/smcohen/320/index.html
- The articles in the Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy are great: http://plato.stanford.edu/

**Word of caution about the internet: Information on philosophical figures and philosophical topics on the internet is not of uniform brilliance. Please exercise caution!**

Blackboard:
I have set up a blackboard page for this course. You will find a wealth of information on this cite, including copies of the syllabus, assignments, any handouts that you may have misplaced – and your grades for the course. Familiarize yourself with blackboard as soon as possible, you will need to use it to submit assignments.

Course Assignments and Grading:
Your grade for this course will be determined based on points earned out of the total possible points.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Points</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Attendance and Participation</td>
<td>60 pts.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reading Questions</td>
<td>60 pts. (5 pts. each)</td>
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<tr>
<td>3 quizzes</td>
<td>150 pts. (50 pts. each)</td>
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<tr>
<td>2 Short Papers</td>
<td>100 pts. (50 pts. each)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total:</strong></td>
<td><strong>370 pts.</strong></td>
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- **Attendance** and punctuality are requirements of this course.
- You are expected to attend all class meetings and actively engage with class discussions. I take active engagement to be an indispensable part of the course and an indispensable part of the practice of philosophy. Your participation will be graded as carefully as your written work.
- **Reading Questions** will be assigned each week. These are meant to help you to focus your reading and to help you do some preliminary work in philosophical interpretation. These are informal writing assignments. (Fifteen will be assigned, you are responsible for 12 of them.)
- We will have three in-class quizzes. Quizzes are meant to be checks on your comprehension of the readings and lectures. Quiz dates: Thurs. 10/4, Thurs. 11/15, and at the final exam time, Thurs. 12/13. (All quizzes are required.)
- **Three short papers** will be assigned throughout the course of the semester. You are responsible for two of them. In other words, you do not have to write one of them. Or you can write all three. Your paper grade will be best 2 out of 3.
- I do not accept late papers. It is not necessary in this course. If you think you will be unable to get one of the first two papers done on time, drop it and write the third. (Seriously, don’t ask to turn in late work.)
Grading Scale:
Your final grade will be determined by something like this scale. Final grades may be curved, if need be.
95% – 100% A, 90 – 94 A-, 87 – 89 B+, 83 – 86 B, 80 – 82 B-, 77 – 79 C+, 73 – 76 C,
70 – 72 C-, 65 – 69 D, 64 & under F.
The guide below will give you an idea of how I am thinking of the relation between letter grades and performance in the course:

**B level work**: Above Average, engages the material at an above average level, shows an understanding of the philosophical views and problems at issue. B is the standard grade for this course. I will assume that each student has a B until I am shown otherwise.

**B+ — A-**: Very good work, shows quite a good grasp of the material and ability to reason and engage with the material clearly and effectively.

**A level work**: A level work is exceptional, shows a complete grasp of the material, shows facility and creativity with philosophical reasoning and critical thinking skills.

**C — B-**: Satisfactory, shows a basic ability to explain and engage with the material.

**D**: Passing work, demonstrates an ability to explain the material in rudimentary terms.

**F**: Failing work.

Academic Integrity:
It should go without saying that all of the work that you do for this course (and any other course) should be your own. This means that you should always use appropriate methods of citation for any sources that you use in your written work. Academic dishonesty will not be tolerated in this course. Plagiarism will result in a failing grade for the course as a whole. If you have questions about how to cite materials or what might count as academic dishonesty, ask me. (A more comprehensive account of LMU’s policies on academic integrity can be found on pp. 57-59 of the Undergraduate Bulletin.)

A note about the internet: Anything that you find on the internet that pertains to your papers or other work for this course needs to be cited, just like any other written material. In general, you should be extremely cautious with materials that you find on the internet. There is a broad array of stuff available on the web concerning philosophy, ranging from very sophisticated work in philosophy to perfectly awful work. It might be best to stay away from philosophical sources on the internet altogether — or to check with me about the quality and appropriateness of the source. I am happy to look over resources that you come across.

“Don’t compromise yourself. You’re all you’ve got.” –Janis Joplin
Course Topics and Reading Assignments

**Required reading assignments are in bold faced type, recommended readings are in ordinary type.**

Introduction

The PreSocratics

- Intro to the PreSocratics: **RAGP 1-7**
- The Milesians: **RAGP 8-14**, Ring 17-34, Shields 5-8
- Pythagoras and the Pythagoreans: **RAGP 15-20**, Ring 40-58,
- Xenophanes: **RAGP 21-23**, Ring 35-39, Shields 8-11
- Heraclitus: **RAGP 24-34**, Ring 59-81, Shields 11-16
- Parmenides and other Eleatics: **RAGP 35-41, 59-63**, Ring 82-118, Shields 16-20
- Anaxagoras: **RAGP 42-47**, Ring 138-143
- Empedocles: **RAGP 47-58**, Ring 128-138
- The Atomists (Leucippus and Democritus): **RAGP 64-71**, Ring 143-151, Shields 20-24

Socrates and Plato

- Intro to Plato: **RAGP 89-96**
- *Euthyphro*: **RAGP 97-114**, Shields 75-80
- *Apology*: **RAGP 115-140**, Shields 55-69
- *Republic* IV: **RAGP 418-444**
- *Meno* and *Phaedo*: **RAGP 212-216, 264-281**; RAGP 229-264
- *Parmenides*: **RAGP 604-613**, Shields 87-93

Aristotle

- Intro to Aristotle: **RAGP 645-654**
- *Categories*: **RAGP 656-662**
- *Physics* I-II: **RAGP 694-719**
- *Nicomachean Ethics* I: **RAGP 832-845**; Shields 184-200
- *Metaphysics* XII: **RAGP 800-808**; Shields 163-183