

1. Instructor and course details

Time: Wednesday 6:00-8:30p.m.
Location: 304 Cathedral of Learning
Instructor: Aaron Novick
Office Hours: Monday, 10am-12pm
Office Location: 901-P Cathedral of Learning
Email: amn61@pitt.edu

2. Course description. This course investigates the origins of western scientific thought in the works of the ancient Greek philosophers. We will consider how the Greek philosophical tradition grew out of the Greek mythological tradition. The class will focus on close engagement with the original texts (in English translations), as we will try to understand how these ancient philosophers understood the world.

3. Prerequisites. There are no prerequisites for this course.

4. Course objectives. By the end of this course, students will:

- Be familiar with the views of the ancient Greek philosophers.
- Be able to recognize and evaluate philosophical arguments.
- Be able to interpret historical texts within their original context.

5. Readings. There are two required texts for this course:

1. Hesiod (Lombardo, trans.), *Works & Days / Theogony*, 1993, Hackett
2. Robin Waterfield, *The First Philosophers*, 2009, Oxford World's Classics

Hesiod was an ancient Greek poet. His two surviving poems are important sources of Greek mythology, especially the *Theogony*. *The First Philosophers* is a collection of writings by and about the pre-Socratic philosophers and the Sophists. Both texts are required and are available in the University Bookstore. If you get them from elsewhere, make sure to get the correct translations.

We will also read selections from other texts, which I have made optional. Any required readings from these texts will be scanned and posted on Courseweb, so students need not buy them. Note that all readings from the Hadot book (which is a useful background source) are optional, and so will not be posted to Courseweb.

1. Pierre Hadot, *What is Ancient Philosophy*, 2002, Belknap
2. Plato (Grube, trans.), *Five Dialogues*, 2002, Hackett
3. Aristotle (Irwin & Fine, trans.), *Introductory Readings*, 1996, Hackett
4. Lucretius (Stallings, trans.), *The Nature of Things*, 2007, Penguin

On the reading schedule, I have also included links to relevant, freely available articles in the Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy. These readings are all optional, but will be useful for those who find the primary texts confusing.

6. Grading. Each assignment for the class will be worth a certain number of points; the point total for all assignments will add up to 100. The grading breakdown is as follows:

- Attendance: 12 points
- Reading responses: 18 points
- Argument assessments: 40 points
- Final paper drafts: 10 points
- Final paper: 20 points

NOTE: Written assignments will be turned in through CourseWeb. I will be grading assignments anonymously, so *please include only your PeopleSoft number* on your assignments.

Attendance (12 points). Philosophy is an inherently social activity: you learn by discussing ideas, allowing you to view them from multiple perspectives. Therefore, you cannot succeed in this class without attending. Class sessions will be substantially discussion based; you are expected to attend prepared to discuss the readings. Each session of the course (not counting the first) counts for one point. As there are 13 such sessions, you are permitted one unexcused absence.

Reading responses (18 points). Weeks 3-11, students will be required to answer a set of questions about the reading due that week. The aim is to prepare students to discuss the reading in class. Each reading response is worth 2 points. I will not grade them for content; you will receive full credit for making a good faith attempt. Reading responses are due at the beginning of class, and *will not be accepted late*, barring exceptional circumstances.

Argument assessments (40 points). In each of weeks 4 to 16, students will have the opportunity to turn in an argument assessment concerning the material discussed *the previous week* (i.e. the reading response for week 4 will concern The Milesians and Heraclitus). These assignments will develop students' abilities to recognize and evaluate arguments. Each individual assignment is optional, though there are four "hard deadlines" (see reading schedule), meaning that students must have turned *at least* one reading response by week 5, *at least* two by week 7, etc. Each reading response is worth ten points; students must complete at least four. However, students may complete as many as they like; *only their best four scores will count toward their final grade.*

Final paper drafts (10 points). On weeks 12, 14, and 15, you are required to turn in a draft of a section of your final paper. (More details on what each section must contain will be provided later in the course.) We will use class time to discuss these drafts (including peer critique), so bring a hard copy to class in addition to turning them in through Courseweb. You will receive full credit for having each of the three drafts completed on time; you can receive half credit for sections turned in no more than one week late.

Final paper (20 points). The final paper will simply consist of each of the three parts turned in as drafts. It is due by the end of the day, December 13. Students are encouraged to use feedback received on their drafts to revise the paper. They may also schedule a meeting with me to discuss it.

7. Laptop and phone policy. The use of laptops in class is permitted, but discouraged, as the use of laptops (a) distracts both those who use them and those around them and (b) leads students to take worse notes (see: <https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/a-learning-secret-don-t-take-notes-with-a-laptop/>). As for phones, the use of phones in class is both disrespectful and incredibly distracting. I reserve the right to deduct attendance credit for those I see using their phones in class. Each class period will have a 10-15 minute break in the middle; wait to use your phones until then.

8. Plagiarism. Cheating/plagiarism will not be tolerated. Students suspected of violating the University of Pittsburgh Policy on Academic Integrity, from the February 1974 Senate Committee on Tenure and Academic Freedom reported to the Senate Council, will be required to participate in the outlined procedural process as initiated by the instructor. A minimum sanction of a zero score for the assignment will be imposed. View the complete policy at www.cfo.pitt.edu/policies/policy/02/02-03-02.html.

9. Disability services and accommodation. Disability Statement – If you have a disability for which you are or may be requesting an accommodation, you are encouraged to contact both your instructor and Disability Resources and Services (DRS), 140 William Pitt Union, (412) 648-7890, <http://drsrecep@pitt.edu>, (412) 228-5347 for P3 ASL users, as early as possible in the term. DRS will verify your disability and determine reasonable accommodations for this course.