Ancient Philosophical Inquiry and Methodology — Syllabus
Reading Seminar attached to *Ancient Philosophy* (Gerd Van Riel), Spring Semester 2022
KU Leuven, De Wulf-Mansion Centre
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Course Description
Amidst different, distinct sub-disciplines, like ethics, philosophy of science/mind, epistemology, and so on, the practice of philosophy centrally involves forms of inquiry that should lead us to the truth we seek—whether about ourselves, about other beings, about the cosmos, and so on. Yet inquiry takes different forms, and what right inquiry looks like is not immediately apparent. For instance, do we presuppose that giving a list of material causes is enough to explain the Cosmos, or is there something more that is needed for to explain it—for instance, to explain "what" it is (such as its essence) besides just listing material components? Does inquiry necessitate raising problems or impasses about what we think we know but actually do not? To what degree can inquiry give us certain knowledge about things we wish to know in general?

In this course, we will do a close study of central texts which involve and discuss philosophical inquiry and methodology: this bears direct relevance not just to ancient philosophy or the history of philosophy, but also to contemporary philosophy and any field of science involving inquiry. We will focus on central texts from Plato and Aristotle, among other connected texts, insofar as they provide the foundation for all subsequent reflection on inquiry.

Schedule
Total course hours: 12 — Room: MSI 1 - 91.19 (aula)

Session 1 **Feb. 23** *14–16h*	Introduction + Plato on seeking the cause and *aporia* in inquiry (pt. 1) **Readings** * Plato, *Meno* 70a–85d
Session 2 **Mar. 9** *14–16h*	Plato on seeking the cause and *aporia* in inquiry (pt. 2) **Readings** * Plato, *Meno* 85d–100b
Session 3 **Mar. 18** *14–16h*	Plato's *Phaedo*: Inquiring into causes in argumentation (pt. 1) **Readings** * Plato, *Phaedo* 57a–77a
Session 4 **Apr. 27** *14–16h*	Plato's *Phaedo*: Inquiring into causes in argumentation (pt. 2) **Readings** * Plato, *Phaedo* 77a–107b
Session 5 **May 6** *14–16h*	Aristotle on inquiry (pt. 1): demonstration, dialectic, and *aporia*/problems **Readings** * Aristotle, *Posterior Analytics*, Book I (A), ch's. 1–4, 10, 31, 33 * Aristotle, *Topics* I.1–6
Session 6 **May 20** *16–18h*	Aristotle on inquiry (pt. 2): definition and knowledge acquisition: the response to Plato **Readings** * Aristotle, *Posterior Analytics,* Book II (B), ch's. 8, 10, 19 * [*Review readings from previous session.*]

** Some seminar readings, especially for sessions 5-6, may be partially re-adjusted. More information will be provided ASAP.*

There will also be a list of secondary readings eventually included (via Toledo), if the student wishes to pursue the topic in current research. However, we will be mainly, if solely, discussing the primary texts in the course.

Office Hours
By appointment only: please contact the instructor by email/Toledo.

Requirements
- *Participation:*
  - As the class is a seminar format, students are expected to have each reading prepared for full discussion in the class and to contribute to each seminar discussion as much as they are able.
  - If the student did not attend the course as required, sufficiently participate in assignments, and/or submit the final course paper (in time), they will receive the result, 'not taken' (NA).
  - In case the student cannot, for well-founded reasons, attend the seminar as required, they must inform the course organizer as soon as possible. The organizer may decide to give the student a make-up assignment (for example, a brief reading report on the material covered in the seminar session which the student missed). In case the student cannot attend a class, for serious reasons and regularly or for a long period of time, he/she should inform the examination ombudsperson as soon as possible.
- *Seminar paper:*
  - The final paper should be roughly **2,000 words**. The deadline is **May 30**.
  - The topic should be oriented around 10-20 lines of one of the texts discussed in class (or also of the student's choice). All texts chosen must be discussed and approved by the instructor before submission of the paper. The guidelines for choosing the topic effectively and how to write the paper will be provided in-class and in a later announcement.
  - In order to discuss their topics with the instructor, students should submit an outline of no more than one page which includes information about (i) the text to be discussed; (ii) a drafted structure of the paper.
  - **Draft of seminar paper:** While not necessary, it is *strongly encouraged* that students arrange a meeting with the course organizer to review a full draft of their seminar paper before submission. The draft must be submitted before **April 4** to receive full feedback.
  - Students are expected to inform themselves about the faculty guidelines for papers and bibliographical referencing: **https://hiw.kuleuven.be/en/study/papers-theses-written-work/index.html**.

Evaluation

The final grade (scale 0–20: see rubric on next page) will be determined as follows:
- Seminar paper: 75% of the final grade.
- Class participation: 25% of the final grade.

Please note: The second examination attempt is limited to (re)submitting the seminar paper and/or course work. Participation cannot be retaken. The student who in the course of the academic year did not attend class as required will again receive the N/A result.

Extra Information
- *Plagiarism*
  - Plagiarism is easily detected, and the penalties will be severe. Students are expected to inform themselves about the faculty guidelines for papers and bibliographical referencing and about the faculty guidelines with regard to plagiarism: **https://hiw.kuleuven.be/en/study/papers-theses-written-work/plagiarism**.
- *Writing support*

- In addition to the recommendation above to review the final draft with the course organizer, students are encouraged to contact the writing tutors of the HIW Study Lab for help with writing their papers (please note, though, that it is not an editing service).

Grading Rubric

18 - 20	A+	Excellent: High distinction, work of excellent quality.
16 - 17	A	Outstanding: Work of very good quality and well above average.
15	A-	Very Good: Distinction, work of good quality.
14	B+	Good: Generally competent work of quality.
13	B	Satisfactory: Fair but with some shortcomings.
12	C+	Sufficient: Fair but with shortcomings.
11	C	Below Sufficient: Performance meets the minimal criteria.
10	D	Barely Sufficient: Performance just meets the minimal criteria.
8 - 9	F	Insufficient: Some more work is required to obtain a passing grade.
6 - 7	F	Very Insufficient: More work is required to obtain a passing grade.
0 - 5	F	Totally Insufficient: Considerable work is required to obtain a passing grade.