Introduction to Ancient Philosophy — Syllabus
Fall Semester 2024, 2nd Term / 2024FA-PHIL-2143-A / 8 weeks / online / Canvas
Newman University
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Course Description
The practice of philosophy centrally involves forms of inquiry that should lead us to the truth we seek—whether about ourselves, about the cosmos, about God, and so on. This course will offer an introduction to this way of doing philosophy by looking at the masters of ancient Greek thought and their method of inquiry and discussions on different aspects of reality—esp. the soul, knowledge, the causes of being, and ethics. We will do a close study and discussion of the central texts on these aspects, focusing especially on Plato, Aristotle, and Plotinus, which provide an important foundation both for further study and reflection on ancient philosophical thought and (especially) for reflecting for ourselves on the nature of the world and how to live the good life.

Schedule

#1 **Oct. 19 (Sat.)**	Introduction + Plato on seeking the cause and *aporia* in inquiry (pt. 1) * **Reading:** Plato, *Meno* 70a–85d
#2 **Oct. 22 (Tues.)**	Plato on seeking the cause and *aporia* in inquiry (pt. 2) * **Reading:** Plato, *Meno* 85d–100b
#3 **Oct. 25 (Fri.)**	Plato on the soul's nature and inquiring into causes (pt. 1) * **Reading:** Plato, *Phaedo* 57a–77a
#4 **Oct. 27 (Sun.)**	Plato on the soul's nature and inquiring into causes (pt. 2) * **Reading:** Plato, *Phaedo* 77a–107b
#5 **Nov. 1 (Fri.)**	Aristotle on inquiry (pt. 1): demonstration, dialectic, and knowledge acquisition * **Reading:** Aristotle, *Posterior Analytics*, Book I, ch's. 1–4
#6 **Nov. 3 (Sun.)**	Aristotle on inquiry (pt. 2): demonstration, dialectic, and knowledge acquisition * **Reading:** Aristotle, *Posterior Analytics*, Book II, ch's. 8–10 + 19
#7 **Nov. 8 (Fri.)**	Aristotle on ethics, *eudaimonia*, and the good life * **Reading:** Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, Book I
#8 **Nov. 10 (Sun.)**	Aristotle on virtues and character * **Reading:** Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, Book II
#9 **Nov. 14 (Thurs.)**	Aristotle on pleasure and the highest virtue * **Reading:** Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, Book X
#10 **Nov. 17 (Sun.)**	Plotinus on man's nature and the living being * **Reading:** Plotinus, *Ennead* I.1
#11 **Nov. 21 (Thurs.)**	Plotinus on virtues * **Reading:** Plotinus, *Ennead* I.3
#12 **Nov. 24 (Sun.)**	Plotinus on beauty * **Reading:** Plotinus, *Ennead* I.6
Nov. 27	*No classes: Thanksgiving*
Dec. 2	*No classes: Scholars Day*
Dec. 6 (Fri.)	***Final exam***

Note: This is an online, asynchronous course, meaning the work may generally be done at the time and place of your choosing, subject to posted deadlines. However, it is not "go at your own pace"; deadlines are firm and late penalties will apply.

Schedule notes:

- In general, unless otherwise specified in the schedule (above), there will be two main assignments on Perusall each week, with the first due on Thursday, and the second on Sunday. All such assignments are due at the end of the day (11:59 PM CST) specified.
- Students are expected to read and be familiarized with the reading assignments listed, above. Other materials will be provided to supplement the readings on Perusall and Canvas. These may be reviewed for further investigation. However our focus will be mainly, if solely, discussing the primary texts listed in the syllabus above.

Learning Objectives

As seekers of wisdom, including (especially) understanding the wisdom of the ancients, our shared goals include:

1. **Discovering Ancient Voices:** Familiarize ourselves with influential figures and texts in the history of ancient philosophy.
2. **Philosophical Dialogue**: Discuss fundamental concepts, questions, and themes from antiquity.
3. **Textual Analysis**: Carefully analyze key passages from significant philosophical texts.
4. **Critical Engagement**: Summarize and evaluate some of the key positions and arguments of ancient philosophers.
5. **Personal Reflection**: Thoughtfully consider our own views in the context of ancient philosophical debates.
6. **Contemporary Relevance**: Recognize the relevance of ancient wisdom in shaping today's thought.
7. **Philosophy in Life:** Infuse philosophy into our own lives, fostering a personal understanding of philosophical practice.

Required Texts/Bibliography

To access the required texts online, please follow the instructions on the course site in Canvas under "Getting the Books". For reference to the hard copy versions, corresponding to the schedule (above), see the bibliography:

- Plato. *Meno and Phaedo*. Edited by David Sedley and Alex Long. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010. https://www.cambridge.org/be/universitypress/subjects/philosophy/philosophy-texts/plato-meno-and-phaedo?format=PB.
- Aristotle. *Posterior Analytics*. Translated by Jonathan Barnes. Second edition. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975, 1993 (reprinted 2002). https://global.oup.com/academic/product/posterior-analytics-9780198240891.
- Aristotle. *Nicomachean Ethics*. Translated by C.D.C. Reeve. Second edition. Indianapolis, IN: Hackett, 2024. https://hackettpublishing.com/philosophy/series-in-philosophy/the-new-hackett-aristotle-series/nicomachean-ethics-reeve-second-ed.
- Plotinus. *Enneads*. Translated by A.H. Armstrong. 7 vols. Vol. 1. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1966. https://www.loebclassics.com/view/LCL440/1969/volume.xml.

N.B. – PDFs of the assigned readings will be circulated in Perusall. However, it is also recommend to read the printed version of each of these works, when possible—especially to highlight or underline passages, make notes in the margins, etc., in congruence with the online version in Perusall. Reading the physical page makes a difference in the process of reading and thinking (*and note-taking*).

Requirements and Evaluation

To promote these objectives, you'll engage in the following activities:

1. Active Participation: Actively participate in meaningful discussions on discussion boards and in one-on-one or small group interactions with the professor via Zoom. (45%)
2. Reflective Annotations: Using Perusall, an online social annotation platform, read and comment on assigned texts and interact with peer annotations. (25%)
3. Final Exam: Open-book essay exam on Canvas. (30%)

Academic Integrity

Academic integrity means, quite simply, being honest and forthright about all of your academic work. When students knowingly and deliberately misrepresent the work they have done, for example by plagiarizing, it is a sign

that they have lost sight of the actual point of going to college. Such individuals effectively remove themselves from the academic community. As such, I will normally regard students who consciously commit violations of academic integrity as having by their actions declared themselves no longer to be students in this course and therefore as ineligible to complete the course with a passing grade. Note that this applies to the course as a whole, not just the specific assignment. Final determinations will be made on a case-by-case basis after consultation with the student. Such cases will also be reported to the Office of Academic Affairs; repeat violators may be subject to more significant consequences, up to and including dismissal from the university.

Violations of academic integrity include:

1. Unauthorized or unacknowledged use of advanced generative AI (ChatGPT, GPT4, Bing Chat, etc.). Faculty members may establish guidelines for when and how the use of such technology is permissible in completing assignments, exams, or papers. Students should consult the course syllabus and assignment instructions, as policies will vary across courses, instructors, and assignments. In the absence of specific guidance from the instructor, students should assume the use of generative AI is prohibited.
2. Cheating on examinations, written quizzes, and other written work;
3. Plagiarism, defined as:
    a. the use of another's written work without appropriate citation,
    b. the use of another student's work,
    c. the purchase and/or use of an already prepared paper,
    d. the use of intellectual property (i.e. ideas or materials) from an author without proper documentation;
    e. downloading material from the internet and submitting them for credit (or partial credit) as one's own work;
4. Any violation of state or federal fair use, copyright, patent, or privacy laws;
5. Giving assistance to another person during an examination;
6. Falsification or changing of any academic record;
7. Falsification of research;
8. Obtaining, attempting to obtain, or distributing unauthorized examinations or examination questions;
9. Use of a paper prepared for one course in another course without the evaluating professor's knowledge and permission.

Attendance

Regular engagement with online courses is a leading indicator of success. You are expected to log in to the course a minimum of two times per week. You are also expected to check regularly for emails or announcements from the instructor and are responsible for any information provided by those means. Please communicate with me as soon as possible if you become sick or experience any other disruptions that interfere with your ability to complete coursework.

Classroom Expectations

Since this is an online class, our classroom consists of the virtual spaces where we will work. This includes Canvas, Zoom, and Perusall. Please observe standard conventions of online behavior ("netiquette") in all course-related activities.

Late Work/Missed Exams

All course work is due at the time specified. Note especially that Perusall annotations that are posted after they are due will not receive credit. The final exam will be available on Canvas during a specified window within which they must be completed, and will have a time limit for completion once opened. Please ensure that you plan ahead for these constraints. Missing an exam without making prior arrangements is subject to a letter grade penalty per day. If you are dealing with unusual circumstances that may interfere with your ability to meet a deadline, please email me as soon as possible so that I may consider your request for an extension.

Grading Policy

The grading scale in this class is as follows (numerical grades rounded to nearest whole number):

A = 90-100%	C = 70-79%	F = 0-59%
B = 80-89%	D = 60-69%	

When converting letter grades to numerical grades, the following equivalences will apply:

A+ = 98%	A = 95%	A- = 92%
A-/B+ = 90%		
B+ = 88%	B = 85%	B- = 82%
...and so on.		

The following general grading standards, as stated in the university catalog, will apply in this course:

A = Extraordinary Achievement

1. gives consistent evidence of initiative, originality, intellectual curiosity, and critical interpretation;
2. manifests a wide acquaintance beyond the text with literature relevant to the subject;
3. demonstrates scholarly achievement as measured by papers, examinations, projects, presentations, and intelligent participation in class; and
4. comprehends, integrates, and applies principles of the course.

B = Good Achievement

1. performs with consistent effort and unusually high interest in the course;
2. shows an understanding beyond that required by the course;
3. communicates with better than average literary style; and
4. contributes critical and interpretative insights.

C = Average Achievement

1. participates in the work of the class;
2. demonstrates familiarity with the content material of the course and completes and comprehends assignments;
3. uses proper style, form, logical structure, and evidence of research in verbal and written communication; and
4. demonstrates intelligent inquiries.

D = Marginal Achievement

1. participates in the work of the class;
2. demonstrates marginal comprehension of course content in the completion of all assignments;
3. is able to communicate with marginal style, form, and logical structure; and
4. makes genuine and serious efforts to achieve course objectives.

F = Failure

No credit earned, computed in GPA.

IN = Incomplete

Given only under extenuating circumstances when failure to complete the course is due to no fault of the student. The course work must be completed under the same instructor and by a date agreed upon by the instructor but no later than the end of the next regular semester. After this time, the "IN" automatically becomes an "F" and is included in the computation of the GPA.

Other Issues

- Please see the document "Getting Started with Technology" on the Current Students page of the NU website (https://newmanu.edu/current-students) for information about logins, computing requirements, etc.
- Due to student privacy laws, I will discuss a student's performance in the course (including but not limited to grades) only with that student and no other. For this reason, please use your Newman University email address whenever contacting me.
- It is assumed that over the course of the semester, an average student will need to spend an average of 2–3 hours per credit hour per week to complete course requirements. This assumption is based on university and federal guidelines regarding what constitutes a "credit hour." I recognize that individual circumstances may vary widely,

but if you are struggling with the course and you are not putting in at least this amount of time, then you may not be spending enough time on the course.

- I will often communicate by means of emails sent through Canvas. Therefore, it is important that your personal settings in Canvas reflect your correct email address (meaning one that you check regularly, which will ideally but not necessarily be your Newman account). Call the IT Help Desk (ext. 2402) if you need assistance with this.
- When submitting written work, please be prepared to produce an exact duplicate copy of your work if requested to do so at any time later in the semester. It is also recommended that you keep all graded work that has been returned to you, as well as any notes and rough drafts produced while composing papers or other written work, until the end of the semester in case there is any question about the grade you received or the authorship of the work submitted.
- When submitting written work via Canvas, please make sure your document has your name on it and is saved as a **.doc**, **.rtf**, or **.pdf** file. For emails, attach your document to an email addressed to me at greigj@newmanu.edu, and look for a confirmation message from me within 24 hours. If you do not receive confirmation within 24 hours, it is your responsibility to contact me and, if necessary, send another copy of your document. (You should also double-check that the email address was entered correctly.) If there is a question about whether a deadline was met, I may ask you to provide documentation that you attempted to send the assignment on time (for example, a printout or screenshot of the relevant message retrieved from your "Sent" folder).
- If you disagree with a grade, please do the following before contacting me: Re-read the instructions on the assignment or test. Carefully consider my comments and the requirements spelled out in the instructions. If, after reflection, you still believe the grade is unfair, write a letter clearly stating your reasons for believing you deserve a higher grade, and return the original assignment to me along with your letter within one week. Grade appeals that are not written will not be considered. Upon receiving your letter, I will consider your comments and assign a higher grade if, in my sole judgment, it is warranted. In no case will your grade be lowered, even if we discover that you should have received a lower grade (except in cases where it is discovered that academic integrity has been violated).
- Occasionally, students wish to withdraw from a course before the end of the semester. Please be aware that withdrawing from a course is entirely the student's responsibility. If you simply stop participating in class without formally withdrawing through the registrar's office, you will receive an "F" for the course. Please check the university calendar or contact the registrar's office for information about the deadline for withdrawal.
- Newman University reserves the right to change the content of this syllabus. In the event of any necessary revision of this syllabus, students will be informed in advance and in writing.