

PHIL 283/CLAS 261

GREAT WORKS: ANCIENT & MEDIEVAL

COURSE OUTLINE

Semester: Winter 2021

Course weight: .5 (half a credit)

Type of contact hours: remote teaching, due to COVID (with up to 1.5 hours a week of **optional synchronous** Q&A or “office” hours)

Schedule: Pre-recorded lectures are uploaded (sometimes) once or (usually) twice a week, on Tuesday and/or Friday at 9:00 am

Professor: Bruno Tremblay

Department: Philosophy (St. Jerome’s / University of Waterloo)

Optional office hour / Q&A period, in the Bongo virtual classroom, through the LEARN site: Monday 10:00-11:20 am (on most Mondays starting with Week 2 — see course schedule)

Email: btrembla@uwaterloo.ca

Short Calendar Description

A historical survey of ancient and medieval philosophy in the Western tradition.

General Description

This course is an introduction to some of the most important works of Ancient and Medieval philosophy. Since philosophy as understood in the Western tradition began in Ancient Greece and became a fully-fledged university discipline in the Middle Ages, such an introduction is also an opportunity to get acquainted with the very foundations of the discipline: the questions that set the first philosophers in motion and the answers they proposed, as well as the method that they followed and that distinguished their efforts from those of the thinkers who preceded the birth of philosophy. In those great works, history and philosophy meet: the writings that history has conserved and consecrated as classics are also those that contain most philosophical wisdom (or at least that have been most influential on the evolution of the Western civilization).

It is important to keep in mind, however, that Ancient and Medieval Philosophy lasted for about two thousand years and that many very important works were written during that period. It goes without saying that a 12-week course can only give us a quick taste of a few of those great works.

Learning Objectives

- To feel the importance and necessity of a philosophical reflection in one’s personal life.
- To know the context in which Ancient and Medieval great philosophical works were born.
- To do a first reading of some of those great works
- To strengthen one’s capability of reading philosophical works and thinking about philosophical problems by oneself.

Course Content

Introduction

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1. The Presocratics: great works that were lost
 - 1.1 The Presocratics and the birth of philosophy; Thales and Parmenides
 - 1.2 Readings
 - Fragments and testimonies concerning Thales
 - Fragments from Parmenides' long poem *On Nature*
2. Socrates: great works that were not written
 - 2.1 Introduction to Socrates and to platonic dialogues
 - 2.2 Readings
 - Plato, *Laches*
 - Plato, *Apology of Socrates*
 - Plato, *Crito*
3. Plato
 - 3.1 Introduction to Plato's non-socratic teachings
 - 3.2 Readings
 - *Meno*
 - The *Republic* and the "Allegory of the Cave" (*Republic*, VII, 514a-516c)
4. Aristotle
 - 4.1 Overview of Aristotle's works and philosophy
 - 4.2 Reading
 - *Nicomachean Ethics*, I
5. Epicurus
 - 5.1 The main tenets of Epicurean philosophy
 - 5.2 Readings
 - *Letter to Menoeceus*

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6. Augustine
 - 6.1 Introduction to Augustine's thought and works
 - 6.2 Reading:
 - *Enchiridion*, I and III-VII
7. Boethius
 - 7.1 Introduction to Boethius and his *Consolation of Philosophy*
 - 7.2 Reading
 - *Consolation of Philosophy*, V

See also the detailed Term Schedule available on the course site (LEARN).

Methodology

The success of this course rests mainly on the student's personal work. Students will be required to read and to reflect on their readings before and after attending the pre-recorded lectures. This individual will also allow those of us who are interested to have better and deeper discussions during the weekly optional synchronous Q&A period.

Evaluation

The breakdown of the course evaluation is as follows:

1. Ten short quizzes (10 x 2% = 20%), lasting approximately 10 minutes each and written with no aid. Their aim is to verify the students' completion (and to some extent comprehension) of

the reading assigned at the end of the previous class. Quizzes have to be written within a set 24-hour period, on LEARN. (N.B. There will actually be about 12 such quizzes, i.e. about one a week. However, only the best 10 results will be retained, at the end of the term. **This also allows for any quiz missed due to illness or any other valid reason.** Should a student miss more than 2 quizzes for a legitimate and documented reason, however, make-up quizzes will be arranged.)

2. A first test (25%), covering roughly the first half of the semester and made up of one or a few short-essay questions. No aid. This test will last for 90 minutes and will have to be written on LEARN, at the one time of your choice within the three-day period of February 10th-12th.
3. A second test (25%), covering all of the course content and made up of a few short-essay questions. No aid. This test will last for 90 minutes and will have to be written on LEARN, at the one time of your choice within the three-day period of April 7th-9th.
4. A 2,500-word term paper (30%). A detailed sheet providing more information about this paper will be given by the middle of the semester. It is due no later than **Wednesday, April 14th, 11:59 pm**, and must be deposited into the appropriate dropbox on LEARN.

Mandatory Readings

Mandatory readings, which are indicated in the “course content” section, can be downloaded from LEARN in editions that are either no longer covered by copyright or made freely accessible by their editor/translator. Students can thus obtain the texts more easily and at no cost.

IMPORTANT INFORMATION

UW policy regarding illness and missed tests:

[The University of Waterloo Examination Regulations](#) state that:

- A medical certificate presented in support of an official petition for relief from normal academic requirements must provide all of the information requested on the “[University of Waterloo Verification of Illness](#)” form or it will not be accepted. This form can be obtained from Health Services or on the link provided above. If a student has a test/examination deferred due to acceptable medical evidence, he/she normally will write the test/examination at a mutually convenient time, to be determined by the course instructor.
- The University acknowledges that, due to the pluralistic nature of the University community, some students may on religious grounds require alternative times to write tests and examinations.
- Elective arrangements (such as travel plans) are not considered acceptable grounds for granting an alternative examination time.

Professor’s policy on late assignments/essays, make-up tests, and plagiarism:

Handing in late assignments: unless arrangements are made with the professor beforehand or an official doctor’s note is provided, 10% of the total will be deducted per day.

Make-up tests: there will be no make-up tests for quizzes, tests, and exams missed for non-valid and non-documented reasons. Travel, excessive workload, defective alarm clocks, minor colds, a late bus, etc., are not considered to be valid reasons.

Plagiarism: students who are caught plagiarizing will automatically fail the evaluation in question and may fail the course. (Plagiarism, according to Webster’s: the use or close imitation of the language and/or thoughts of another author and the representation of them as one’s own original work.)

Academic Integrity: To maintain a culture of academic integrity, members of the University of Waterloo and its Federated University and Affiliated Colleges are expected to promote honesty, trust, fairness, respect, and responsibility.

Academic Integrity Office (UW) : A resource for students and instructors.

Discipline: A student is expected to know what constitutes academic integrity, to avoid committing academic offences, and to take responsibility for his/her actions. A student who is unsure whether an action constitutes an offence, or who needs help in learning how to avoid offences (e.g., plagiarism, cheating) or about “rules” for group work/collaboration should seek guidance from the course professor, academic advisor, or the Associate Dean. When misconduct has been found to have occurred, disciplinary penalties will be imposed under the [St. Jerome’s University Policy on Student Discipline](#). For information on categories of offenses and types of penalties, students should refer to [University of Waterloo Policy 71 \(Student Discipline\)](#).

Grievance: A student who believes that a decision affecting some aspect of his/her university life has been unfair or unreasonable may have grounds for initiating a grievance. Students who decide to file a grievance should refer to [University of Waterloo Policy 70 \(Student Petitions and Grievances\)](#). For more information, students should contact the Associate Dean of St. Jerome’s University.

Appeals: A student may appeal the finding and/or penalty in a decision made under the St. Jerome’s University Policy on Student Discipline or University of Waterloo Policy 70 (Student Petitions and Grievances) if a ground for an appeal can be established. In such a case, read [St. Jerome's University Policy on Student Appeals](#).

Note for Students with Disabilities: The [AccessAbility Services \(AS\) Office](#), located in Needles Hall, Room 1132, collaborates with all academic departments to arrange appropriate accommodations for students with disabilities without compromising the academic integrity of the curriculum. If you require academic accommodations to lessen the impact of your disability, please register with the AS Office at the beginning of each academic term.