PHILOSOPHY 430: METAPHYSICS AND EPISTEMOLOGY IN ANCIENT GREEK PHILOSOPHY
Instructor: Daniel Schneider

We’ll be studying in depth, and with close attention to the texts, ancient Greek philosophers’ attempts to answer the following questions: What sorts of things are there in the world? Is a world of change consistent with a world of substances? What would be a satisfactory account of unity and diversity? What sort of knowledge, if any, can we have of the world in which we live? Why are reason and logic important? Why become a philosopher, and what is the difference between the philosopher and the sophist?

Required Books:
Proteus Reader in Ancient Greek Philosophy compiled by Paula Gottlieb (for 2008).

Recommended Books:
Epictetus The Enchiridion

Attendance and Participation
There will be three lectures a week (MWF 9:55 a.m.) and a discussion section. Participating in section is just as important as attending lectures. Deadlines for the readings will be announced in class.

Written Work
There will be three tutorial papers, 5 pages (double-spaced) each. Tutorials will be held during the weeks beginning Monday February 18th, Monday March 31st, and Monday May 5th. (Any changes in tutorial times will be announced in class.)

Tutorial Papers
See attached handout for information on the tutorial method.

Final Exam
There will be a comprehensive final exam.

Grading:
Each tutorial paper is worth 20% of your final grade. The final is worth 30% and your attendance and participation determines the remaining 10%.

Paper 1: 20%
Paper 2: 20%
Paper 3: 20%
Final: 30%
Participation: 10%

Goals of the course:
1. To be able to understand and to criticize a text of the Pre-Socratics, Plato, or Aristotle from a philosophical point of view.

2. To find out what the task of the philosopher is, according to the ancient Greek philosophers.

3. To see (a) what the ancient Greek philosophers have to say about the world and about our understanding of it and (b) whether they are right.

Outline of the Course and Primary Texts:

1. Introduction
   (i) The themes of the course
   (ii) Which philosophers are we studying and why?
   (iii) The method and goals of the course
   (iv) What is the role of the philosopher?

   Reading: Thales; Aristotle *Metaphysics* Bk 1 (esp. chapters 1, 2, and first paragraph of chapter 3)

2. The Pre-Socratic Background
   1. The Pre-Socratic “revolution” and Thales
      (i) How revolutionary were the Pre-Socratics?
      (ii) Thales’s life as a philosopher
      (iii) The challenge of explaining what Thales meant
      (iv) Thales’s view and some modern concerns
      (v) A problem of change and the psyche

   Reading: Anaxagoras (20) and Heraclitus (87); Thales (1)-(3), (4)-(5)

   2. Pythagoras
      (i) The importance of mathematics
      (ii) The psyche and ethics
      (iii) Two approaches to learning

   Reading: Pythagoras (1)-(16) esp. (11) (15) (16); (6) (1) and (8) (9)

   3. Heraclitus the riddler
      (i) Listening to the logos
      (ii) The fire
      (iii) The road
      (iv) Heraclitean flux
      (v) The controversy over the bow and lyre

   Reading: Heraclitus (1)-(115)

   4. Explaining change: Naturalism, cosmology and biology

   Reading: Anaxagoras and Empedocles (1)-(58)
3. Socrates and Plato

1. Introduction to Socrates and Plato
   (i) The order of Plato’s dialogues and the controversy over the early dialogues
   (ii) Gorgias, Athenian democracy, and two types of persuasion.
   Reading: *Gorgias* 454C-455 (cf. *Republic* VI 492-3)

2. Listening to the logos and Socratic method
   (i) Character vs. personality vs. reputation
   (ii) The point of the Socratic distinctions
   (iii) The sophists vs. the philosopher
   (iv) Examining one’s way of life: Socratic method and the elenchus
   Reading: *Apology*

3. Socrates questions Euthyphro
   (i) The “What is x?” question
   (ii) Euthyphro’s definitions of piety and Socrates’s criticisms
   (iii) The Euthyphro distinction: Nature vs. feature
   Reading: *Euthyphro* esp. 9e-11e (with handout)

4. Meno: A transitional dialogue
   (i) An exercise in the elenchus
   (ii) The paradox of inquiry and some points about knowledge and belief
   (iii) The experiment with the slave
   (iv) Plato’s introduction of the method of hypothesis
   (v) Interpreting the last part of the dialogue
   Reading: *Meno*

5. Plato introduces the Forms
   (i) A further argument about recollection
   (ii) Materialist vs. teleological explanation
   (iii) Modern implications
   (iv) The “second sailing”: Elaborating the method of hypothesis.
   (v) How the Forms provide explanations: the safe explanation and the more sophisticated explanation
   Reading: *Phaedo* 72D-77A, 96A-99D, 100A-E

6. Metaphysics and Epistemology in Plato’s Republic
   (i) Overview of Plato’s *Republic*
   (ii) The lovers of sights and sounds vs. the lovers of wisdom: Knowledge vs. belief
   (iii) The heart of Plato’s system: The sun, line and cave
   Reading: *Republic* V 476-480, VI 505-9, 509D-511E, VII 514-521, 521-540

7. A critique of the Forms?
   Reading: *Parmenides* 127B-135D
4. Aristotle

1. Introduction to Aristotle’s early work
   (i) Aristotle the naturalist
   (ii) The big ten and the point of distinguishing them
   Reading: Categories 4

2. Aristotle’s Categories.
   (i) Aristotle’s implicit criticism of Plato
   (ii) The primacy of ordinary objects and particular vs. universal
   (iii) The “said of” relation
   (iv) Homonymy, synonymy and paronymy
   Reading: Categories 1-5, De Interpretatione 7

3. Aristotle’s early essentialism
   (i) The four predicables
   (ii) Why be an Aristotelian essentialist?
   (iii) Types of change
   (iv) Modern objections to essentialism and lines of reply
   Reading: Topics I 5, Categories 14 (handout)

4. Aristotle the naturalist
   (i) The distinction between natural and artificial objects
   (ii) Problems with the distinction
   (iii) Modern applications of the distinction
   (iv) Introduction of the distinction between matter and form
   Reading: Physics I 1, II 1-3

5. The four causes
   (i) Application of the four causes to natural objects and processes
   (ii) Scientific method and the importance of the final cause
   (iii) Aristotelian teleology, modern biology and Darwin.
   Reading: Physics II 1-3; Parts of Animals I 1 and I 5, Physics II 8-9

6. Aristotle’s later metaphysics
   (i) How can there be a comprehensive science of being?
   (ii) What is primary substance?
   (iii) First philosophy in action: Aristotle’s defense of a fundamental principle.
   Reading: Metaphysics IV 1-3 with VI 1-2 (on the web), VII, especially 1-3;
   Metaphysics IV 4-5 (on the web)

7. Aristotle applies his principles to the study of life
   Reading: De Anima I 1, II 1-4; Meterologica IV 12.

Aristotle vs. Plato: Metaphysics I 6, 9, Nicomachean Ethics I 6