Course Goals
This course will introduce you to some of the basic texts of ancient Greek philosophy. We will be focussing on the philosophy of Plato and Aristotle, which are among the most influential in all of Western culture. We will pay particular attention to the relationships between the different aspects of each philosopher's works. For instance, we will look at how Plato's theory about what the world is like affects both his theory of knowledge and his ethics. We will also examine the ideas of some pre-Socratic philosophers and of the later Greek philosopher Sextus Empiricus. No previous work in philosophy is required for this course, although some previous work in philosophy would be helpful. Classical studies majors will be encouraged to apply their knowledge of ancient Greek in their papers where appropriate.

By the end of this course, you should be familiar with the questions addressed by philosophers of the ancient period, and have a thorough acquaintance with the ways that the philosophers we read answer these questions. You should also have improved your ability to interpret difficult texts by recognizing and analyzing the arguments presented in them. This improvement should be evident in your writing and in your ability to participate in discussions of academic material.

Required Texts
(These texts will be supplemented with handouts and readings on closed reserve.)

On Reserve
Required Work

- Attend and participate in all class meetings
- Read assignments from the texts before each class meeting
- Complete a series of brief, unannounced in-class quizzes
- Complete two take-home essay exams (approximately 9-12 pages each)

Grading

Your grade will depend equally on three factors: the two exams and the quizzes. The frequency and quality of your class participation can also affect your final grade for the course, especially if your average for the course falls between two grades.

The quizzes will consist of short questions such as definitions and true/false. Quizzes will not be announced, and there will be no make-up quizzes. Quiz grades will be on a percentage basis. Students who must miss quizzes because of true emergencies, illness or religious holidays are required to notify me in advance. Students with excused absences will have their quiz grades computed as a percentage of a lower number of points, depending on how many points were on the excused quizzes. Quizzes missed with no excused absence will receive no credit.

Assignments and deadlines for the exams will be distributed in class. Keep copies of your exams. I cannot be responsible for lost work. Late midterms will be accepted at a penalty of one letter grade per day. Late final exams will not be accepted. No excuses will be accepted for an assignment after the deadline has passed.

Readings

Below is an approximate reading schedule. I will announce reading assignments each week, which may add up to a little bit more or less than what is listed here. You will be responsible for all readings announced in class, whether they appear on this list or not.

Week One:

Supplemental readings from the pre-Socratic philosophers.

Weeks One – Four:

**Plato:**
The Euthyphro
The Meno
The Apology
The Crito
The Phaedo
Weeks Five – Nine:

**Aristotle:**
- Physics, Books I and II
- Nichomachean Ethics, Books I – X

Weeks Nine – Ten:

**Sextus Empiricus:**
- Outlines of Pyrrhonism, Book I

This page currently maintained by [Ken Richman](mailto:Ken.Richman@kzoo.edu). Please direct any questions or comments to the Chair of the Department.

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