PHIL 205 – Ancient Philosophy
Personhood and the Polis
Winter 2011

Instructor: Eric Lambert
Location: Dewey
310
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Office: HH 202
Times: 2:40-3:55 pm
Office hrs: TBA

Texts

Readings in Ancient Greek Philosophy: from Thales to Aristotle, 3rd edition, edited by Marc Cohen, Patricia Curd, and C.D.C. Reeve

Antigone, Sophocles, trans. by Richard Emil Braun

Course description

In PHIL 205, Ancient Philosophy: Personhood and the Polis, we will focus on the works of Plato and Aristotle, two of the most influential thinkers in the Western philosophical tradition. We will examine their politico-ethical works, in particular, seeking to acquire not only a “flavor” of Classical Greek reasoning but an understanding of how these thinkers experienced and reflected on such concepts as justice, virtue, the value of friendship and self-knowledge, as well as more explicitly political themes as the relation of the individual to the state, the import of knowledge and reason in politics, and the role of moral education in citizenship.

After a quick look at the Presocratics, proto-philosophers who some argue inaugurate the shift from mythological explanation to rational reflection, we read three Socratic dialogues, exchanges that purportedly took place shortly before Socrates was sentenced to commit suicide. In part because he was deeply affected by the death of Socrates, his friend and mentor, Plato composed the Republic, one of the great works of political philosophy. After several weeks studying the Republic, we conclude with the ethical and political theory of Aristotle.

The objective of the course is for students to become conversant with the concerns, concepts, and arguments of these philosophers, as well as the similarities and differences between them. Chief goals of the course are to develop the ability to analyze and evaluate arguments you come across in reading, and to gain facility explicating and elucidating your own concepts and arguments.

Grading

25% final paper (8-10 pp.)
5% peer review of rough draft of final paper (typed, min. 3-5 pp.)
15% short essay assignment (4-6 pp.)
40% four (4) short papers (target length: 2-3 carefully written pages), worth 10% each
15% participation

Attendance

Attendance is required. Since there are only ten weeks per quarter, each class session is important. Thus three or more unexcused absences will result in 0.5 points being immediately deducted from a student’s final
grade (so if your final grade is 2.7 and you have three unexcused absences, you will receive a 2.3). Lateness should also be avoided. Since tardiness is usually disruptive, excessive lateness (three or more times late) will count as an unexcused absence.

Late papers

Unless prior arrangements are made, late papers will be marked down 0.25 points each day the paper is late. Late papers will not be penalized only if prior arrangements are made, appropriate documentation is provided, and the reasons are consistent with Kalamazoo College policy.

Academic Integrity

Per the Kalamazoo College Honor System: “The term "plagiarism" includes, but is not limited to, the use, by paraphrase or direct quotation, of the published or unpublished work of another person without full and clear acknowledgment. It also includes the unacknowledged use of materials prepared by another person or agency engaged in the selling of term papers or other academic materials.” Simply put, do not plagiarize. If you are not sure what plagiarism consists of, talk to me. Plagiarized work will result (at a minimum) in a failing grade for that assignment, and possibly a failing grade for the course.

Schedule of readings

Week 1
Mon, Jan 3: Introduction
Wed, Jan 5: Milesians (1-14)
Fri, Jan 7: Heraclitus and Parmenides (24-41)

Week 2
Mon, Jan 10: Sophists (80-88); Plato (89-96)
Wed, Jan 12: Euthyphro (97-114)
Fri, Jan 14: The Apology (115-140)

Week 3
Mon, Jan 17: * * MLK Day * *
Wed, Jan 19: Crito (141-153), and Antigone
Fri, Jan 21: Antigone

Week 4
Mon, Jan 24: The Republic, Book I (331-359)
Wed, Jan 26: The Republic, Book II (360-385)
Fri, Jan 28:   *The Republic*, Book III (386-417)

**Week 5**
Mon, Jan 31:   *The Republic*, Book IV (418-444)
Fri, Feb 4:   *The Republic*, Book VI (477-503)

**Week 6**
Mon, Feb 7:   *The Republic*, Book VII (504-528)
Wed, Feb 9:   *The Republic*, Book VIII (529-555)
Fri, Feb 11:   *The Republic*, Book IX (556-577)

**Week 7**
Mon, Feb 14:   “Ethics” (handout; skim sections d – f, pp. 222-226)
Wed, Feb 16:    *De Anima*, Book I, Book II.1-3 (809-818)
              *Nichomachean Ethics*, Book I (832-845)
Fri, Feb 18:    *Nichomachean Ethics*, Book II – III (845-863)

**Week 8**
Wed, Feb 23:   *Nichomachean Ethics*, Book X (881-891)
Fri, Feb 25:   *Physics*, Book II.3 (707-708)
              (Stop at sentence beginning “Although there are many types of causes…”)
              *Metaphysics*, Book I.3 (762-765)

**Week 9**
Mon, Feb 28:   “Politics” (handout, 233-252)
Wed, Mar 2:    “Politics” (handout, 252-258); *Politics*, Books I-II (892-899)
              Fri, Mar 4:    *Politics*, Books I-II (892-899)

**Week 10**
Mon, Mar 7:    *Politics*, Book III – VII (899-922)
Wed, Mar 9:    Review and discussion
Fri, Mar 11:   Exchange and peer review of rough drafts of final paper
Due dates for papers:

January 10 the first short paper (2-3 pp.) is due. (Parmenides)
January 19 the second short paper (2-3 pp.) is due. (Apology.)
January 31 the third short paper (2-3 pp.) is due. (Thrasymachus)
February 14 the fourth short paper (2-3 pp.) is due. (Allegory of the Cave)

February 25 the short essay (4-6 pp.) is due. (Pass out assignment on Feb. 14.)

NOTE: The final paper will be due [between Mar 14-17]. Students are to deliver the final paper to Humphrey House 202, no later than 4:00 pm.