

PHIL UN2101 History of Philosophy I—Pre-Socratics through Augustine, Fall 2020

[The syllabus will be posted soon on Canvas]

Welcome to History of Philosophy I!

The course offers:

- an introduction to central questions in ancient philosophy.
- an introduction to questions in ancient philosophy that continue to interest philosophers today.
- exercises and assignments that help you practice oral and written philosophical skills.
- an introduction to a wide range of formats in which ancient philosophers engage in philosophical thought, including poems, dialogues, and treatises.

We cover selections from the following philosophers and texts: Thales, Parmenides, Melissus, Leucippus, Democritus, Plato's *Apology*, *Phaedo*, *Euthyphro*, *Meno*, *Republic*, Aristotle's *Topics*, *Nicomachean Ethics*, *Metaphysics*, *Physics*, Epicurus, Stoics, Skeptics, Augustine.

In the Fall 2020, History of Philosophy I will be taught remotely. All students are required to attend a recitation section, some of which are likely to be taught in a hybrid mode. A detailed syllabus will be posted on Canvas soon.

The class is structured to work equally well for students who are on campus and those who may not be able to be in NYC during the semester or part of the semester. It will include asynchronous elements, in particular, a handout with complete lecture notes for every lesson as well as several recorded mini lectures per week. Each mini lecture ends with a puzzle or discussion question, which aims to encourage close study of the text and engagement with perennial philosophical questions. The plan is that you will read the texts, watch the mini lectures and take notes at your own pace, and be ready to participate in synchronous class meetings.

Synchronous class time will focus on discussion of the puzzles that are formulated in the mini lectures, questions from students, and on looking more closely at important issues. During synchronous meetings, we will use the "polling" tool in Zoom: students take "votes" on philosophical and interpretive questions. In this context, "voting" means that you decide which of several theories or ideas you find more/less compelling. Typically, there's no "right" answer; the aim is to think through theoretical options and the implications of the theories we study. We will use "breakout rooms" to offer occasions for you to discuss the options with peers.

Requirements for the class include close reading of the primary texts, 10 short written assignments (some very short, some mid-length, and one a bit longer), and a final exam. The written assignments are responses to the puzzles we discuss in class; the structure of the assignments makes sure that you receive frequent input and have the chance to practice philosophical analysis, argumentation, and writing.