

**Bridgewater State University**  
**Philosophy 301 Ancient Philosophy**  
**Summer 2020**  
**3 Credits**

Instructor: TBA  
Email: TBA

**Description:** In this course, students will be introduced to the field of philosophy through the examination of fundamental questions and issues featured in Ancient Philosophical texts. We will read pre-Socratics, Plato, Aristotle, and Hellenistic thinkers, with a focus on their metaphysical and epistemological views. During this important time, many of the foundations of philosophical problems were developed. Although philosophical developments occurred in many areas, we will focus on the metaphysics and epistemology of some of the more prominent figures of this period. Much of this material is difficult, but hopefully you will find it rewarding. The format of the class will be small group and instructor lead whole class discussion. Students will produce 4 short papers and lead class discussion once per week.

**Objectives:** In this course, students will learn some foundational issues in ancient philosophy. By critically assessing the views and arguments of historical and contemporary philosophers, students will develop and strengthen skills to identify, evaluate, and construct arguments. In written work and discussion, students will employ the theory, tools, and methods of philosophical texts. In addition, students will produce a papers utilizing the methods of philosophical analysis.

**Required Text:**

*[Ancient Philosophy \(Philosophic Classics: Volume I\)](#)*. Sixth edition. Forrest E. Baird, ed. (e-text available)

**Assignments:** There are three kinds of assignments: readings, reflection papers, and short papers.

**-Readings**

The texts you will be reading this semester are among the most difficult and most controversial ever written. Current philosophers make their careers by arguing with one another about what a text means. Thus, i) there is no right answer, only good, bad, and better guesses, and ii) I do not expect you to understand anything you read, but I do expect you to try hard. The best way to approach a philosophical text is by following these steps:

1) First skim a text, turning pages quickly, reading headings and looking briefly at the fine print. Now, close the book, and ask yourself: what is this about? What is the BIG question being explored here. Do you have a sense of where the author might be headed? Even if you not sure, keep your first thoughts in mind. You are probably on the right track. Step 1 should take about 10 minutes.

2) Next, read the whole text assigned. Quickly. Don't stop to consider puzzling aspects. Now, close the book, and ask yourself: what is this about? What is the BIG question being explored here. Do you have a sense of where the author might be headed? Do you think differently than you did before about what is going on in the text? This should take about 1 hour.

3) Finally, carefully read the text. Slowly. Take notes. Write summaries of passages. Write questions that occur to you. Note passages that you do not understand.

### **-Daily Summary**

All students will keep a daily summaries journal. It can be any group of pieces of paper, or a series of electronic documents. In it you should have a series of dated, titled entries for EVERY reading throughout the semester. They will not be graded. You receive .5 point for each one, when attendance is taken at the beginning of class. After attendance is taken, no late entries will ever be given credit.

In your journal, you may also include pages for class notes, etc., as long as each journal entry begins on its own page and is clearly marked.

Prepare to write the reflection by following the instructions for reading above. Then, after the last reading, take a few minutes to think. Note that this is not like a book report, and thus a general overall summary of the text is not sufficient. However, you may want to write a brief summary for your own purpose in preparation for the reflection. Now, choose a single statement or paragraph or key idea from the reading that interests or puzzles you most. Think about how you might describe or explain it within the context of the reading, what the author means. What questions and responses occur to you? Why are they important to you?

Then write the reflection. First, quote the key idea. Then, write a summary/description of it (one paragraph) and what you think it means/why it might be important/interesting. It should be about a half page long. This is what you will bring to class, and it will serve as the draft for the reflection you will write in class during the second hour, after we have reviewed the text in the first hour.

### **- Papers**

Students will write a 3-page paper for each Part of the course, due immediately after the end of each Part of the course. Each paper will be a rewritten and expanded version of one of the reflections in that Part. Writing a philosophy paper is different from writing papers in any other discipline. You will be learning how to write and how to improve your writing skills throughout the semester. Refer to the handout "How to Write a Philosophy Paper". This document suggests a writing process and indicates the grading rubric. Final drafts submitted late will receive a grade reduction penalty of 1 point each calendar day. Exceptions will be granted only if I receive the request for late submittal with a valid reason (such as a doctor's note indicating injury or illness) the day before the due date.

### **Grades**

Students are expected to submit four short papers, keep a reflections journal. Neglecting to complete any of these will result in an F as a final grade. I expect that all assignments will be completed independently by each student. Any work you represent as your own must actually be your own. If you cheat or plagiarize, an F will be given on the assignment and possibly (depending

on the nature of the violation) for the course. For more information, consult your style manual for correct citation procedures, see [http://www.plagiarism.org/research\\_site/e\\_what\\_is\\_plagiarism.html](http://www.plagiarism.org/research_site/e_what_is_plagiarism.html), or ask me if you have any questions.

Most of the term, we will be meeting to discuss a text. For each of these days, every student will receive 1 point for attendance and 1 point for the reflection journal entry. There are no ‘make-ups’ for attendance points. If you miss class for ANY reason, no “attendance” credit will be granted – no exceptions. There is some built in forgiveness for missing 2 of the class hours and assignments.

Reflections not submitted in class may be submitted by email, but only on the day it is due, or before. That is: No credit will be given for any journal entry unless it is: a) submitted in class, or b) emailed to me by the end of the day (midnight) it is due. Credit may be granted for such e-submissions only three times during the term.

Final grades will be calculated as follows:

|  |           |
|--|-----------|
| Attendance @.5 for each Hour of class, 40 hours  | 20        |
| Reflection @.5 for draft brought to class, and .5 for final draft written during second hour) 40 | 40        |
| Papers: (4 papers @ up to 10 points)   | <u>40</u> |
| Total  | 100       |

| Grade | Description  | 4-point Equivalent | 100-point |
|-------|--------------|--------------------|-----------|
| A     | Superior     | 4.0                | 95-100    |
| A-    | Superior     | 3.7                | 90-94     |
| B+    | Good         | 3.3                | 87-89     |
| B     | Good         | 3.0                | 83-86     |
| B-    | Good         | 2.7                | 80-82     |
| C+    | Satisfactory | 2.3                | 77-79     |
| C     | Satisfactory | 2.0                | 73-76     |
| C-    | Satisfactory | 1.7                | 70-72     |
| D     | Poor         | 1.0                | 65-69     |
| F     | Failure      | 0.0                | 0-64      |

***The syllabus for this course, including the attached course schedule, is subject to change at my discretion.***

| Date |           | Hour 1   | Hour 2  |
|------|-----------|--|---|
| 5/25 | Reading   | 1. Thales, Anaximander, and Anaximenes (pp. 8-13)                                      | 2. Pythagoras and Xenophanes (pp. 14-18)                          |
| 5/26 | Reading   | 3. Heraclitus (pp. 18-21)  | 4. Parmenides (pp. 22-26)   |
| 5/27 | Reading   | 5. Zeno of Elea (pp. 26-30)  | 6. Empedocles (pp. 31-36)   |
| 5/28 | Reading   | 7. Anaxagoras (pp. 36-38)  | 8. Democritus/Leucippus (pp. 39-42)                               |
| 5/29 | Reading   | 9. Socrates I: <i>Euthyphro</i> (pp. 70-76; 2a-9e)                                     | 10. Socrates I: <i>Euthyphro</i> (pp. 76-82; 10a-16a)             |
| 5/30 | Paper Due |  |   |
| 5/31 |           |  |   |
| 6/1  | Reading   | 11. Socrates II: <i>Apology</i> (pp. 82-90 : 17a-27d)                                  | 12. Socrates II: <i>Apology</i> (pp. 90-99 : 27d-42a)             |
| 6/2  | Reading   | 13. Socrates III: <i>Crito</i> (pp. 99-107)  | 14. Plato I: <i>Theaetetus</i> (pp. 297 - 307)                    |
| 6/3  | Reading   | 15. Plato II: <i>Symposium</i> (pp. 177-184)   | 16. Plato II: <i>Symposium</i> (pp. 184-193)                      |
| 6/4  | Reading   | 17. Plato III: <i>Republic (Book) II</i> (pp. 213-225)                                 | 18. Plato III: <i>Republic (Book) VI</i> (pp. 274-282; 504e-511e) |
| 6/5  | Reading   | 19. Plato III: <i>Republic VII</i> (pp. 283-288; 514a-521b)                            | writing workshop  |
| 6/6  | Paper Due |  |   |
| 6/7  |           |  |   |
| 6/8  | Reading   | 20. Aristotle I: <i>Categories</i> (pp. 319-324)                                       | 21. Aristotle II: <i>Posterior Analytics</i> (pp. 330-334)        |
| 6/9  | Reading   | 22. Aristotle III: <i>Physics</i> II.3 (pp. 337-338); <i>Metaphysics</i> (pp. 344-347) | 23. Aristotle III: <i>Metaphysics</i> (pp. 353-360)               |
| 6/10 | Reading   | 24. Aristotle IV: <i>On the Soul</i> (pp. 371-377)                                     | 25. Aristotle V: <i>Nicomachean Ethics</i> (pp. 378-386 I.1-11)   |
| 6/11 | Reading   | 26. Aristotle V: <i>Nicomachean Ethics</i> (pp. 386-391)                               | 27. Aristotle V: <i>Nicomachean Ethics</i> 391-397 / II.1-6       |
| 6/12 | Reading   | discussion   | writing workshop  |
| 6/13 |           |  |   |
| 6/14 | Paper Due |  |   |
| 6/15 | Reading   | 28. Epicurus I: <i>Letter to Herodotus</i> (pp. 469-477)                               | 29. Epicurus I: <i>Letter to Herodotus</i> (pp. 477-483)          |
| 6/16 | Reading   | 30. Epicurus II: <i>Letter to Menoceus</i> (pp. 483-487)                               | 31. Epicurus III: <i>Principal Doctrines</i> (pp. 488-490)        |
| 6/17 | Reading   | 32. Epictetus I: <i>Handbook (Enchiridion)</i> (pp. 519-530)                           | 33. Epictetus I: <i>Handbook (Enchiridion)</i> (pp. 519-530)      |
| 6/18 | Reading   | 34. Sextus Empiricus: <i>Outlines of Pyrrhonism</i> (pp. 541-545)                      | 35. Plotinus II: <i>Enneads</i> V.1.6-12; V.3.12-17 (pp. 557-561) |
| 6/19 | Reading   | Final paper workshop   | Final paper workshop  |
| 6/20 | Paper Due |  |   |