COURSE DESCRIPTION: The history of philosophy from ancient to medieval times: Presocratics to St. Thomas Aquinas.

Prerequisite: CUNY Certification in reading and writing. 3 cl. hr, 3 cr.

Grading: 25% Exam 1 25% Exam 2 or paper 50% Final

Suggested Text:
Vol. I: Ancient Philosophy; Vol. II: Medieval Philosophy


Prepared by: Dr. Daphne McKinney November 1989
Revised by: Dr. Daphne McKinney February 1994, January 1997
14 WEEK OUTLINE

THE HERITAGE OF ANCIENT PHILOSOPHY

WEEK 1: Pre-Socratic Philosophy
The beginning of philosophy - extant writings and references by later thinkers
God and Nature in Homer and in Hesiod
Thales, Anaximander, Anaximenes, Heracleitus and Xenophanes
Euclid - Axiomatic Geometry
Parmenides, The Pluralists, Empedocles, Anaxogaras
Pythagoras and the Pythagoreans

WEEK 2: The Historical Perspective - political, social and cultural
Sparta, Athens, The Peloponnesian War, The Old Oligarchy
Aristophanes, Euripides, and the Sophists
Atomism - Democritus and Lucretius - the motion of atoms, the sensory world, psychology and ethics - evaluation of atomism
Lives and times of Socrates and Plato

WEEK 3: Plato
Socratic thought and early dialogues of Plato
Plato - theory of knowledge, the Forms,
Criticism of The Theory of Forms

WEEK 4: Plato
- metaphysics, ethics, political theory, theory of art and religion
Aristotle
Life, Aristotle’s Aim
Metaphysics, Nature Science, Logic
- the natural of reality, natural science, biology, psychology, logic

WEEK 5: Aristotle - Ethics, Politics, Art
- Animal drives and practical reason
- ethics, political theory, theory of Art
Evaluation of Aristotle’s philosophy

WEEK 6: The Late Classical Period
Political and cultural changes
Epicureanism, Stoicism
Cicero, Epictetus, and Marcus Aurelius
Stoicism as an operative ideal in Roman life
Scepticism
Survey of classical thought - weeks 1 - 6

WEEK 7:  Review for Midterm Exam
Midterm Exam

WEEK 8:  The New Religious Orientation
The Mystery Cults, Neoplatonism, Plotinus
The Coming of Christianity
Jesus: The Jewish Heritage, The Jesus Movement
Christianity: The Formative Years
The Mysticism of Paul, John and the Logos Mystery
The Effects of Institutionalism
Heresy and Orthodoxy
- the Gnostic, Arian, Pelegian and Manichean heresies
- relation of faith to reason

WEEK 9:  Augustine:
His Life and Times
The Inner Struggle - Confessions
Augustine’s Concept of God, properties of God-Reality
Providence, Evil and Free Will
The Basic Conflict in Augustine’s account of God
The Two Cities: Heaven and Hell, The Earthly Pilgrimage, Man
Augustine’s Ethics, the Drama of Salvation
Nature and Natural Science, History
Evaluation of Augustine’s thought

WEEK 10: The Medieval Interval
The Dark Ages, The Church, Feudalism, Chivalry
Art and Letters, Science, The Universities
Philosophy during the medieval period
John Scotus Erigena
The Controversy over Universals
Abelard
The Faith-Reason Controversy

WEEK 11: St. Thomas Aquinas
Life
Metaphysics: the central problem, basic concepts,
Proofs of God’s Existence, God’s Nature
The physical world, angels
Psychology, Ethics, Politics
Grace, Predestination and the Moral Life
Evaluation of Thomas’s thought

WEEK 12: The End of the Middle Ages
Orthodoxy - problems
Roger Bacon, Dun Scotus, William of Occam, The Averroists
Will vs. Intellect in Ethics

WEEK 13: Survey of medieval thought: week 7 - 12

WEEK 14: Review for Final Exam
Final Exam.

14 WEEK BEHAVIORAL OBJECTIVES  THE HERITAGE OF ANCIENT PHILOSOPHY

At the end of the week indicated, the student should be able:

WEEK 1: 1) To distinguish between early philosophical and mythical thought;
          2) To clearly state the major concern of the pre-Socratics;
          3) To identify the philosophical and mythical features of their thought;
          4) To show the influence of each on later thinking, in particular:
             a) How the problems or inconsistencies in the views of each generated the differences in subsequent pre-Socratic thought.
             b) The development of logical consistency as the hallmark of knowledge.

WEEK 2: 1) To clearly state the differences between the Spartan and Athenian way of life, the effects of the Peloponnesian War on the Athenian, and the political, social and cultural climate during Socrates’s and Plato’s lives;
          2) To explain how and why Democritus attempted to reformulate the pluralism of Empedocles and Anaxagoras;
          3) To show the main similarity and difference between the views of Democritus and the Sophists.

WEEK 3: 1) To identify then key Socratic concepts and show how they are illustrated in Plato’s early dialogues;
          2) To explain Plato’s rationalism, and to identify its pre-Socratic features;
          3) To state the problems with Plato’s theory of knowledge.
WEEK 4:  
1) To explain Plato’s metaphysical theory in terms of his response to the pre-Socratic naturalists and his theory of knowledge; 
2) To show the interrelationship between Plato’s psychological, ethical and political theories, the effect of his theory of knowledge on this interrelationship and his views on art and religion. 
3) To explain the key differences between Aristotle’s and Plato’s thought in terms of Aristotle’s revision of Plato’s forms, his emphasis on biology as the leading model science, and his practical and empirical approach; 
4) To state the limitations of Aristotle’s logic.

WEEK 5:  
1) To show how Aristotle’s ethics are related to his general metaphysical position; 
2) To explain Aristotle’s distinction between cognitive and practical reason, his consequent distinction between intellectual and moral virtues, and the key concepts of his ethical theory: happiness, doctrine of the mean, etc.; 
3) To relate Aristotle’s political theory to his ethical theory in terms of his emphasis on purpose (form, end good); 
4) To explain the major features of Aristotle’s political theory, and the differences between Plato’s and Aristotle’s political thought. 
5) To compare and contrast Aristotle’s and Plato’s aesthetics.

WEEK 6:  
1) To explain the philosophy of the late classical period in terms of a) the rise of the Roman Empire: b) the legacy of Greek thought in the Roman world, in particular Epicureanism (Lucretius), Stoicism (Cicero, Epictetus, and Marcus Aurelius) and Skepticism (Sextus Empiricus and Carneades).

WEEK 7:  
1) To trace the history of philosophy from the pre-Socratics to Aristotle, showing the influences of each philosopher on subsequent thought.

WEEK 8:  
1) To explain the changes in thought in the period from Marcus Aurelius to 5th century AD in terms of (a) the history of the period, (b) the effects of Christianity, and (c) neoplatonism; 
2) To show the effect of the four heresies on the gradual emergence of orthodoxy and on the relation of faith to reason in Christianity; 
3) To contrast Greek and Christian views.

WEEK 9:  
1) To explain the key concepts of Augustine’s Christian philosophy; 
2) To explain the neoplatonic features of, and the effect of heretical thinking on
Augustine’s thought;

3) To evaluate Augustine’s attempt to reduce his various beliefs to systematic order.

WEEK 10: 1) To explain how Christianity survived after the collapse of the Roman empire, and why it played an increasing political role;
2) To account for the ideas, institutions and attitudes that emerged during the eight century interval between Augustine and Thomas;
3) To explain the problems that arose between John Scotus Erigena’s neoplatonic and the orthodox Christian views, and his attempt to reconcile the two.
4) To explain the controversy over universals and the resulting schools of thought: medieval realism, nominalism and the compromise between the two: the conceptualism of Abelard.
5) To explain the faith-reason controversy and the compromise it generated, e.g. Anselm’s proof for the existence of God.

WEEK 11: 1) To explain the basic concepts of Thomas’s metaphysics, psychology, ethics, and politics; and his method of argument;
2) To show the influence of Aristotle on Thomas’s thought.

WEEK 12: 1) To explain Bacon’s view of nature and utility of the sciences, his “experimental science”, and his conception of philosophy.
2) To explain how Dun Scotus’s thought differs from Thomas’s.

WEEK 13: 1) To show how William of Occam in his theory of knowledge developed those tendencies in Scotism that were deviations from Thomism.
2) To trace the history of philosophy from Augustine to William Occam.
3) To explain the controversy over will and intellect.

WEEK 14: 1) To trace the history of philosophy from classical to medieval times: to be able to identify the major thinkers of this period, to explain their different philosophical viewpoints, and to show how the thought of each was influenced by his predecessor(s) and the ideas, institutions and attitudes of his time.

GENERAL EDUCATION
General Education at New York City College of Technology, The City University of New York, provides
students with a well rounded knowledge base, an appreciation of diverse cultural and intellectual traditions, an interest in relating the past to the contemporary world, and the skills necessary to reflect upon and shape society. A general education provides the opportunity to explore knowledge from various disciplines and perspectives, and to develop students’ abilities to read, write and think critically, and to assess information from a variety of sources. Further, and perhaps most importantly, general education develops students’ intellectual and creative curiosity and commitment to lifelong learning.

GENERAL EDUCATION LEARNING OUTCOMES

Communication
Read and listen analytically, comprehending the meaning of texts, including identifying an argument’s major assumptions and evaluating its supporting evidence.

Write clearly and coherently in varied academic formats using standard English to critique others’ texts and to improve upon one’s own texts. Present a formal or an informal spoken presentation, speaking to persuade or to describe. Listening to detail by way of analyzing the meanings of texts.

Critical Thinking
Learning the language of logic, formally and informally, for reasoned argumentation. Critical thinking involves the interpretation and criticism of texts, often primary sources. Philosophical positions are evaluated from a variety of sources. Information is integrated into one’s own system of beliefs. The basic concepts of logic are identified and studied, i.e., truth and falsehood, the statement, the argument, premises and conclusion, deductive logic, validity, soundness, inductive logic, strength and cogency, identifying fallacies, translating natural language into symbolic form, testing for consistency and entailment, studying and applying the scientific method.

Information, Research and Computer skills
Information literacy begins with knowing when information is needed. How is the information acquired and then evaluated for its quality? Information literacy allows us to synthesize information from multiple, perhaps, conflicting sources. The importance of using information ethically and legally is stressed throughout.

Scientific and Mathematical Literacy
Understanding logical argumentation as the basis for an understanding of the scientific method; scientific literacy studies the history of the sciences, and recognizes the contribution of science to human progress. It studies the interrelationships among the sciences and between science and the language of mathematics. An understanding of basic statistical analysis, for example, is necessary for evaluating scientific data and interpreting scientific literature.

Humanistic and Social Inquiry
Humanistic inquiry studies and comes to respect the diversity of human experience while learning the interconnectedness of global and local concerns. The diversity of cultural traditions is stressed throughout together with an understanding of social and political institutions. Humanistic and social inquiry recognizes a variety of perspectives that emerge from new scholarship on gender, race, and class as well as from non-
western cultural traditions. The arts are stressed as a basic human activity. Art forms find their expressions culturally, politically, philosophically and ethically.

**ASSESSMENT OF GENERAL EDUCATION LEARNING OUTCOMES**

The methods for assessing general education objectives are generic but specificity may arise depending on which area of general education is being stressed.

Multiple choice quizzes are especially useful for assessing reading comprehension of basic content as well as attention to detail.

The written assignment is many and various depending on the purpose of the assignment. Assignments range from the low-stakes one-pager to the formal term paper.

In class, group work resulting in formal/informal oral presentations.

Short answer quizzes addressing basic reading comprehension.

Collaborative, in-class editing of written work.

**BIBLIOGRAPHY: THE HERITAGE OF ANCIENT PHILOSOPHY**

Compiled by: Dr. D. McKinney 1994
Revised by: Dr. D. McKinney 1997
Revised by: Dr. W. Brand 2001
Revised by: Dr. Hugh P. McDonald, 2004

**GENERAL:**


Burrow, J.A. *The Ages of Man, a Study in Medieval Writing and Thought*. NY: Oxford Univ. Press. 1986


**INDIVIDUAL PHILOSOPHERS:** In addition to those listed below, see The Library of Liberal Arts series of primary sources on Aquinas, Aristotle, Augustine, Bacon, Bonaventura, Burke, Dante, Lucretius, Machiavelli, Plato, and Xenophon (NY: MacMillan Publishing Co, LLA). and numerous collections of completed works.

**ARISTOTLE:**


**AQUINAS (ST. THOMAS AQUINAS):**


**AUGUSTINE:**


King, Peter, ed. *Augustine, The Teacher and Against the Academicians*. Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Co. 1994


**AVERROES:**

Davidson, Herbert A. *Alfarabi, Avicenna and Averroes, on Intellect. Their Cosmologies, Theories of the Active Intellect and Theories of Human Intellect*. NY: Oxford Univ. Press 1992
BONAVENTURE:

CICERO:

DUNS SCOTUS

EPICURUS:

MARCUS AURELIUS:

OCKHAM:

PLATO:


**PRE-SOCRATICS:**


**SOCRATES:**


**THUCYDIDES:**