

WILLIAM RAINEY HARPER COLLEGE
LIBERAL ARTS DIVISION
GENERAL COURSE OUTLINE

PHI Course Prefix	231 Course Number	History of Philosophy: Ancient and Medieval Course Title	3-0 (Lec-Lab)	3 Semester Hours
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COURSE DESCRIPTION

Surveys the major figures and schools in Western philosophical tradition from the pre-Socratic Greeks through the 14th century. Emphasis on interpreting philosophical reflection in light of the social, political, religious and cultural context from which it arises. IAI H4 901

TOPICAL OUTLINE

- I. Introduction
 - A. Philosophy and Culture: The Role of Philosophy
 - B. Philosophy as a Historical Process
 - 1. History as the appropriation and transcendence of the past
 - 2. The philosophy of the history of philosophy
 - C. The Problem of Historical Knowledge
 - 1. Subjective viewpoints and objective truth
 - 2. The role of historical interpretation
 - 3. The limitations of historical knowledge
 - 4. Towards a critical-historical method of interpreting the history of philosophy
 - D. The Sources of History of Philosophy
 - 1. Primary source texts
 - 2. Secondary source texts
- II. Early Greek Cosmology--The Pre-Socratic
 - A. General characteristics
 - B. Thales of Miletus
 - C. Anaximander
 - D. Anaximenes
 - E. The Pythagorean Brotherhood
 - F. Heraclitus
 - G. The Eleatics: Parmenides, Zeno, Xenophanes
 - H. Empedocles
 - I. Anaxagoras
 - J. Democritus
 - K. The significance of pre-Socratic philosophy
- III. Classical Hellenic Philosophy
 - A. General Characteristics
 - B. Socrates
 - C. Plato
 - D. Aristotle
 - E. The Contributions of Plato and Aristotle
- IV. Hellenistic Philosophy
 - A. General characteristics of the time
 - B. Epicureanism
 - C. Stoicism
 - D. Skepticism
- V. Jewish-Greek Religion and Philosophy
 - A. General characteristics
 - B. Gnosticism
 - C. Philo

- D. Plotinus and Neo-Platonism
- VI. The Greek-Christian Transition
 - A. General characteristics
 - B. The Patristics
 - C. The Apologists
 - D. St. Augustine
 - E. The Significance of the Augustinian Synthesis
- VII. The Development of Medieval Scholasticism
 - A. General Characteristics
 - B. John Scotus Erigena
 - C. Anselm of Canterbury
 - D. Peter Abelard
 - E. Anti-Scholastic Tendencies of the 12th Century
 - F. Arabian Philosophy and the Rediscovery of Aristotle's Writings
 - G. The 13th Century--the Culmination of Medieval Philosophy
 - 1. Albertus Magnus
 - 2. St. Thomas Aquinas
 - 3. Duns Scotus
 - 4. William of Occam
 - H. Later Scholasticism
- VIII. The Transition to Renaissance and Modern Philosophy

METHODS OF PRESENTATION

1. Lecture/discussion method
2. Films, AV units, visiting lecturer, when appropriate and available
3. Student presentation, when appropriate

STUDENT OUTCOMES: (*The student should . . .*)

Attitudes:

1. develop a deeper appreciation for history (presuming that the student has had other history courses)
2. develop an appreciation for the history of philosophical thinking.
3. see how ancient and medieval forms of thought have influenced contemporary thinking.
4. recognize cultural and masculine biases as they appear within the historical study of philosophy.

Skills:

1. understand the historical progression of philosophical thought, i.e., a student should be able to see how later philosophers build on the ideas of earlier philosophers.
2. make connections between ancient and medieval thinking, and contemporary issues.
3. be able to recognize the views of the ancient and medieval philosophers considered within the course.

Content:

1. know the thought of the following: some of the pre-Socratics, Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, and medieval philosophers such as Aquinas, Augustine, etc. (Much of this is at the instructor's discretion)
2. know the social, political, religious, and cultural contexts in which the selected philosophers live.
3. know the kinds of philosophical thinking in which the selected philosophers engaged.
4. understand the strengths and weaknesses of the various philosophical positions.
5. know the positions of major systematic thinkers on metaphysics, epistemology, ethics, and political philosophy.

METHODS OF EVALUATION

1. Written examinations, primarily interpretive and critical essay
2. Short term papers on approved topics
3. Class participation

TEXTBOOKS/INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS

Stumpf-Fieser, *Socrates to Sartre and Beyond*, 8th Edition, McGraw Hill, 2007.

Plato, *The Republic*

Rosen, Stanley, *The Examined Life: Readings from Western Philosophy from Plato to Kant*, Random House, 2000.

PREPARED BY: Colleen Burns

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