

PHIL 260/2 A
Before and After Socrates
Fall 2006

General Information

Location: FG-B040

Days: M-W

Hours: 10:15-11:30

Instructor: Andrea Falcon

Office Hours: after class or by appointment

Address: # 404, PR Building, 2100 Mackay Street, SWG Campus

telephone: (514) 848-2424 ext. 2516

email: afalcon@alcor.concordia.ca

webpage: www.andreafalcon.net

Course Description

This course is an introduction to ancient philosophy from the beginning to Plato. We shall try to understand what ancient philosophy was before and after Socrates, with a focus on the complexity of the so-called Socratic problem. We shall read Plato, *Apology*, *Crito*, *Phaedo*, *Symposium*; Aristophanes, *Clouds*; Xenophon, *Memoirs of Socrates*; *Symposium*.

Course Materials

Required:

A Presocratic Reader. Selected Fragments and Testimonia, edited with Introduction by Patricia Curd; translated by Richard D. McKirahan Jr. (Hackett 1996).

Aristophanes, *Clouds*. Translated with notes by Peter Meineck; Introduction by Ian C. Storey (Hackett 2000).

Plato, *Five Dialogues (Euthyphro, Apology, Crito, Meno, Phaedo)*, translated by G.M.A. Grube (Hackett 2002).

Plato, *Symposium*, translated by Paul Woodruff and Alexander Nehamas (Hackett 1989).

Xenophon, *Conversations of Socrates*, translated by Hugh Tredennick (Penguin 1990).

Optional:

Thomas C. Brickhouse and Nicholas D. Smith, *The Trial and Execution of Socrates. Sources and Controversies* (Oxford University Press 2002) -- on reserve in the library.

Tentative Schedule

First day of Class (September 6): *Introduction*

Weeks 2 and 3: *Philosophy before Socrates*. Philosophy emerged out of the need to have a certain kind of answer to certain questions; for instance question as to the origin of the world as we know it. From the very beginning, philosophers were extraordinarily curious and totally engaged investigators whose ultimate concern was to arrive at a coherent and comprehensive interpretation of the world we live in.

Week 2: Material monism (Thales and Diogenes of Apollonia)

Required Reading: *A Presocratic Reader. Selected Fragments and Testimonia.*

Week 3: Material pluralism (Empedocles and Anaxagoras, Atomism)

Required Reading: *A Presocratic Reader. Selected Fragments and Testimonia.*

Weeks 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10: *The Socratic Enigma.* Socrates is the most important yet enigmatic philosophers of all times; his fame endured for centuries despite the fact that he never actually wrote anything. We have three major extant sources of information about Socrates: Aristophanes, Plato, and Xenophon.

Week 4: Socrates in the clouds

Required Reading: Aristophanes, *Clouds*, translated with notes by Peter Meineck; Introduction by Ian C. Storey

Week 5: Socrates at a dinner-party

Required Reading: Plato, *Symposium*, translated by Paul Woodruff and Alexander Nehamas (Hackett 1989).

Weeks 6-7: Socrates in court

Required Reading: *Apology* in Plato, *Five Dialogues (Euthyphro, Apology, Crito, Meno, Phaedo)*, translated by G.M.A. Grube (Hackett 2002).

Week 8: Socrates in jail

Required Reading: Plato, *Crito* in Plato, *Five Dialogues (Euthyphro, Apology, Crito, Meno, Phaedo)*, translated by G.M.A. Grube (Hackett 2002).

Week 9: The last hours of Socrates

Required Reading: Plato, *Phaedo* in Plato, *Five Dialogues (Euthyphro, Apology, Crito, Meno, Phaedo)*, translated by G.M.A. Grube (Hackett 2002).

Week 10: More on Socrates in court

Required Reading: Xenophon, *Socrates' Defense* in *Conversations of Socrates*, translated by Hugh Tredennick (Penguin 1990).

Weeks 11, 12 and 13: *Philosophy after Socrates.* Socrates was arguably the most influential philosopher of antiquity. He inspired a number of philosophical positions, each claiming to expound the authentic version of his teaching. We often use the label "Minor Socratics" ("Demi-Socratiques") to refer to a heterogeneous group of philosophers who considered themselves followers of Socrates.

Week 11: Antisthenes as a Socratic Philosopher

Required Reading: *The Dinner Party* in *Conversations of Socrates*, translated by Hugh Tredennick (Penguin 1990).

Week 12 Aristippus as a Socratic philosopher

Required Reading: *Memoirs of Socrates* 2.1 in Xenophon, *Conversations of Socrates*, translated by Hugh Tredennick (Penguin 1990).

Week 13 Socrates gone mad: Diogenes the Dog

Required Reading: the relevant texts will be provided in class.

Last Day of Class (December 4): *Review*

NB *This schedule may be subject to change. All changes will be made in class with ample time for adjustments.*

Assignments and Grading

The final grade for the course is determined by 2 short papers (3 pages) and a final exam, each counting 1/3 of the final grade.

Each short paper will be an exercise in *close* textual reading. You will be asked to identify the main topic of a given passage and explain in your own words any claims expressed in the passage as clear as possible. The aim is for you to show that you have understood the material discussed in class and that you are able to think critically about it.

The final exam will be in-class and comprehensive. It will be designed to test the extent to which you have absorbed the basic points of the readings that we discuss in class. All three of these assignments must be completed in order to pass the class. *Participation can raise the grade.*

First Short Paper: due in class on October 11

Second Short Paper: due in class on November 8

Final Exam: to be scheduled by the university

Please note that extensions on assignments are not permitted, except in case of illness or due to serious extenuating circumstance. In the event of illness or serious extenuating circumstance, you must inform the instructor before the due date, and documentary evidence of the illness or serious extenuating circumstance must be provided to the instructor. There will be no exceptions to this rule. Please do not ask for one.

If there are students in this course who, because of a disability, may have a need for special academic accommodations, please come and discuss this with me or contact Disability Services.

Course policies

Regular attendance is required.

Papers must be handed in on time. Late papers will be downgraded in proportion to their lateness.

Be careful to cite all sources used. Plagiarism is a serious violation of academic integrity, and will result in a failing grade in the course.

Participation is expected and your final grade will benefit from the extent to which this expectation is fulfilled.

Your rights

You have the right to hear and to understand all of the material. If there is anything unclear, you have the right to ask about it. If you do not want to ask during class, you have the right to visit your instructor during office hours. If you cannot make office hours, you have the right to schedule an appointment. You have the right to have your papers returned promptly.

Your obligations

If you make an appointment and cannot meet it, you should notify the instructor. You are obligated to attend all the lectures. You are obligated to allow others to hear and understand the lectures. You should, therefore, refrain from chatting, reading newspapers or in any way disturbing others during lecture.

Additional suggested readings (on reserve in Webster Library)

M. Frede, "The Philosopher," in G.E.R. Lloyd and J. Brunschwig (eds.) *Greek Thought. A Guide to Classical Knowledge* (Harvard University Press 2000): 2-19.

G. Vlastos, "Socratic Piety," in G. Vlastos *Socrates: Ironist and Moral Philosopher* (Cambridge University Press 1992): 157-178.

G. Vlastos, "Socrates' Rejection of Retaliation," in G. Vlastos, *Socrates: Ironist and Moral Philosopher* (Cambridge University Press 1992): 179-199.

G. Vlastos, "Happiness and Virtue in Socrates, Moral Theory," in G. Vlastos *Socrates: Ironist and Moral Philosopher* (Cambridge University Press 1992): 200-232.

G. W. Most, "A Cock for Asclepius", *Classical Quarterly* 43 (1993): 96-111.

L.-A. Dorion, "Xenophon's Socrates," in S. Ahbel-Rappe and R. Kamtekar (eds.), *A Companion to Socrates* (Blackwell Publishing 2005): 93:109.