
HISTORY OF PHILOSOPHY I: FROM ANCIENT TO MEDIEVAL in Fall 2020 (PL1100)

Course Code	PL1100	Professor(s)	Jula Wildberger
Prerequisites	None	Office Number	Off campus
Class Schedule	W: 14:30-17:55 in Q-A101 W: 14:30-17:55 in RMOTE-00	Office Hours	https://aup.libcal.com/appointments/julawildberger
Credits	4	Email	jwildberger@aup.edu
Semester	Fall 2020	Office Tel. Ext.	01 40 62 06 81

Course Description

We all know what philosophy is. Or do we? In this course you can explore the first two millennia of a project that began 2600 years ago in Miletus, a Greek city state at the west coast of what is now Turkey: Thales, an astronomer and engineer of Middle Eastern origin, presented a new type of theory about what there is and why.

You will observe how methods, concepts, and forms of what we now call “philosophy” developed within their respective socio-political and cultural contexts, how the project spread with speakers of Greek around the Mediterranean, passed into different languages (Latin, Aramaic = Syrian, Arabic, the European vernaculars) and managed to survive, even thrive on, the rise of the new monotheistic religions.

You will not only learn how philosophy began and make up your own mind about what it actually is; this process will also be an opportunity for you to practice philosophy yourself. You will begin to use words with greater care and not take their meaning for granted. You will start defining concepts, learn how terminologies develop within systems of ideas, and begin to recognize the fabric of arguments. You will encounter various genres of philosophical discourse, acquire a set of key terms that have shaped the debate for the centuries to come, and weigh answers to questions humans cannot help but ask again and again until today: What is there, and where did it come from? How do we know? Who are we? Is there for us such a thing as the good life and happiness? How can we get there? What is most valuable for a human being? Are we free to act as we like? When does a person do wrong, and what are (or should be) the consequences of such wrongdoing? Is there a superior being, God? What is that being like, and can we prove that being's existence? What if my reasoning tells me one thing, and my faith something different?

The course will follow the history of philosophy and its changing themes. We begin with issues of knowledge and explanation, also at the meta-level of our own historical perspective as

modern readers looking back over a span of so many centuries: How can we know about the thought of the earliest philosophers? How reliable are our sources? Can we really get into the heads of people who lived in such a different environment, so long ago? What about our expectations and modern-day experience? What about the academic and popular knowledge cultures that have shaped our take on the world? In which sense can we call that which these early thinkers did call “philosophy”? What is a “philosophical” explanation or inquiry, and what “philosophy”?

Such questions will soon blend with a classification of the objects of knowledge, i.e. the things that “are” (really or not so really), questions that fascinated the great Presocratics of the second generation (Heraclitus, Parmenides, Democritus).

We will look at the innovative and radical technologies developed in the 5th cent. BCE by Socrates and the Sophists for identifying or creating realities with words, and contrast the metaphysics-cum-epistemology of the two most famous Socratics: Plato and Aristotle.

Well prepared with a basic set of concepts such as “nature,” “form,” or “cause,” we can then turn to the ancestors of our modern ethical theories: Aristotle’s teleology and virtue ethics; Epicurean hedonism (the precursor of modern utilitarianism); Cynic ethics of freedom that Nietzsche liked a lot; the ideals of rationality, sociability, and integration promoted by the Stoics, who laid the ground for modern theories of natural law, human dignity and human rights, and and from whom Kant learned deontology and cosmopolitanism.

With the (Neo-)Platonism of Plotinus and its reception by Augustine we approach the Middle Ages and encounter a model of the world which combined main strands of thought from classical antiquity and transformed them into a paradigm for Christian, Jewish, and Muslim thinkers wishing to apply philosophy to their faith as well. We will see this in some detail when we study Abelard’s (rather Stoic) definition of sin and Thomas Aquinas’ reflections on where exactly to locate the badness of an action. Medieval attempts to prove the existence of God, such as Avicenna’s proof from the contingency of everything but God and Anselm of Canterbury’s famous “Ontological Argument” will constitute the end point of our tour and bring us back to the question we started with: what philosophy is and how it differs from and coexists with other forms of intellectual and spiritual practice.

For this ambitious project, we will need your active participation. How much the whole group and you personally can achieve depends on your commitment to take responsibility for our success. My job as your teacher is to select the material for study, to formulate the questions we are going to tackle so that you can answer them in the weekly quizzes, and to provide, as best as I can, constructive feedback and the explanations that you seek from me. Not everything you need to know can be treated in class. Lectures will be rare and short. There will be much group work and in-class discussion, to practice and develop what you have prepared. On the basis of your independent study at home, we will cooperate both online, on our Blackboard site, and face to face in class to improve your knowledge, understanding and skills. You will need to study the textbook readings carefully, look up words, names, places, ask for the information could not find, engage fully in the exercises and discussions. If you do so, you will give me chance to support you in the big and fascinating task of this course: teaching yourself

philosophy.

The course is 1000-level, which means that no prior knowledge is required and that I presuppose that you may still have to get to know how things work in an academic context. It does not mean that *the* course is easy. Getting a good, even excellent grade is absolutely doable for any student who takes this course, but *only* if you are willing to complete the hard, but hopefully rewarding, work this requires. If you are a more advanced philosophy student, do not underestimate the challenge. Ancient and medieval philosophy requires skills you probably do not yet have. In my experience, sometimes the more advanced students find it harder to adapt to the methodological rigor of this course at the beginning because maybe they have become used to working in a different manner. Then, please, bear with me; it may be worth your while.

Course Learning Outcomes

Philosophical reading - ability to read with care philosophical texts, especially slow and careful reading, paying attention to every single word; analysis of arguments and concepts used in texts.

Philosophical analysis - analysis of concepts and their discursive organizations, especially understanding how philosophical concepts like, e.g., nature, principle, or form change meaning if used in different theories by different thinkers and how, in turn, thinkers use such established concepts for building their own theories.

Reflective orientation - use of conceptual analysis to frame issues: how philosophers use concepts with which they formulate their overall world view and system of thought in order to answer specific questions, e.g. what the origin of the word is, what god is like, or what the good life is. Reflection on what philosophy might be and what it might achieve.

Historical understanding (i) - knowledge of relation between philosophy and history. Familiarity with the complex problems of studying a philosopher from a historical point of view; how history shapes ideas and that we need to know their socio-cultural context if we really want to understand philosophers.

Historical understanding (ii): Basic factual knowledge about ancient and medieval philosophers and the history of ideas during these periods.

Historical understanding (iii): Acquaintance with key issues and questions ancient and medieval thinkers were reacting to.

Methods of interdisciplinarity - ability and knowledge to work across disciplinary borders: acquire a sense to which DEGREE the study of our ancient and medieval philosophers depends on the contributions of other disciplines. Our focus will be on the discipline of classical philology (source problems; languages; genres).

Oral expression and clarity - ability to speak with high consistency and lucidity.

Written expression: Learn how to watch your words; take responsibility of the meaning of what you say; use a precise and terminologically clear analytic idiom; practice using the voice of an academic expert; give your papers a professional shape (MLA style); assure the correctness of information you present by means of thorough research and adequate documentation

of sources.

Introduction to university study and to independent, responsible work in a professional context.
Local and Global Perspectives: Students will enhance their intercultural understanding of languages, cultures, and histories of local societies and the global issues to which these relate. (CCI LO1)

Aesthetic Inquiry and Creative Expression: Students will engage with artistic or creative objects (e.g., visual art, theatrical works, film) in different media and from a range of cultural traditions. (CCI LO2)

Exploring and Engaging Difference: Students will think critically about cultural and social difference; they will identify and understand power structures that determine hierarchies and inequalities that can relate to race, ethnicity, gender, nationhood, religion, or class. (CCI LO3)

General Education

The general education program at AUP consists of four requirements: Speaking the World, Modeling the World, Mapping the World, and Comparing Worlds Past and Present. This course can be used to fulfill the Comparing the Worlds Past and Present requirement and as such has the following learning outcomes:

- Acquisition of an historical perspective by following the development of philosophy over a period of more than 2000 years.
- Cross-cultural comparison of ways to do philosophy (in particular Greek – Roman, but also Christian – Muslim – Jewish).
- Observing how a philosophical idea, or any idea that people have about whatever, arises from and is shaped by a social, economic, political and cultural context.

The course also fulfills the Integrative Inquiry requirement of the Global Liberal Arts Core Curriculum. It contributes to the following learning outcomes:

- Local and Global Perspectives: Students will enhance their intercultural understanding of languages, cultures, and histories of local societies and the global issues to which these relate.
- Aesthetic Inquiry and Creative Expression: Students will engage with artistic or creative objects (e.g., visual art, theatrical works, film) in different media and from a range of cultural traditions.
- Exploring and Engaging Difference: Students will think critically about cultural and social difference; they will identify and understand power structures that determine hierarchies and inequalities that can relate to race, ethnicity, gender, nationhood, religion, or class.

Course Outline

Note that this schedule may be adapted during the semester. No changes will be made without your, i.e. the class's, consent.

The readings must be completed before you come to the class in question. Extra readings beyond the textbook will be made available on Blackboard in the content area "Class Readings."

Bring all texts to our meetings, together with your detailed reading notes.

The oral exams will test your ability to give a thoughtful and well-informed answer to the reflection questions raised in the preceding weeks and whether you know the quiz facts indicated below after the reflection questions.

Week 1 (class of 23 Sep): The Presocratics (I)

Prescribed readings: Adamson I 1, 2, 3, 4, 9, 10, from ch. 33 pp. 236-238 (the explanation of Aristotle's four 'causes'); Terence Irwine and Aristotle on phusiologoi; the Anaximander fragment; Plutarch on Anaximenes (DK 13 B 1)

Questions: (a) What distinguishes a thinker like Thales from previous and contemporary wise people or intellectuals? Why do we call him a "philosopher"? (b) How do we know about Thales' ideas at all? How reliable are our sources of information and which reasons may have led to misrepresentations of Thales' life and philosophy? (c) What is an arche or "principle"? (d) Does one need a special language to do philosophy? How would such a language differ from ordinary speech?

Quiz facts: Miletus; 585 BCE (total eclipse said to have been predicted by Thales); Thales, Anaximander, Anaximenes, Xenophanes, Pythagoras, Anaxagoras, and Empedocles: core ideas.

Week 2 (class of 30 Sep): The Presocratics (II): Parmenides, Heraclitus, Democritus, and the Birth of Metaphysics

Prescribed readings: Adamson I 5, 6, 7, 8; excerpts from Parmenides, Heraclitus, and Democritus

Questions: If we conceive of principles as cosmological rather than cosmogonic, we arrive at a model that divides the world into surface phenomena and some persistent entities "underneath." This then raises the question of what there really is and, related to this, the

question of change, what change may be and how it can occur at all. How do our three philosophers – Parmenides, Heraclitus, and Democritus – address such issues?

Quiz facts: Names and core ideas of Parmenides, Heraclitus, Democritus. Rough relative and absolute dates (which century) of all Presocratics studied so far. The Presocratics Overview (in Class Readings and in Quiz Materials) may help with learning.

Week 3 (class of 7 Oct): Socrates & the Sophists

*****First oral exam*****

Read for this class: Adamson I 12, 13, 14, 17, 19, 41; excerpts from Plato's *Apology*, *Symposium*, and *Laches*

Questions: (a) What is a Sophist, and how do Sophists (with uppercase S) differ (if at all) from the Presocratics, Socrates, and what we today call a sophist? (b) How does Protagoras' relativism differ from Democritus' skepticism about epiphenomena? (c) What was Socrates' great project? Why did he think that an unexamined life is not worth living? What is such an examination (elenchus)? What is an aporia? (d) Socrates was an intellectualist. What does this mean?

Quiz facts: Socrates and the Sophists Protagoras, Prodicus and Gorgias (the three most interesting from a philosophical point of view). You should also be able to explain in a few words who these men were. Also remember one date: 399 (death of Socrates).

Week 4 (class of 14 Oct): Plato: Dialectic and the Cave

*****Assignment 1 due*****

Read for this class: Adamson I 15, 16, 21, 22, 26, 27, 28; excerpt from the *Theaetetus*; Plato's description of the Cave; Plato. *Republic*, Book 2, 369c-374e: City of Pigs, Kallipolis, why there needs to be a class of guardians (start reading from: "Come then," I said, "and let's make a city from the beginning ...", p. 60 at the bottom); excerpts from Plato's criticism of art at the beginning of book 10 of the *Republic*

Questions: (a) How does Platonic dialectic differ from Socratic elenchus? (b) What is Plato's tripartite model of the soul and what its implications for Plato's ethics, politics, and epistemology? (c) What happens inside and outside Plato's Cave, and what does this allegory tell us? (d) What is the role of the Forms (or Ideas) in Plato's philosophy?

Quiz facts: Name of Plato's "school" (Academy) and Plato's dates (428-347 BCE).

Explore the content area “Art of Argument” on Blackboard.

Week 5 (class of 21 Oct): Ways of Knowing: Plato’s Forms vs. Aristotle’s Nous & Empeiria

Read for this class: Adamson I 18, 20, 23, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33; excerpt from Aristotle’s Poetics and Metaphysics A.1; videos on Plato’s Forms (You can postpone reading Metaphysics A.1 if you’re lacking time.)

Questions: (a) How do we know, according to Plato’s theory of Forms? (b) What are the Platonic Forms? (c) How does Aristotle’s epistemology differ from Plato’s? Why does he introduce two different types of knowing: empeiria (experience) and nous (intellection)? (c) What is the best type of knowledge according to Aristotle, and why?

Quiz facts: Aristotle’s four causes & the following terms of Aristotle’s philosophy: category; substance; essence; hylomorphism; actuality (energeia = literally: “being-at-work”) vs. potentiality; particular (kat’ hekaston) vs. universal (katholou).

Week 6 (class of 28 Oct): Aristotle on the Best We Can Get

*****Second oral exam;** not yet included: actuality (energeia = literally: “being-at-work”) vs. potentiality; particular (kat’ hekaston) vs. universal (katholou).*******

Read for this class: Adamson I 34, 35, 37, 38, 39 & excerpts from the Nicomachean Ethics and Metaphysics Lambda

Questions: (a) What is eudaimonia? How might we call that thing in English? What is a “eudaemonistic” theory of ethics? Which other types of ethics could there be? (b) What is the good of human beings according to Aristotle? What is the best thing in the world according to Aristotle? (c) Which type of life does he regard as the best for us? Is that a realistic option? (d) Who or what is the unmoved mover? (e) What is “teleology” and what has it to do with Aristotle’s thought?

Quiz facts: name of the school of thought that continued Aristotle’s work (“Peripatetics”) and Aristotle’s dates (384-322 BCE).

Week 7 (class of 4 Nov): Epicureanism and Skepticism

Read for this class: Adamson II 1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 15, 16; Epicurus, Letter to Menoeceus;

Lucretius, *De rerum natura*, proem of book 2

Questions: (a) What are the main periods of ancient and medieval philosophy? Where are we now and what is still to come? (The overview timeline given in the Class Readings for this week may help with this.) (b) What is the good of a human being according to the Epicureans? (c) Aristotle identified the contemplative life as the best and most divine. Why would an Epicurean practice philosophy? (d) How do the Epicureans deal with such bothersome things like desires, fears, pain, death, and bad luck in general?

Week 8 (class of 18 Nov): Cynics and Stoics

*****Third oral exam*****

Read for this class: Adamson II 2, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14; excerpts from Diogenes Laertius, *Lives of Eminent Philosophers*, Book 6 (on Crates and Hipparchia) and Book 7 (Stoic definitions of the end); Arrian, *Discourses of Epictetus* 1.6 “On Providence”

Questions: (a) What would be a good life according to a Stoic? (b) What is “providence” and how does this idea fit into Stoicism? (b) How would you recognize a Cynic? What might a modern-day Cynic be like? How does a Cynic (uppercase C) differ from a cynic, a Skeptic (or skeptic), a Stoic, and an Epicurean? (c) Suppose among your friends there were an Epicurean, a Skeptic, a Cynic, and a Stoic. How would each of them advise you if you were confronted with a situation such as these here: you do not know how to pay back your student loan; you have failed an important exam; you just graduated with the best GPA of your class and are being offered your dream job; you have just lost your job; your little son is going to die from an extremely painful form of cancer; your home country H has just declared war on country E and you are being drafted to serve as a soldier in that war; ... (The point is that you should learn to make sense, and maybe even good use, of the different theories by applying them to issues that you regard as important. So don't hesitate to suggest and think through other scenarios yourself. Share your thoughts with us on Blackboard and in class.)

Week 9 (class of 25 Nov): Plotinus and Augustine

*****Assignment 2 due*****

Read for this class: Adamson II 21, 29, 30, 31, 32, 47, p. 348-9, 50
(For the group work exercise we'll use an excerpt from Plotinus' *Enneads* and a piece of Augustine's *Confessions*.)

Questions: (a) What is Neoplatonism and how does that philosophical system differ from Plato's thought? (b) Which elements of Stoicism and Aristotelianism does it integrate? (c) How

does Augustine build on Plotinus and, in general, what could the attraction of Neoplatonism be for a monotheistic thinker?

Quiz facts (for later make-up exams): dates of Plotinus (c. 205-270) and Augustine (354-430). Where did they study? In which countries did they live? Which languages did they speak and write in?

Week 10 (class of 2 Dec): Error, Sin, and Guilt: Pierre Abelard on Sin and Thomas Aquinas on Human Action

Read for this class: Pierre Abelard on Sin; excerpt from Thomas Aquinas. Summa Theologiae on good and bad action and human responsibility.

Prescribed listening: Peter Adamson's account of Heloise and Abelard:
<https://historyofphilosophy.net/heloise-abelard>

Also watch the video with an introduction to medieval philosophy (link to be provided once it's ready).

Questions: (a) What is a sin according to Abelard, what constitutes it, and why and in which sense is it bad? (b) How does Abelard differentiate sin from other types of action or mental processes? (c) How is sin connected, or not connected, to punishment, in his view? (d) What makes an action good or bad according to the ancient philosophers you have studied so far? Are their criteria different from those by which Abelard and Aquinas assess an action? (e) How does Aquinas use the sophisticated methods of High Scholasticism to further our understanding of human responsibility and action?

Optional: to make up for missed assignments or gain extra points: (f) Which theoretical problems about human agency arise for Christian philosophers from their theological views about God, e.g. concerning predestination or the omnipotence and omniscience of God? (You can give a better answer if you also read Adamson II.49 and 53)

Week 11 (class of 9 Dec): Faith and Reason -- or Faith vs. Reason?

Prescribed reading: Anthony Kenny. Excerpts from chapter 9 ("God"). E-book version accessible, e.g. here: <https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/aup/detail.action?docID=422634>. Please read from the beginning until & including "Anselm's Proof of God" (278-295) and "Aquinas' Proofs of God's Existence" (302-304)

IEP, article "Faith and Reason," sections 1-4 (feel free to read on, but it is not obligatory):
<http://www.iep.utm.edu/faith-re/>

Prescribed listening:

(i) A discussion of Avicenna on BBC4 In Our Time: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b00855lt>
(also available here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7rDWNlrAzFc>)

(ii) An interview about Anselm's approach to philosophy: <https://historyofphilosophy.net/anselm-sweeney>

(iii) Peter Adamson on Thomas Aquinas: <https://historyofphilosophy.net/aquinas>

Questions for our discussion in class (no questionnaire!!): (a) How do Avicenna and Anselm prove the existence of God? Do their arguments work? What would Nicholas say? (b) What is the function of philosophy within the framework of medieval monotheistic thought? What can philosophy teach us about God, if at all? Can philosophy help us to be good Jews, Christians, or Muslims, or at least help a believer to be a better person? Should an adherent of one of these monotheistic religions practice philosophy or rather not? Are there kinds of philosophy that a monotheist of this kind should, or must, reject? (c) What if philosophy leads to thoughts incompatible with what a believer regards as the truth revealed by scripture, if reason contradicts faith?

There is no questionnaire for week 11. Instead you can do an OPTIONAL practice final after the class, which will count the equivalent of one first + one second questionnaire (or blog post). For this exercise, you'll analyze, contextualize, and critique a medieval text from Nicolas of Kues and submit it to the [assignment tool on Blackboard](#). If you do it right after the class, I'll try my very best to provide you with timely feedback so that you can use it for the final.

Link to the practice text:

https://ac.aup.edu/~jwildberger/PL1100HistoryPhilosophyI_AncientMedieval/StudentReportWeb/TextForOptional_FinalExamPractice.pdf

22 December 2020: Last day on which written coursework is accepted

Textbooks

Title	Author	Publisher	ISBN	Required
Classical Philosophy: A history of philosophy without any gaps, Volume 1	Peter Adamson	Oxford University Press	9780198767039	Yes
Philosophy in the Hellenistic and Roman Worlds: A	Peter Adamson	Oxford University Press	9780198818601	Yes

Attendance Policy

All assignments must be completed by the due date/time. Belated assignments, whether blog posts or papers, receive a fail grade. If you think you have good reasons, you can ask for an extension BEFORE the due date.

The last day on which written work (e.g. rewrites) will be accepted is the day of the final exam, Wednesday 18 December 2019.

Punctual and regular attendance of all classes is obligatory and counts toward the continuous contribution grade.

In case of absence for which you think you have a valid excuse:

- Please notify me immediately, ideally before the class in question.
- Absence because of health issues: for one week's absence, just notify me. If you have already missed more than two class sessions, I need a doctor's note or equivalent.
- Absence because of a study trip: automatically excused. I get a notification, but it would be nice if you could remind me, just to make sure.
- Absence for other reasons: please present your case, so that we can discuss it and see what can be done about it.

Please keep in mind that many absences may affect your grade even if they are excused.

Students studying at The American University of Paris are STILL EXPECTED TO ATTEND ALL scheduled classes. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, students will have the option of attending classes remotely when special circumstances apply. For example when students are placed under quarantine by the French authorities or by their doctor, or when students present symptoms of Covid-19 and are directed, by their doctor or the AUP Health Office, to remain home. It is still the student's responsibility to be aware of any specific attendance policy that their professor might have set in the course syllabus. In particular, Students attending remotely

from distant Time Zones should check with their professors about the specific attendance policy for remote learners.

Since I myself am teaching remotely, you are free to attend class from home. Some students prefer to be in a classroom, though, and if you're one of them, there is a classroom reserved for us in which you can attend the whole-class meetings, and, as far as this is possible your study group's meeting with each other and with me.

For the first class, on 23 Sep, we will spend all the assigned time together. Each of you needs to use their own device for that session because we'll do online exercises and practice using teams.

Special health and safety measures during the reign of COVID-19:

- Please, for everyone's safety you must wash your hands well before you enter the classroom. You are required to wear a mask during all face-to-face classroom time or for individual meetings with me or other students. The mask must cover your nose and mouth at all times. No exceptions!
- Unfortunately, no food or drink will be allowed inside the classroom.
- If you feel ill, **DO NOT COME TO CLASS**. If you are well enough, you can join us online instead. If you experience ANY symptoms consistent with COVID-19 (fever, dry cough, aches and pains, respiratory difficulty), please seek medical help immediately. Make sure to keep me informed, and get a note from the doctor if you have to be absent from class.

Grading Policy

In-class participation and asynchronous group work (15% of the grade).

Criteria:

Physical presence: D (Everyone may have a bad day, and then it's good if you manage to come at least and stay in touch. On the long run, it would be unfair to your classmates – but also not nice for you yourself – if you planned on systematically coming to class but pretending not to be there.)

You get involved but aren't really prepared and come without the necessary materials, so that your contributions are not very helpful to the class and your team. Or: You come more or less prepared, appear to be listening attentively, answer if asked directly, but do not get involved –

just as if you weren't really part of the team: C

You have done some preparation and are somewhat active, but your contributions are sporadic or disconnected. You may speak a lot but not always to the point; you engage in private dialogues with the teacher and do not care so much about supporting your peers and furthering our shared project: B

You contribute regularly both during group work and discussions with the whole class. Your contributions are constructive, relevant, and connected. You do not only speak but also listen carefully to what the others have to say, so that you have a sense of what is going on in class, what the group needs, which questions are on the table. You undertake the tasks assigned to you conscientiously, whether as leader of a group or as a member of the team, and your presence benefits your peers because you come prepared, with notes, the texts, some ideas. So you may spark a debate occasionally with an interesting question, but you always keep in mind that this course is a team project and that if it is to succeed, we all must make sure that we do not forget our shared goal of helping everyone to get to know and make more sense of the philosophers and methods we study: A

Week 1-5: Weekly blog posts (10 + 20 % of the grade):

First blog post (10%): I cannot guarantee that I will be able to take note of your post in preparation for the class session to come if your post arrives later than Tue 18:00. However, you can still submit first posts until directly **before the class session of that week**, i.e. until Wed 13:30. Later first posts cannot be accepted and will not count for your grade. For the first post you can write whatever you like, as long as it is somehow connected to the readings and the questions posed for that week. At least one paragraph of your own making (not just something quoted from somewhere) is required, but you are free to post more. If you complete all posts, irrespective of what exactly you write, your grade for this task will be an A. For each missing blog post, one grade notch will be detracted. Zero blog posts earn you the grade F. If you are a particularly diligent poster, your excellence may be weighed in your favor if there is an issue with your other coursework or if you need a little bit of extra bonus to make it to a higher grade.

Second blog post (20%): Due by **Thursday 18:00 after the class session of that week**. This post will be graded and consists of two parts: (a) write at least one paragraph commenting on your own first post; (b) write at least one more paragraph commenting on the post of another student in the class. I will go through your posts at the end of the week and add further comments and clarifications, or answer any questions you pose to me in your blogs. Criteria:

1. The post answers (one) of the questions posed or, if it is a comment to another student's post, is relevant to the post it comments on in such a way that one can see you have read the post carefully, tried to understand what your classmate is saying and engage with his or her ideas.
2. The answer demonstrates your familiarity with the prescribed readings and the concepts

discussed there and in class. This doesn't mean that you must have understood everything. Usually, you won't. It's through our online and in-class discussions that we work to help you understand better. Still, you can imagine that your post will be very different if you have invested thought and energy to really get something out of the readings and the class (in comparison, say, to a post in which someone just blabs verbiage because they haven't done any readings and didn't pay attention to the class discussion).

3. You try to make your writing conceptually consistent, and you support your claims with evidence and arguments.
4. You try to write in such a way that others can get your meaning. This also means trying to write in an analytic style that affects the highest possible degree of clarity and precision. This includes an effort to use the right terms, being wary of empty clichés used in everyday conversation (e.g.: “higher level of consciousness,” “deep,” “it is logical”) and avoiding unnecessary ornamentation that confuses your point (especially metaphors and always using different words when you're talking about the same thing). The general rule is that you watch your words carefully. Don't worry that you might sound boring. There is nothing more beautiful and thrilling than a clear thought precisely expressed.
5. You have proofread your post thoroughly to remove grammar and spelling mistakes.
6. When some content is not your own intellectual achievement and you adduce a source, you document it properly (MLA style citations in the text itself and works cited at the end; quote the textbooks only in-text by name of author and page number). When you cite literally, you indicate this by quotation marks. Should you fail to do these two things, the result is plagiarism, irrespective of whether you intended to cheat or not, and will be treated as such.

If you missed the first blog post, you can still earn your grade at least for the second one. Then make (a) one new post in which you yourself answer one of the questions for that week and (b) the comment post as usual.

If you cannot attend a class session, this does not automatically mean that you are exempt from the blog postings. ***Please get in touch and consult me what to do.*** As a rule, if you are ill, you should take care of your health first of all, but sometimes it might be good to stay in touch at least though the blog.

If you are on a study trip, your absence from class is excused but not automatically your 'absence' from that week's blog. Unless I give you explicit exemption, you would be required to post as usual. It depends on the length and the dates of that trip, and I am happy to hear your case so that we can find a reasonable solution.

Week 6 until end of class: Two individual weekly questionnaires with your answers to the key questions of the week

First questionnaire (10%): I cannot guarantee that I will be able to take note of your answers in preparation for the class session to come if your post arrives later than Tue 18:00. However, you can still submit this questionnaire until directly **before the class session of that week**, i.e. until Wed 13:30. Later first questionnaires will not count for your grade. If you complete all questionnaires, your grade for this task will be an A, as long as you give a serious effort to give a good answer. If your answer is off the mark, no problem. This is about learning, not knowing. For each missing questionnaire, one grade notch will be detracted.

Second questionnaire (20%): Due by **Friday 18:00 after the class session of that week**. Please reconsider your answers to the questions you gave in the first questionnaire for this week and add or change as you see fit. This questionnaire will be graded. Criteria:

- Diligence, completeness, and accuracy of answers to the first and second questionnaire combined.
- Clarity and precision of expression.
- Ability to use terminology correctly.

Again, it's not necessary that you've understood everything, but one should see some kind of learning curve if your answers weren't perfect right away.

Three oral tests (15 % of the grade)

Conversations about the dates and facts and reflection questions of the previous weeks (those since the last test).

1. For the dates and facts part, you need to know the few dates, names, terms, or other facts listed in the the schedule (always the ones for the *previous class*) PLUS all the facts, dates etc. that were to be learned in the classes up to that date. Facts on medieval philosophers will be tested only in the final exam. Questions may be both ways, i.e. either you explain the date, name or term (e.g. what happened in 585) or you are given a description and are asked to indicate the date, name or term (e.g.: when was the solar eclipse that Thales is said to have predicted?)
2. The best preparation for the reflection questions will be well prepared participation in class and on the blogs/questionnaires. Even if you are more interested in one question, go through all of them, especially before you start your readings, and jot down a few notes in reply to them while reading and while rethinking the material before your second blog post. On the blog for that week, you can seek explanations and test your answers, and also continue the discussion after the class until you feel you have achieved sufficient clarity for yourself and found something that you could say. Grading criteria are the same as for the second blog post.

Two written assignments (each 15 % of the grade).

Due in Week 4 (14 Oct) and Week 9 (25 Nov). Further rules and the grading criteria are explained on Blackboard. Please submit via the Assignment tool on Blackboard.

The due dates must be met; late submissions will be graded with F. If you have a good reason for submitting late, you can seek an extension BEFORE the deadline expires.

Very sloppy papers with a lot of errors, or papers not set in proper MLA layout with citations and list of works cited, may be returned for fixing the issues before they can be graded. This is a first-year course in which students need to learn such standards. Therefore expectations with regard to these 'formalities' will be particularly strict. Your great ideas should be presented in an impeccable form, and the sooner you learn it the greater the benefit you can reap over the course of your studies and even later, in your professional work.

Plagiarism, also partial plagiarism and omission of in-text citations, or any other breaches of academic integrity, will lead to a fail grade without rewrite option.

Otherwise, you can submit *optional* rewrites (in case you wish to improve your grade or train your skills on the basis of the feedback you have received). If the rewrite earns a higher mark than the previous version, the rewrite grade replaces the original grade completely. The first rewrite of the first assignment must be completed before you hand in the second assignment. This is so because you should be able to make use of the skills learned in the process for the next task. Further rewrites are accepted until the day of the final exam.

In their feedback, some students remarked that they felt the work they put into the written assignments was worth more than 15%. I agree that 15% does not look like much, but these assignments are also an excellent training for the reflection quiz questions and the final exam so that application in this task can make a much larger difference for your grade, especially if you think of the additional rule no. 3, below.

One more advice how to do well in these tasks in an efficient manner: Please understand that understanding what the task is makes up part of the task itself. It's not because I'm bad at explaining what you should do; it's just something new and possibly not what you'd expected. My experience with grading the papers is that almost 50% of deductions I have to make from top grades are the result of students not doing what they are asked to do in the prompt and the instructions, or not doing it completely. Ideally, you should have the prompt and the instructions in front of you in written form and check whether your paper does what it's supposed to do. If in doubt, please don't hesitate to seek further explanations (face-to-face or by email). This may be a valuable learning process by itself, and I will be grateful for the opportunity to connect more directly with you and lend you a hand.

Final paper: text discussion task (10 % of the grade)

Informed analysis of an unknown text by one medieval philosopher, due by 22 December (as long as the date is 22 Dec) via assignment submission tool on Blackboard or email (then it's your risk whether the file arrives in time). I'll confirm receipt, of course. If you make notes in the text, such as counting statements or highlighting key terms, you can attach a photo of the text with your notes; no need to type that up.

Criteria:

- Quality should be such as can be expected from a well prepared student working 2.5 hours on the piece.
- You comprehend the text correctly, and you read the text carefully and thoroughly, paying attention to detail as well.
- You identify key concepts and use them in your discussion, explaining them where necessary and drawing on definitions given in the text itself.
- You identify arguments and are able to perform a rudimentary analysis of the argument, most importantly: distinguishing the claim and further intermediary conclusions from the premises/assumptions from which the author has built their argument.
- If you have time, a well informed critique of the argument is appreciated too, but don't critique without first analyzing and just reading the argument carefully. Otherwise you may very well end up critiquing what now one has said, and that's kind of pointless.
- You are able to contextualize the text historically, i.e. place it within the history of thought and intellectual movements we have studied and within the historical time period to which it belongs.
- You are able to contextualize the text generically and with regard to the particular sources or general traditions on which it draws. Where do the ideas come from? What is new? Why has the text this form and how do we need to take account of that form when trying to make sense of the text.

Additional rules

1. Belated assignments will not be accepted. They automatically earn the grade F. So make sure to note the due dates of the two written assignments, and do not miss the weekly Blog deadlines (for the first blog post: before class; for the second post: after class, by Thursday 18:00). If there is a pressing serious reason why you cannot complete an assignment in time, you need to ask for an extension BEFORE the deadline expires.
2. If you aspire to a grade A, regular punctual attendance and regular contributions to the blog are essential, irrespective of how stellar your performance may be in other respects. This is so because this course is a team project and if you fail to do your part as a member of that team, then your performance is not as perfect as it should be for earning a top grade.
3. Some students need time to warm up to the subject and have a steeper learning curve than others. For this reason there is an extra rule concerning the final exam-writing task:

If the grade for that final task is higher than the grades for the previous papers, the final grade will replace the original grade for the two written assignments. ((The reason for this is that during the semester you are still training the skills and acquiring the knowledge you should have at the end. In the final task you demonstrate how successful you were, i.e. what you have actually learned during the semester as a whole. This is why the final task is very difficult and marked according to strict criteria. If you do well in it, better than during the semester, you deserve that better grade.))

Other
