PHIL 310: Ancient Greek Philosophy

Instructor: J. H. Lesher
Office: Skinner 1107B
Office Hour: Th 11-12 and by appointment

Phone: 301-405-2117
E-mail address: jlesher@umd.edu

Course Description: PHIL 310 focuses on the emergence of philosophical thinking in ancient Greece during the 6th century BCE and the course of its development down to the end of the classical period. The major figures studied are the Presocratic philosophers, Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle. The goal of the course is to gain some familiarity with the main elements of ancient Greek thought and with the ways in which ancient ideas influenced the philosophy, science, art, and literature of later centuries.

Required Text: Cohen, Curd, and Reeve, Readings in Ancient Greek Philosophy, 3rd edition.

Schedule of Readings and Examinations (Note: In order to achieve a satisfactory understanding of the assigned materials you will need to read through them several times. It will help if you read the assigned material at least once before hearing it discussed in class.)

Part I: The Presocratic Philosophers (Jan 26-Feb 23)
Jan 26  Thales, Anaximander, and Anaximenes (see Readings, pages 1-14)
Jan 31  Xenophanes of Colophon (21-23)
Feb 2   Pythagoras of Samos (15-20)
Feb 7-9  Heraclitus of Ephesus-2 sessions (24-34)
Feb 14-16 Parmenides of Elea-2 sessions (35-41)
Feb 21  Some Images Relating to the Presocratics
Feb 23  First Hour Exam on the Presocratics

Part II Socrates and Plato (Feb 28-Apr 25)
Feb 28  ‘The Socratic Question’: Plato’s Apology (115-140)
Mar 2   Socrates on Civil Obedience: Plato’s Crito (141-153)
Mar 7   The Socratic Elenchus: Plato’s Euthyphro (97-114)
Mar 9   Socrates’ Contributions to Western Thought (handout)
Mar 14  Plato’s Meno: the search for essential definitions (203-228)
Mar 16  Knowledge as ‘Recollection’: Plato’s Meno (203-228)
Apr 4   Plato’s Political Theory: the Ideal State (453-476)
Apr 6   Plato’s ‘Feminism’ (445-465)
Apr 11  Plato’s Theory of Knowledge and Reality (471-528)
Apr 13  Plato’s Theory of Love; the Symposium (282-330)
Apr 18  Plato’s Parmenides (604-613)
Apr 20  Some Images Relating to Socrates and Plato
April 25  Second Hour Exam on Socrates and Plato

Part III Aristotle (Apr 27-May 11)
Apr 27  Aristotelian Science: Main Features and Limitations (645-654, 676-693, 707-709)
The Pursuit of Happiness: the *Ergon* Argument (832-845)

Aristotle’s Ethical Theory: Some Pros and Cons (845-852)

The Search for Substance: Aristotle’s *Metaphysics* (771-780)

Aristotle’s God: *Metaphysics* (800-808)

The final exam for this course will be held on Monday, May 15th, from 8 to 10 a.m. and will cover the entire semester's readings, lectures, and handouts (as covered in the final exam review questions).

**Grading Policy:** There will be two hour-exams and the final exam. Review questions will be handed in advance of each exam—be sure you get a copy. Each of these grades will represent one-third of your semester grade. If the resulting average is on or near a borderline, some consideration will be given to class attendance and the extent of your participation in class discussions (within limits, more participation is better than less).

**Office Hours:** I have listed the hour immediately following the Thursday class as my official office hour but I would be happy to meet with you at any mutually convenient time. Please e-mail me at jlesher@umd.edu so we can find a day and time to meet.

**Academic Integrity:** In accordance with current University policy you will need to write the following signed statement on each piece of written work you submit in this course: ‘I pledge on my honor that I have not given or received any unauthorized assistance on this examination.’

**Excused Absences:** If you have special needs, or plan to be absent from class on a particular date, please send me an e-mail in advance to explain your situation. Otherwise, you are expected to attend each and every class and to take the exams as scheduled.

**Web page:** I have recently updated the web page for this course, but for the near future it will be limited to providing copies of the materials distributed in class as handouts. You can gain access to it at:

http://www.philosophy.umd.edu/Faculty/JLesher/PHIL310/

In addition, you might wish to look at the web page on ancient Greek philosophy created by one of the authors of our anthology, Marc Cohen. You can find it at:

[http://faculty.washington.edu/smcohen/320/index.html](http://faculty.washington.edu/smcohen/320/index.html) (Just copy this address into your favorite web browser.)