

# **GREEK PHILOSOPHY FROM THE BEGINNINGS TO ARISTOTLE**

## **Intercollegiate course**

**Convenor: Dr Verity Harte**

## **Aims and Objectives**

The Greek philosophy course aims to enable students to develop a critical understanding of the arguments and methods of the classical Greek philosophers: the pre-Socratics, Plato and Aristotle. The course is arranged in two levels, the first of which is a survey course, while the second studies particular topics and texts in greater detail.

Students completing the course will:

- a) Through attention to ancient texts in translation acquire a good understanding of the themes and important works of Plato, Aristotle and their pre-Socratic predecessors, particularly with respect to the epistemology and metaphysics of these writers.
- b) Acquire an appreciation of how the problems under discussion were motivated for ancient thinkers, and will have considered the question of which of these problems remain alive in the contemporary world.
- c) Acquire an ability to relate the questions discussed to the work of philosophers studied on other papers
- d)** Have been encouraged to read with great care and to reflect upon some difficult texts, as well as introductory and secondary material, and to give some attention to questions of interpretation.

## **Level 1, Semester 1: Plato & the PreSocratics. Lecturer: Verity Harte, KCL**

In Semester 1, the lectures will focus on introducing some central aspects of Plato's epistemology and metaphysics, drawing principally on the following Platonic works: *Meno*, *Phaedo*, *Republic* & *Parmenides*. In addition, we shall look at the work of two of Plato's PreSocratic predecessors: Parmenides & Zeno.

Each lecture will be focused around discussion of particular passages of Plato's works or, in the case, of Parmenides and Zeno, some of the surviving fragments of their work.

### **Schedule of Lectures**

- (1) Can we Inquire? Meno's Paradox of Inquiry
- (2) Why be Puzzled? Socratic Method
- (3) Puzzles about Particulars 1: Recollecting Forms
- (4) Puzzles about Particulars 2: Forms as Explanations
- (5) Forms and Particulars 1: Philosophical Understanding
- (6) Forms and Particulars 2: Understanding & the Good
- (7) Review Lecture: Platonic Forms
- (8) & (9) Criticisms of Forms: Plato's *Parmenides*
- (10) Two of Plato's Predecessors: Parmenides and Zeno

## **1, Semester 2: Aristotle & the PreSocratics. Lecturer: Peter Adamson, KCL**

## Plan of Lectures

1. Categories: the 10 categories, substantial vs. accidental predication.
2. Categories: Aristotle's notion of substance.
3. Aristotle's critique of Plato's theory of Forms.
4. Physics I: theory of change.
5. Physics II: the four causes.
6. Aristotle's method, and theories of place and motion in the Physics.
7. De Anima I-II.1-3: definition of soul.
8. De Anima II.4-12: theory of perception.
9. De Anima III.4-5: theory of intellection.
10. Aristotle's God: Physics VIII, Metaphysics XII.

## Level 2:

### Semester 1 2001

#### **Plato's Theory of Forms (DR R HEINAMAN)**

Four lectures

#### **Plato and the Sophists (DR P ADAMSON)**

This course of six lectures will explore Plato's response to the Sophists, who were his chief intellectual opponents on the contemporary scene in Athens. Along the way we will see that many of Plato's characteristic views in epistemology, metaphysics, and the philosophy of language were shaped by his confrontation with the Sophists. After an introductory lecture each lecture will examine Plato's handling of a particular historical Sophist.

Readings will consist of brief handouts distributed at the end of each lecture, to be read for the following lecture.

## Plan of Lectures

1 Introduction: the Many Faces of Sophistry

[READING WEEK ]

2 Protagoras vs. Gorgias: the *Protagoras* and *Gorgias*

3 Protagorean Relativism: the *Theaetetus*

4 Gorgias on Metaphysics: *On Not-Being* and the *Sophist*

5 The Sophistical Brothers: the *Euthydemus*

6 Prodicus and Language: the *Cratylus*

## **Semester 2, 2002**

**Lecturer: Verity Harte, KCL**

This course of 10 lectures will focus on some central topics in Aristotle's epistemology and metaphysics, in each case using Aristotle's *Physics* as a springboard for discussion, but also involving discussion of passages from other Aristotelian works, especially his *Metaphysics*.

## Draft Schedule of Lectures (to be finalised in January 2002):

(1) Aristotelian Method: *Physics* I

(2) Puzzles about Change: *Physics* I.7

(3) Matter & Form as Principles of Change: *Physics* II

(4) Potentiality & Actuality & the Analysis of Change: *Physics* III

(5) Aristotle on Space or Place: *Physics IV*

[READING WEEK]

(6) Change & Time: *Physics IV*

(7) Continuity & Infinity: *Physics VI*

(8) Causes of Change: *Physics VII*

(9) Self-Changers: *Physics VIII*

(10) God as First Principle of Change: *Physics VIII*