

Indian Institute of Technology Kanpur

Proposal for a New Course

PHI445

1. Course No: **PHI*****

2. Course Title: **Ancient Greek Philosophy**

3. Per Week Lectures: 3 (L), Tutorial: -- (T), Laboratory: -- (P), Additional Hours [0-2]: -- (A).

Credits (3*L+2*T+P+A): 9 Duration of Course: Full Semester / ~~Modular~~

4. Proposing Department/IDP: Department of Humanities and Social Sciences

Other Departments/IDPs which may be interested in the proposed course: --

Other faculty members interested in teaching the proposed course: --

5. Proposing Instructor(s): **Prashant Bagad**

6. Course Description:

A) Objectives:

This course explores the rich and formative period of Western philosophy, tracing its origin and evolution. It begins by considering how philosophy emerged from and contended with myths and poetry, while also intertwining with natural sciences in its early stages. The course investigates the profound questions posed by the Greeks that remain relevant today: Why is there something rather than nothing? What is the origin of existence? Can we identify the building blocks of reality? Can nature guide us in living a meaningful life? What constitutes a good life? What is the ideal form of government? Is poetry inherently irrational? Students will engage in a contemporary and critical dialogue with the Pre-Socratics, Sophists, Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle. The course discusses the interplay between inquiries into the natural world and the social-cultural realm, demonstrating how these domains influence one another. The course shows how a philosophical conversation with ancient thinkers can be intellectually enriching and transformative.

B) Contents (preferably in the form of 5 to 10 broad titles):

No	Broad Title	Topics	No. of Lectures
1	Early Thinking	Poetry, Myths, Philosophy	5
2	Presocratics	Mythos and Logos Beginnings of Science and Philosophy Arche Ionian Philosophers: Thales, Anaximander vs. Anaximenes, Xenophanes, Pythagoras Heraclitus (Flux) and Parmenides (Being) Democritus (atomic theory) Empedocles (evolution)	10
3	Sophists	Nomos and Physis Rhetoric and Philosophy Values, Virtues, Ethics	5
4	Socrates and Plato	Critique of Presocratics and Sophists Knowledge and Recollection Form of the Good Eros Forms and Political Life	10
5	Aristotle	Conception of Nature Form and Matter Four Causes Psychology Teleological Ethics Best City, Best Life	10

C) Pre-requisites, if any (examples: a- PSO201A, or b- PSO201A or equivalent): None

D) Short summary for including in the Courses of Study Booklet

Early Thinking: Poetry, Myths, Philosophy. Presocratics: Mythos and Logos, Beginnings of Science and Philosophy, Arche, Ionian Philosophers: Thales, Anaximander vs. Anaximenes, Xenophanes, Pythagoras. Heraclitus (Flux) and Parmenides (Being). Democritus (atomic theory) Empedocles (evolution). Sophists: Nomos and Physis, Rhetoric and Philosophy, Values, Virtues, Ethics. Socrates and Plato: Critique of Presocratics and Sophists, Knowledge and Recollection, Form of the Good, Eros, Forms and Political Life. Aristotle: Conception of Nature, Form and Matter, Four Causes, Psychology, Teleological Ethics, Best City, Best Life.

7. Recommended books:

Textbooks

Arieti, James. *Philosophy in the Ancient World: An Introduction*. Rowman and Littlefield: Lanham, 2005.

Cohen, Marc, Curd, Patricia and Reeve, C.D.C. (eds.). *Ancient Greek Philosophy: From Thales to Aristotle* (fourth edition). Hackett: Indianapolis, 2011.

Clark, Stephen. *Ancient Mediterranean Philosophy: An Introduction*. Bloomsbury: London, 2013.

Graham, Daniel. *Ancient Philosophy: The Fundamentals*. Wiley-Blackwell: Hoboken, 2020.

Roochnik, David. *Retrieving the Ancients: An Introduction to Greek Philosophy* (second edition). Blackwell: Malden, 2023.

Shields, Christopher. *Classical Philosophy: A Contemporary Introduction* (second edition). Routledge: London, 2012.

Stametellos, Giannis. *Introduction to Presocratics: A Thematic Approach to Early Greek Philosophy with Key Readings*. Wiley-Blackwell: Malden, 2012.

Tankha, Vijay. *Ancient Greek Philosophy: Thales to Socrates* (second edition). Pearson: New Delhi, 2014.

Wardy, Robert. *Doing Greek Philosophy*. Routledge: London, 2006.

Wright, M. R. *Introducing Greek Philosophy*. Acumen: Durham, 2009.

Reference Books

Adamson, Peter. *Classical Philosophy*. Oxford University Press: Oxford, 2016.

Annas, Julia. *Ancient Philosophy*. Oxford University Press: Oxford, 2000.

Annas, Julia. *Plato*. Oxford University Press: Oxford, 2003.

Barnes, Jonathan. *Early Greek Philosophy* (second revised edition). Penguin: London, 2001.

Barnes, Jonathan. *Aristotle*. Oxford University Press: Oxford, 2001.

Barnes, Jonathan. *Works of Aristotle*.

Cooper, John (ed.). *Plato: Complete Works*. Hackett: Indianapolis, 1997.

Dillon, John and Gergel, Tania (trans.). *Greek Sophists*. Penguin: London, 2003.

Gadamer, Hans-Georg. *Beginning of Knowledge*. Translated by Rod Coltman. Continuum: New York, 2002.

- Gill, Mary Louise and Pellegrin, Pierre (eds.). *Companion to Ancient Philosophy*. Blackwell: Malden, 2006.
- Hadot, Pierre. *What is Ancient Philosophy?* Translated by Maichel Chase. Harvard University Press: Cambridge, Massachusetts, 2002.
- Heidegger, Martin. *Early Greek Thinking*. Translated by D. F. Krell and F. A. Capuzzi. Harper: San Fransisco, 1975.
- Huby, Pamela. *Greek Ethics*. Macmillan: London, 1967.
- Irwin, Terence. *Classical Thought*. Oxford University Press: Oxford, 1989.
- Kahn, Charles. *Art and Thought of Heraclitus: An Edition of the Fragments with Translation and Commentary*. Cambridge University Press: Cambridge, 1979.
- Kenny, Anthony. *Ancient Philosophy*. Clarendon Press: Oxford, 2004.
- Kerferd, G. B. *Sophistic Movement*. Cambridge University Press: Cambridge, 1981.
- Graziosi, Barbara. *Homer*. Oxford University Press: Oxford, 2019.
- Guthrie, W. K. C. *History of Greek Philosophy: volumes 1-6*. Cambridge University Press: Cambridge,
- Hesiod. *Theogony and Works and Days*. Translated by Dorothea Wender. Penguin: London, 1973.
- Laks, Andre. *Concept of Pre-Socratic Philosophy: Its Origin, Development and Significance*. Translated by Glenn Most. Princeton University Press: Princeton, 2006.
- Luchte, James. *Early Greek Thought: Before the Dawn*. Bloomsbury: London, 2011.
- McKirahan, Richard. *Philosophy Before Socrates: An Introduction with Texts and Commentary* (second edition). Hackett: Indianapolis, 2010.
- Nietzsche, Frederich. *Philosophy in the Tragic Age of the Greeks*. Translated by Marianne Cowan. H. Regency Co.: Chicago, 1969.
- O'Grady, Patricia (ed.). *Meet the Philosophers of Ancient Greece*. Ashgate: Farnham, 2005.
- Ong, Walter. *Orality and Literacy: The Technologizing of the Word* (30th anniversary edition). Routledge: London, 2012.
- Osborne, Catherine. *Presocratic Philosophy*. Oxford University Press: Oxford, 1997.
- Preus, Anthony. *Historical Dictionary of Ancient Greek Philosophy*. Scarecrow Press: Lanham, Maryland, 2007.
- Seaford, Richard. *Origins of Philosophy in Ancient Greece and Ancient India*. Cambridge University Press: Cambridge, 2020.
- Sedley, David (ed.). *Cambridge Companion to Greek and Roman Philosophy*. Cambridge University Press: Cambridge, 2003.

Warren, James and Sheffield, Frisbee (eds.). *Routledge Companion to Ancient Philosophy*. Routledge: New York, 2014.

Waterfield, Robin. *First Philosophers*. Oxford University Press: Oxford, 2000.

West, M. L. *Early Greek Philosophy and the Orient*. Clarendon Press: Oxford, 1971.

Journals

Apeiron

Journal of Ancient Philosophy

Phronesis

Plato Journal

Web

Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy: <https://iep.utm.edu/>

Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy: <https://plato.stanford.edu/>

8. Any other remarks: --



Dated: 11 February 2025

Proposer: Prashant Bagad

Dated: Feb. 12, 2025

DUGC Convener: Sushita Mathur

The course is approved / ~~not approved~~ ✓

Chair, SUGC 

Dated: 6/3/2025