**Marta Jimenez - Philosophy - August 8, 2018**

**PHIL200W- Ancient Greek and Medieval Philosophy**

I was interested in taking the Piedmont Project course to learn more about sustainability initiatives at Emory, and to find a creative way to integrate questions of environmental sustainability into my teaching on Ancient Philosophy. My teaching seeks broadly to show students how the issues and theories we discuss are relevant to their own lives and to contemporary society so they can take what they learn with them out of the classroom. I have long felt that learning is greatly enhanced by an appreciation of the dialogues between different authors across time and traditions, and my pedagogical approach has aimed at bringing abundant perspectives to life by including material that is as varied as possible. Unfortunately, the contemporary field of environmental ethics has generally been viewed as quite separate from classical Greek philosophy, and I have struggled to think of ways in which I might bring the two into productive conversation. I am pleased to report that the two intensive days of the Piedmont Project have provided new insight on how I might connect texts from the past with contemporary discussions on environmental sustainability.

My course on Ancient Greek and Medieval Philosophy is devoted to exploring the notions of “Nature”, “the Good Life,” and “the Good Community” as treated by major ancient and medieval authors. I now see how the worldview championed by these early philosophers can provide useful terrain for a discussion of current environmental questions, insofar as in all these thinkers we find a constant preocupation with themes that are central to environmental thought such as (1) the relationship between human beings and nature (or the cosmos in general), (2) the relevance of integrity and balance for a flourishing human life, and (3) the inseparability between individual and community. These themes correspond broadly to the three main sections of my course, and I believe that much of what ancient authors contribute on these topics can serve as a productive starting point for conversations about how to improve our current attitudes about nature and about the life of other beings, human and non-human, in lines that are consistent with the principles of sustainability.

To start, ancient authors’ holistic approach to the study of the cosmos provides us with interesting ways of seeing the interconnectedness of all elements of nature, and concretely, reveals new meaningful links between the human and the non-human. From the first philosopher Thales, who gives us a fascinating attempt to bridge the gap between animate and inanimate reality in his project of finding the first principle of reality, to the Aristotelian teleological conception of nature, ancient philosophers are a clear model for any attempt to conceive nature in a holistic way and for any project of finding a proper integration of human beings in the cosmos. Moreover, the Socratic constant concern with integrity and with finding balance between our interests and desires as to live a flourishing life gives an opportunity to engage students in deliberations about how to integrate our sometimes conflicting interests in order to achieve a more sustainable existence, both as individuals and as a community. Finally, ancient and medieval discussions about the good community (from Thucydides’ defense and criticism of democracy to Ockham’s discussion about private property, and about whether we are allowed to *own* what God gave us for our use and stewardship) underscore the centrality of moderation and stability in the use of resources, and the relevance of thinking about legacy in our interventions in the natural and political spheres. The work of these authors offers an ideal intellectual space to think about how to organize our political life in a way that is more respectful toward the lives of others and the well-being of the world in general.

By emphasizing these themes in the thought of ancient and medieval thinkers, I am excited to encourage students to think more closely about the relationship between the human and the non-human worlds, about the importance of consistency and integrity in leading an ethical existence, and about what we can gain if we adopt a more holistic view of nature and of human life. It is my hope that such analyses can bring contemporary questions of environmental sustainability into focus and allow us to better understand the modern world through an ancient lens.

\* Please find below an updated syllabus. Participating in the Piedmont Project has helped me think of new angles to present some of the topics that were already included in the syllabus, and has served as encouragement to search for additional texts and topics that will deepen the discussion of the course general themes while underscoring sustainability-related issues. Thank you!

### Emory University

### PHIL 200: Ancient Greek and Medieval Philosophy

*Syllabus*

**Professor: Marta Jimenez** ([marta.jimenez@emory.edu](mailto:marta.jimenez@emory.edu)), Bowden Hall #318 (office hours by appointment)

**Course Description**

This course is an introduction to ancient Greek and medieval philosophy. We will critically examine the theories, philosophical problems and arguments discussed by some of the most important ancient Greek philosophers and medieval thinkers. The main themes of the course will be distributed in three sections: (1) Nature, (2) the Good Life, and (3) the Good Community.

The main general goal of this course is to acquire familiarity with the ways in which philosophers of the past approached the study of nature, ethics, and political theory. Students will learn to appreciate not only the peculiar details of the views of ancient and medieval philosophers on these topics, but also the sense of continuity with which they approached these areas. In contrast to many contemporary approaches, where the study of nature, the good life and the conditions for a good community belong to separate fields, ancient and medieval philosophers tackled these topics always as intimately interconnected, and held that individual human life was inseparable from the life of the community and the general functioning of the cosmos. One of our missions in class will be to think about the ethical and political consequences of adopting these kinds of holistic views, as opposed to the atomistic approaches that are more familiar to us today.

**Course Objectives**

Beyond the general goal of acquiring familiarity with ancient and medieval views on nature, the good life and the good community, the specific aims of the course are (1) to cultivate the skills of **reading and interpreting texts** of ancient and medieval philosophy, learning to look at the philosophical problems in their original context, (2) to develop an **understanding of some of the most important concepts, theses, and arguments** discussed in the works of ancient Greek and medieval philosophers; and (3) to achieve an **appreciation of the relevance** of the philosophical views and theories of these authors to later philosophy, understanding not only what the problems are, and why they arose, but also why many of them persist.

**Introduction**

In addition, this course will help you (4) **improve your writing and critical thinking skills**. This is a writing course, so you will have to write and think about writing more than in a lecture course (see “Satisfying Writing Requirement Guidelines” on Canvas). Because this is a philosophy course, you will focus on writing in a philosophical way – i.e. you will have to pay special attention to developing clear and well-constructed arguments and to engaging critically with the views expressed in the readings and in class.

**Requirements and Grading**

1. **Weekly Short Assignments and Peer Reviews (approx. 35%)**

*Weekly short papers*. Every student is required to hand in **300 to 500 words (approx. one page) of writing each week** reflecting on the readings for the following week’s sessions. While the topics are flexible, some guidelines and/or questions to help you organize your thoughts will be provided each week on Canvas.

*Peer editing and evaluating*. Every student will be responsible for **editing and evaluating another student’s piece each week**. The purpose of this exercise is (a) that you develop a critical eye and learn to see the general virtues and vices of a given written piece (general structure, soundness of the argument, etc.); and (b) that you learn to carefully read work in progress and pay attention to potential areas for improvement and parts that have to be condensed or eliminated (repetitions, incorrect statements, etc.).

*Short paper revisions.* Throughout the course you are required to **revise at least 4 of these papers** and rewrite it taking into consideration the comments of your peer and any other feedback that you receive from the class or the instructors. You can revise more than 4 for extra credit, but take into account that in this case **quality is preferable to quantity** – for this reason, it is often better to revise the same piece several times than to revise every single piece once.

1. **Critical Essays (50%)**

Students are required to submit at least **two 5-6 page final papers or one single longer final paper (10-12 pages, around 3000 words) on the last day of the term**. For each of these critical essays, you can build on one or more of the mini-papers written during the semester and develop the argument(s) and ideas. You can also write on a different topic after consulting with the professors and submitting a 300-500 word essay on that new topic.

A **first draft of your critical essay(s) is due on the day after Fall break** at the latest, although you can submit it as early as you want. A **second draft of your paper(s) is due on the day after the Thanksgiving break** at the latest, although you can submit it as early as you want, after responding to the feedback received on your first draft. You will receive final comments by the last day of class and will have a chance to fix your paper and **submit a final version by the last day of the term**.

Although the goal is to have you write the strongest paper possible, the final grade will take into account not only the quality of the final result, but also the quality of each of these steps. Please take seriously the process of writing and re-writing drafts.

1. **Class Participation and Progress (approx. 15%)**

You must read every assignment carefully before class and come ready to participate. **Occasionally you will be asked to present** one of your written assignments or one of the assignments you commented on to the class and respond to other students’ questions.

**Required Texts**

- *The First Philosophers: The Presocratics and Sophists* (ed. R. Waterfield; Oxford U. Press 2000) [**ISBN:** 978-0199539093] [*FP*]

- *A Plato Reader: Eight Essential Dialogues* (ed. C.D.C. Reeve; Hackett 2012) [**ISBN:** 978-1603848114]

*-* Plato, *Gorgias* (trans. Donal Zeyl; Hackett 1987)[**ISBN:** 978-0872200166]

*- Aristotle: Introductory Readings* (trans. T. Irwin & G. Fine; Hackett 1996) [**ISBN:** 978-0872203396]

*- Lucretius: On the Nature of Things* (trans. Martin Ferguson Smith; Hackett 2001) [**ISBN:** 978-0872205871]

*- Medieval Islamic Philosophical Writings* (ed. Muhammad Ali Khalidi; Cambridge University Press 2005) [**ISBN:** 978-0521529631] [*MIPW*]

**Tentative Schedule**

1. **Introduction**. Ancient and medieval conceptions of philosophy and modern approaches to ancient and medieval philosophy. Ancient poets, tragedians, sophists and philosophers. Stages, chronologies and schools of ancient and medieval philosophy.

**Nature: Ancient and Medieval Physics and Metaphysics**

1. **From *Mythos* to *Logos*? First Greek Philosophers and the Search for the First Principle (*archē*)*.* Physics as the Study of Nature (*phusis*) as a Holistic System.** Homer and Hesiod. The Milesian Philosophers of Nature: Thales, Anaximander, Anaximenes.

*Readings:* “The Milesians” (*FP* 3-21)

1. **Eleatic Rationalist Ontology.** Eleatic Ontology and the Limits of Reason: Parmenides, Zeno, Melissus.

*Readings:* “Parmenides” (*FP* 49-68); “Zeno” (*FP* 69-81); “Melissus” (82-6).

*Additional readings:* Arguments against Plurality and Movement:

1. **Heraclitus’ Radical Becoming.** Heraclitus on the “Universal Flux”, the “Unity of Opposites” and Fire as the First Principle.

*Readings:* “Heraclitus of Ephesus” (*FP,* 32-48)

1. **Pluralist Reponses to Parmenides.** Anaxagoras’ Theory of “Everything-in-Everything”. Empedocles’ Pluralism. Early Atomists: Leucippus and Democritus.

*Readings:* “Anaxagoras” (*FP,* 116-32); “Empedocles” (*FP,* 133-63) “Atomists” (*FP,* 164-92).

1. **Sophists and Rhetoricians on the Nature of Reality.** Protagoras’ Relativism. Gorgias’ Nihilism. The Nature vs. Convention Debate. The Sophistic Move Towards Fragmentation and the Loss of a Unified Natural Cosmos: Consequences for a Conception of the Human.

*Readings:* “Protagoras” (*FP,* 205-20); “Gorgias” (*FP,* 222-40); “Antiphon the Sophist” (*FP,* 258-69); “*Double Arguments*” (*FP,* 285-98)

1. **Socratic Method of Inquiry and the Search for Definitions. Paradox of Inquiry. Theory of Forms.** Socratic cross-examinations and the search for definitions in ethics. The *Euthyphro* problem. Plato’s *Meno* and the problem of learning. Forms and sensibles. Consistency, the Unity of the Intelligible, and the Possibility of Knowledge.

*Readings:* Plato’s *Euthyphro*, *Meno* and *Phaedo*

1. **Plato’s Vision of Nature.** Study of the mathematical organization of the cosmos. The world as a living organism.

*Readings:* Plato’s *Timaeus* (selections on Canvas)

1. **Aristotle on Wisdom and the Study of Nature**. Aristotle’s own history of philosophy. Criticism of previous thinkers. Theory of the causes.

*Readings: Metaph* 1.1-3, 6 (*AIR* 115-127)

1. **Aristotle’s Teleology, Theory of Life and Structure of the Cosmos.** Teleology. Aristotle’s defense of teleology against Empedocles *Physics* II.8. What is a living thing? What is life? How is the cosmos organized?

*Readings: Physics* 2 (*AIR* 42-61); *Metaph* 12

1. **Epicurean Philosophy of Nature.** Lucretius on the Nature of Things. The Place of Human Beings in Nature and of Nature in Human Life.

*Readings:* Lucretius, *The Rerum Natura* (Selections)

1. **Medieval Thought on Nature and God.**

*Readings: Genesis* (in Canvas), TBA commentaries on the *Genesis* (Selections in Canvas)

**The Good Life: Ancient and Medieval Ethics and Moral Psychology**

1. **The Socratic “Turn” and the Quest for the Examined Life**. The Socratic turn to questions about the good life. Socrates’ mission and the relevance of philosophy. Socrates’ death, the many and the Laws. Socrates on civil disobedience. Integrity, coherence, and the good life.

*Readings:*  Plato’s *Apology* and *Crito*

1. **Ancient theories of the soul: Platonic Dualism vs. Pythagorean “Harmony” model**. Plato’s views on the soul-body relation and the immortality of the soul.

*Readings:* Plato’s *Euthyphro*, *Meno* and *Phaedo*

1. **Plato’s Moral Psychology and the Virtues.** The problem of greed and the question about the benefits of justice. Plato’s theory of the divided soul. Akrasia. Virtue as knowledge. The good life as harmony between parts of the soul.

*Readings: Republic* 1-4

1. **Aristotle’s Theory of the Soul.** The nature of the soul. Kinds of soul. Perception. Imagination. Thought. Movement.

*Readings*: *De Anima* 1.1; 2.1-6, 11-12; 3.3-5, 10-11.

1. **Aristotle on the Virtues and the Human Good.** Aristotle’s notion of human flourishing. Distinction between intellectual and character virtues. Three global virtues: Justice, Phronesis, and Sophia.

*Readings: Nicomachean Ethics* 1-5

1. **Early Christian and Islamic Medieval Thought on Mind and Body and Soul.** Augustine on the Soul.

*Readings:* Augustine, *Confessions* (selections on Canvas); Ibn Sīnā, *On the Soul* (27-59)

1. **Early Christian and Islamic Medieval Thought on Integrity and the Good Life.**

*Readings:* Augustine, *Confessions* (selections on Canvas); Al-Ghazālī, *The Rescuer from Error* (*MIPW,* 59-99); Ibn Rushd, *The Incoherence of the Incoherence* (*MIPW*, 155-181)

**The Best Community: Ancient and Medieval Political Theory**

1. **Historians, Sophists and Rhetoricians on Democracy and the Polis.** Thucydides’ Defense and Criticism of Democracy. The Role of Sophists and Rhetoricians in Democracy.

*Readings:* “Funeral Oration” (Thucydides’ *Peloponesian War* 2.34-46); Selections from “Protagoras” (*FP,* 205-20); Selections from Plato’s *Gorgias*

1. **Plato on Justice.** Glaucon’s challenge against justice: Why be just? City-soul analogy.

*Readings: Republic* 1-3

1. **Plato on the Ideal City and its Corruption.** Philosopher Kings. The ideal education of the rulers. The Form of the Good. Arguments for the superiority of the philosophical life.

*Readings: Republic* 8-9

1. **Aristotle on Human Beings as Political Animals, Justice and the Best Political Regime.**

*Readings: Politics* I.1-2, II.1-5, III.1, 4, 11-12, VII.1-2, 13, 15 (*AIR* 288-318)

1. **Aquinas on the Best Political Regime. Aquinas on the Good Ruler and the Problem of Tyranny.**

*Readings:* Aquinas, *On Kingship* (Selections in Canvas)

1. **Debate about Poverty in the 14th Century. Ockham on Property and Poverty.**

*Readings: Ockam, Work of Ninety Days (Selections); Papal documents relating to Franciscan poverty: Ad conditorem canonum (1322), Cum inter nonnullos (1323), Quia quorundam (1324) and Quia vir reprobus**(1329).* (Selections in Canvas)

**\* Final papers(s) due on the last day of class**(Submit an electronic copy through Canvas and bring a hard copy to the philosophy department’s main office at Bowden Hall #214).