

PHIL2005/CLCV2105 (1.0 credit)
Ancient Philosophy: The Search for Wisdom

Course outline

Professor: Annie Larivée
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T.A.: TBD
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Fall-Winter 2025-2026
Blended Course (online with optional synchronous discussions)
Official course scheduling:
Tuesdays/Thursdays, 11:35am-12:55pm

The course has asynchronous and (optional) synchronous elements. For online learning technical requirements, go to:
<https://carleton.ca/its/help-centre/faq-technical-specs-for-new-students/>

1. COURSE DESCRIPTION AND VISION

In this course we embark on a journey to Ancient Greece and Rome to explore the source of philosophy as a millennial quest for wisdom. Our journey has two parts.

In the fall, we focus our attention on philosophy as a form of contemplation guided by the most basic question of all: What is reality? What is our world made of? We will see that philosophy was the fertile ground in which many other types of knowledge started to flourish –mathematics, astronomy, biology, psychology, linguistics, and political science among others. We will also examine how philosophy attempted to distinguish the wisdom it sought from mythology, poetry, sophistry, political power, and rhetoric.



In the winter, we discover philosophy as a way of life that pledges to lead its practitioners to eudaimonia, i.e., flourishing, happiness. The primary question of philosophy then becomes: What is the good life? What leads to happiness? We will see that becoming a Stoic, Sceptic, Cynic or Epicurean philosopher implied a commitment to a way of life shaped by a specific conception of the world, the mind, soul, and human nature. We will explore these existential options to see if they can still teach us how to live.

2. MAIN LEARNING OUTCOMES

At the end of this course, you will have developed:

1. a solid comprehension of ancient Greek and Roman philosophy's main stages of development,
2. a strong grasp of the core principles and doctrines embraced in diverse philosophical schools,
3. an appreciation for the contribution of philosophy to a meaningful human life,
4. a 'historical sense' (i.e., a sense of the distance that separates our present from the past, a sense of our connection to the past, and a critical attitude towards both the past and present).
5. good reading, writing, reasoning, and argumentative skills,
6. good time management skills and appreciation of the benefits of having a weekly 'routine'.

3. COURSE DESIGN and WEEKLY ROUTINE

This is a 1.0 credit course!

The course consists of 24 Lessons available on Brightspace: 12 in the fall, 12 in the winter. One Lesson corresponds to the material covered and activities to be completed each week.

The formula is simple. Here is our routine:

- Each Lesson is available on Sunday at midnight.
- You have one week to complete the Lesson (content described below).

Although the bulk of the work is done asynchronously, at your own pace, we do stay connected!

- Every Tuesday at 11:35 am, we have an *optional* live zoom Discussion. You can use it to get participation marks. Participation is assessed through a 'Participation report quiz'.
- If you can't attend the discussion, you can also get participation marks by joining our discussion Forum on Brightspace, or by annotating weekly readings on Perusall.

There is no final exam or essay in this course. Assimilation and progress depend on regular, sustained engagement.

In addition to the 24 Lessons, a 'Welcome to the course!' Module is available on Brightspace. This module comprises: a welcome video (with explanations on the course vision, on requirements, etc.), a course outline in PDF form, a 'Course Commitment and Honor Pledge' form, and a Quiz on the Outline and Pledge (that unlocks Lesson 1).

4. TYPICAL STRUCTURE OF LESSONS

Here is what a typical Lesson contains:

'Theoria Section'

- Theoria part 1:
 - o Intro video and Mini-lectures set 1
 - o Occasionally, reading(s) and/or link(s) to video(s)
 - o Quiz on mini-lectures/readings/videos above
- Theoria Part 2:
 - o Mini-lectures set 2
 - o Occasionally, reading(s) and/or link(s) to video(s)
 - o Quiz on mini-lectures/readings/videos above
- Occasionally, a Closing video (brief recap, explanations on weekly assignment, writing advice, etc.)

'Praxis Section'

- Mandatory readings for mini-assignments available on Perusall
- Mini-assignment instructions
- Live zoom discussion on mini-assignment/course content held on Tuesdays
- Discussions on the Forum
- Weekly Participation Report Quiz

5. COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Each semester is worth 50% of your final grade, and each semester's grade is made up of the following:

Quizzes:

- 2 per Lesson (5 questions for each quiz from a bank; questions are on material covered in the mini-lectures)
- Worth 40% per semester
- You have 2 attempts per quiz, and only your best attempt on each quiz counts.
- 10 minutes for each quiz attempt.
- You know which answers you got right or wrong, but correct answers are not provided after completion.

Weekly mini assignment:

- One-page written exercise assigned weekly (total of 12)
- You may submit as many as you wish, but only your 8 best marks count
- Total of 45% per semester
- *** No late submissions accepted unless given an extension by the Professor.
- ***To unlock each week's mini assignment, you need to have completed an attempt on both quizzes for that week.
- Optional zoom discussion on mini-assignment on the following Tuesday
- Forum discussions can be on the topic discussed in the mini-assignment

Engagement + participation:

- You may get participation points each week by either:
1. Making a Forum post and responding to another Forum post.
 2. Making a comment on Perusall and responding to another comment.
 3. Attending the weekly zoom discussion and contributing either by voice/video or via the zoom chat.
- This will be assessed through a quick 'Participation report quiz' each week
 - Only 8 weeks of participation points count per semester, so you only need to claim participation points 8 times a semester to get full points.
 - Total of 15% per semester

NOTE: If you don't watch the pre-recorded lectures and do the work on a weekly basis, you will not be successful in this course. Most importantly, you will not fully benefit from our shared journey. If you fall behind, you are responsible for catching up, but non-excused late mini assignments are not accepted.

Students registered with the Paul Menton Centre are responsible for soliciting letters of accommodation in due time.

Please check your Carleton account regularly. If you have any questions or concerns do not hesitate to contact your T.A. or myself. We are there for you!

6. READING MATERIAL

All Mandatory readings are available for free through Perusall, an online course library maker. Please go to <https://app.perusall.com/> and register a free account, then use the following course code to get access to readings: **MACLEAN-EVANS-6LMT9**

You can also find this Perusall information on the course Brightspace page.

7. LESSON TOPICS and CALENDAR

FALL SEMESTER

The Birth of the Search for Wisdom: Philosophy as Contemplation

What is reality? How can we access truth?

Introduction Module: Welcome to the course!

Fall Semester	Topic	Material available On Sunday at midnight	Live Discussion + Q&A on Tuesday 11:35am (Zoom)	Activities to be completed by 11:59 pm on Sunday
Lesson 1	Getting ready for our journey to Ancient Greece	Aug. 31	None this week	Sep. 7 (Exceptional extended deadline for mini assignment: Oct. 26 (see instructions on Brightspace))
Lesson 2	Wondering at things. The Presocratic source of the quest for wisdom	Sep. 7	Sep. 9 (<i>Meet your prof</i>)	Sep. 14
Lesson 3	All is one. The Milesians and Xenophanes in search of unity.	Sep. 14	Sep. 16	Sep. 21
Lesson 4	Everything is rational, all is connected. Pythagoras on numbers, harmony, and purification of the soul	Sep. 21	Sep. 23	Sep. 28
Lesson 5	All is in flux. The fiery wisdom of Heraclitus 'the Dark'	Sep 28	Sep. 30	Oct. 5
Lesson 6	Approaching the 'Truth's untrembling core'. Parmenides revelation on Being	Oct. 5	Oct. 7	Oct. 12
Lesson 7	It's all about basic elements. Anaxagoras, Empedocles, Democritus as scientific visionaries	Oct. 12	Oct. 14	Oct. 19
Lesson 8	Everything is relative. The legacy of the sophistic movement	Oct. 19	Oct. 21	Nov. 2 (Extra time from reading week)
Lesson 9	Know thyself. From sophia to philosophia: the Socratic turn	Nov. 2	Nov. 4	Nov. 9
Lesson 10	Contemplating the Real World with Plato	Nov. 9	Nov. 11	Nov. 16
Lesson 11	Wisdom as conversion of the soul. 'Platonic love' and philosophical ascent	Nov. 16	Nov. 18	Nov. 23
Lesson 12	Aristotle and the blessed life of contemplation	Nov. 23	Nov. 25	Nov. 30

WINTER SEMESTER
The Ancient Search for Happiness. Philosophy as a Way of Life
How should we live? What leads to happiness?

Winter Semester	Topic	Material available at midnight on Sunday	Live Discussion + Q&A on Tuesday 11:35am (Zoom)	Activities to be completed by 11:59 pm on Sunday
Lesson 13	How <i>not</i> to live. Callicles, Thrasymachus, and the ‘happiness’ of the tyrant	Jan. 4	None this week	Jan. 11
Lesson 14	Socrates and the examined life	Jan. 11	Jan. 13	Jan. 18
Lesson 15	Living like a dog. The rough life of the Cynics	Jan. 18	Jan. 20	Jan. 25
Lesson 16	Living well inside the cave 1. Plato on ruling one’s inner citadel	Jan. 25	Jan. 27	Feb. 1
Lesson 17	Living well inside the cave 2. Plato and the transformation of social life	Feb. 1	Feb. 3	Feb. 8
Lesson 18	Reflecting on the good life. Aristotle on happiness	Feb. 8	Feb. 10	Feb. 15
Lesson 19	How to become virtuous? Aristotle’s training method	Feb. 15	Feb 17	March 1 (Extra time from reading week)
Lesson 20	The Stoic Art of Life Part 1. ‘Amor Fati!’	March 1	March 3	March 8
Lesson 21	The Stoic Art of Living Part 2. Pacifying Emotions	March 8	March 10	March 15
Lesson 22	Skeptic Wisdom Happiness Through Suspension of Judgement	March 15	March 17	March 22
Lesson 23	The Epicurean Art of Life Part 1 Living Without Fear	March. 22	March. 24	March 29
Lesson 24	Epicurus’ Art of Life Part 2 The Good Life is the Pleasant Life	March. 29	March. 31	April 5

8. POLICY ON THE USE OF AI

AI can be useful to proofread or clarify your own written work. However, using AI tools (such as ChatGPT or other platforms) **to generate the content of an assignment (partially or entirely) is prohibited**. This includes generating mini-essays, Forum discussion posts, and Perusall posts. If you resort to AI for editing purposes, do include a line at the end of any assignment that explains what you used the AI for.

Only through personal engagement will you benefit from this course. All submitted work must reflect your own thinking and interaction with the materials.

Violation of this policy will be treated as **academic misconduct** and reported to the Dean's office.

Also, please **do not input any course materials into ChatGPT or other AI tools**. Doing so **violates copyright law and breaches course policies**.

9. SUGGESTIONS FOR ADDITIONAL READINGS (OPTIONAL RESOURCES)

a) Primary sources

ARISTOTLE. Complete Works of Aristotle, The Revised Oxford Translation, Vol. 1 and 2, J. Barnes (ed.), Oxford U. Press, 1984.
BARNES, J., Early Greek Philosophy, Penguin Books, 1987.
EPICTETUS, Discourses, Fragments, Handbook, transl. R. Hard, OUP Oxford; 2014.
EPICURUS, The Epicurus Reader: Selected Writings and Testimonia, Hackett Pub., 1994.
MARCUS AURELIUS, Meditations, transl. G. Hayes, Modern Library, 2002.
PLATO. Plato. Complete Works. Vol. 1 and 2, Cooper and Hutchinson (ed.), Hackett publ. 1997.

b) Secondary sources

ADAMSON, P., Classical Philosophy: A History of Philosophy without any gaps, Vol. 1, Oxford U. Press, 2014.
_____, Philosophy in the Hellenistic and Roman Worlds: A History of Philosophy without any gaps, Vol. 2, Oxford U. Press, 2015.
BARNES, J., Aristotle. A Very Short Introduction, Oxford University Press, 2000.
BETT, R., The Cambridge Companion to Ancient Scepticism, Cambridge U. Press, 2010.
BRAGUE, R., Eccentric Culture: A Theory of Western Civilization, South Bend, Indiana: St. Augustine's Press, 2002.
DESMOND, W. The Cynics, University of California Press, 2008.
DILLON, J., T. GERGEL (ed.), The Greek Sophists, Penguin Classics, 2003
DODDS, E.R., The Greeks and the Irrational, Berkeley, Univ. of California Press, 1951.
GUTHRIE, W.K.C., A History of Greek Philosophy, vol. 1-6, Cambridge, Cambridge Univ. Press, 1962.
HADOT, P., Philosophy as a Way of Life: Spiritual Exercises from Socrates to Foucault, Wiley-Blackwell, 1995.
_____, What is Ancient Philosophy? Cambridge, The Belknap Press of Harvard University press, 2004.
_____, Plotinus or the Simplicity of Vision, University of Chicago Press, 1998.
KAHN, Ch., Plato and the Socratic Dialogue: The Philosophical Use of a Literary Form, Cambridge: U. Press, 1996.
KERFERD, G.B., The Sophistic Movement, Cambridge, Cambridge Univ. Press, 1981.
KRAUT, R. (ed.), The Cambridge Companion to Plato, Cambridge, Cambridge Univ. Press, 1996.
NUSSBAUM, M. The Therapy of Desire, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994.
REMES, P., Neoplatonism, Berkeley/Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2008.
SEDLEY, D. (ed.), The Cambridge Companion to Greek and Roman Philosophy, Cambridge University Press, 2003.
THORSRUUD, H., Ancient Scepticism, University of California Press, 2008.
UNTERSTEINER, M., The Sophists, trans. K. Freeman, Oxford: Blackwell, 1954.
VLASTOS, G., Socrates. Ironist and Moral Philosopher, Ithaca (NY): Cornell Univ. Press, 1991.
_____, Socratic Studies, M. Burnyeat (ed.), Cambridge, Cambridge Univ. Press, 1994.

Department of Philosophy and Carleton University Policies (Fall/Winter 2025-26)

Assignments:

Please follow your professor's instructions on how assignments will be handled electronically. We no longer allow hard copies to be placed in the department's essay box.

Evaluation:

Standing in a course is determined by the course instructor subject to the approval of the Faculty Dean. This means that grades submitted by the instructor may be subject to revision. No grades are final until they have been approved by the Dean.

Deferrals for Term Work:

If students are unable to complete term work because of illness or other circumstances beyond their control, they should contact their course instructor no later than *three working days* of the due date. Normally, any deferred term work will be completed by the last day of the term. Term work cannot be deferred by the Registrar.

Deferrals for Final Exams:

Students are expected to be available for the duration of a course including the examination period. Occasionally, students encounter circumstances beyond their control where they may not be able to write a final examination or submit a take-home examination. Examples of this would be a serious illness or the death of a family member. If you miss a final examination and/or fail to submit a take-home examination by the due date, you may apply for a deferral no later than *three working days* after the original due date (as per the University Regulations in [Section 4.3 of the Undergraduate Calendar](#)). Visit the [Registrar's Office](#) for further information.

Plagiarism:

It is the responsibility of each student to understand the meaning of 'plagiarism' as defined in the Undergraduate or Graduate Calendars, and to avoid both committing plagiarism and aiding or abetting plagiarism by other students. ([Section 10.1 of the Undergraduate Calendar Academic Regulations](#))

Academic Accommodation:

You may need special arrangements to meet your academic obligations during the term:

- *Pregnancy or religious obligation:* write to your professor with any requests for academic accommodation during the first two weeks of class, or as soon as possible after the need for accommodation is known to exist. For more details visit the [EIC](#) website.
- *Academic accommodations for students with disabilities:* The [Paul Menton Centre](#) for Students with Disabilities (PMC) provides services to students with Learning Disabilities (LD), psychiatric/mental health disabilities, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD), chronic medical conditions, and impairments in mobility, hearing, and vision. If you have a disability requiring academic accommodations in this course, please contact PMC at 613-520-6608 or pmc@carleton.ca for a formal evaluation. If you are already registered with the PMC, contact your PMC coordinator to send your Letter of Accommodation at the beginning of the term, and no later than two weeks before the first in-class test or exam requiring accommodation. After requesting accommodation from PMC, meet with your professor to ensure accommodation arrangements are made.
- *Survivors of Sexual Violence:* As a community, Carleton University is committed to maintaining a positive learning, working and living environment where sexual violence will not be tolerated, and where survivors are supported through academic accommodations as per [Carleton's Sexual Violence Policy](#).
- *Accommodation for [Student Activities](#):* Carleton University recognizes the substantial benefits, both to the individual student and for the university, that result from a student participating in activities beyond the classroom experience. Reasonable accommodation must be provided to students who compete or perform at the national or international level. Please contact your instructor with any requests for academic accommodation during the first two weeks of class, or as soon as possible after the need for accommodation is known to exist.

Important Dates:

Sept. 3	Classes start.
Sept. 16	Last day for registration and course changes for fall term and fall/winter (two-term) courses.
Sept. 30	Last day for entire fee adjustment when withdrawing from fall term or two-term courses. Withdrawals after this date will result in a permanent notation of WDN on the official transcript.
Oct. 13	Statutory holiday. University closed.
Oct. 20-24	Fall Break – no classes.
Nov. 21	Last day for summative tests or examinations, or formative tests or examinations totaling more than 15% of the final grade, before the official examination period.
Dec. 5	Last day of fall term classes. <i>Classes follow a Monday schedule.</i> Last day for academic withdrawal from fall term courses. Last day for handing in term work and the last day that can be specified by a course instructor as a due date for term work for a fall term course.
Dec. 6-7	No classes or examinations take place.
Dec. 8-20	Final examinations for fall term courses and mid-term examinations in two-term courses. Examinations are normally held all seven days of the week.
Dec. 20	All take-home examinations are due.
Jan. 5	Classes begin.
Jan. 16	Last day for registration and course changes in the winter term.
Jan. 31	Last day for a full fee adjustment when withdrawing from winter term courses or from the winter portion of two-term courses. Withdrawals after this date will result in a permanent notation of WDN on the official transcript.
Feb. 16	Statutory holiday. University closed.
Feb. 16-20	Winter Break – no classes.
Mar. 15	Last day for academic withdrawal from fall/winter and winter courses.
Mar. 25	Last day for summative tests or examinations, or formative tests or examinations totaling more than 15% of the final grade, in winter term or fall/winter courses before the official examination period.
Apr. 3	Statutory holiday. University closed.
Apr. 8	Last day of two-term and winter term classes. <i>Classes follow a Friday schedule.</i> Last day for handing in term work and the last day that can be specified by a course instructor as a due date for two-term and for winter term courses.
Apr. 9-10	No classes or examinations take place.
Apr. 11-23	Final examinations for winter term and two-term courses. Examinations are normally held all seven days of the week.
Apr. 23	All take-home examinations are due.

Addresses:

Department of Philosophy:
www.carleton.ca/philosophy
520-2110

Registrar's Office:
www.carleton.ca/registrar
520-3500

Academic Advising Centre:
www.carleton.ca/academicadvising
520-7850

Writing Services:
<https://carleton.ca/csas/support/>
520-3822

MacOdrum Library
<http://www.library.carleton.ca/>
520-2735