

Instructor: Christopher McGrath**Email:** christopher.mcgrath@carleton.ca**Office Hours:** Monday and Wednesday, 2:30-3:30pm**Office:** 3A54 Paterson Hall**Lecture Times:** Monday and Wednesday, 1:00-2:30pm**Classroom:** TBD**Course Description:**

Major figures and developments in philosophy from the early Greeks to the year 1400. Descriptive and comparative approach, providing an understanding of the place of philosophers in the history of thought. Appreciation of critical reasoning is included for comprehending philosophical developments.

The aim of this course is to provide students with an introduction to the history of philosophy by examining some of the major developments that occurred in the field from the beginning of the philosophical tradition in Ancient Greece to the end of the medieval era in Europe.

This semester we will be dividing our work into three units, corresponding to three main periods of this history, each exhibiting a distinct role in philosophy's development. We will begin in Unit One by examining the question of philosophy's beginning: to understand how philosophy first emerges we will examine the tradition of poetry or mythology which is taken to precede it in Ancient Greece, and juxtapose with this tradition the work of the earliest philosophers – the Presocratics and Sophists. After this, we will move on to Unit Two which will focus on trying to understand how the burgeoning philosophical tradition inaugurated by the Presocratics and Sophists becomes systematized and consolidated in the work of the two great thinkers of Classical Athens – Plato and Aristotle. In Unit Three we will turn to examine what comes of this philosophical tradition after the aspirations of the Ancient Greek city-states are replaced on the historical stage by the Hellenistic – and subsequently the Roman and Medieval European – eras. In particular, we will focus on how Christianity emerges in late antiquity as a new context for philosophy which both appropriates from and challenges the models inherited from the ancients, and in the course of this examine also how the traditions of Skepticism, Epicureanism, and Stoicism represent alternative forms of life answering to the particular challenges that emerge starting with the Hellenistic era.

In each of these three units, we will examine how the relevant philosophical work provides new models by which to understand the world and our place in it, as organized around three main themes: how the natural world and our knowledge of it is understood, how humanity is understood and what ways of life can be extolled in order to answer human concerns, and how these questions about the relations between nature and humanity are reflected also in changing conceptions of religion and the divine.

At the end of the course, students who have followed the class work will find themselves having obtained a representative introduction to the thought of the major thinkers and philosophical traditions of these periods: the poets, the Presocratics, the Sophists, Plato, Aristotle, the Skeptics, the Epicureans, the Stoics, Christian Patristic thought, and a sample of Christian Scholasticism. They will have a general understanding of the three main themes of this history: how philosophy emerged from the mythology of the poets, how it was consolidated in Classical Athens, and how it developed subsequently in the Hellenistic and Christian traditions. And they will have been introduced to some of the major areas of philosophical commitment which distinguish the Christian tradition that emerges in late antiquity from the pagan tradition of the ancients, while also having explored parallels between the emerging Christian tradition and the Stoics. In the course of this work, such students will find themselves with a broader understanding of philosophy's history, particularly through an understanding of the development of the themes of nature, humanity, and God, as they take shape in the philosophical thought of these eras.

Lecture Schedule:

Lecture topics and readings may be adjusted pending our ability to adequately get through the material in class, or in accord with other issues raised during the class process. The tentative schedule is as follows:

Date:	Lecture Topic:	Readings Selected From:
SEP 09	Introduction to the Course	n/a
	Unit One: The Beginning of Philosophy	
SEP 14	Mythos and Logos	Guthrie's <i>A History of Greek Philosophy</i> , Vol. 1
SEP 16	Nature in Myth and Philosophy	Hesiod's <i>Theogony</i> and the fragments of Thales and Anaximenes
SEP 21	Humanity in Myth and Philosophy	Hesiod's <i>Works and Days</i> and Protagoras' "Great Speech"
SEP 23	God in Myth and Philosophy	Hesiod's <i>Theogony</i> and the fragments of Xenophanes and Anaxagoras
SEP 28	The One and the Many	The fragments of Heraclitus
	Unit Two: Classical Greek Philosophy	
SEP 30	Plato: The Intelligible and the Sensible	Plato's <i>Phaedo</i> and <i>Republic</i>
OCT 05	Test #1	n/a
OCT 07	Plato: The Theory of Forms	Plato's <i>Phaedo</i> and <i>Philebus</i>
OCT 12	Aristotle: Nature and Causality	Aristotle's <i>Physics</i>
OCT 14	Life in Classical Greek Philosophy	Aristotle's <i>On the Soul</i>
OCT 19	Ethics in Classical Greek Philosophy	Aristotle's <i>Nicomachean Ethics</i>
OCT 21	Reason, God, and Eudaimonia	Aristotle's <i>Nicomachean Ethics</i> and Arendt's <i>The Human Condition</i>
OCT 26	No Class – Fall Break	n/a
OCT 28	No Class – Fall Break	n/a
NOV 02	Plato on Love and Beauty Research Report Due	Plato's <i>Symposium</i>
NOV 04	Plato and Aristotle on God	Plato's <i>Laws</i> and Aristotle's <i>Metaphysics</i>
	Unit Three: Hellenistic and Christian Thought	
NOV 09	Ways of Life: Skepticism and Epicureanism	Sextus Empiricus' <i>Outlines of Pyrrhonism</i> and Epicurus' <i>Letter to Menoeceus</i>
NOV 11	Test #2	n/a
NOV 16	Ways of Life: Stoicism	Epictetus' <i>Discourses</i>
NOV 18	Ways of Life: The Christian Critique of Stoicism	Augustine's <i>The City of God</i>
NOV 23	Stoic and Christian Cosmopolitanism	Epictetus' <i>Discourses</i> , the book of <i>Genesis</i> , and Augustine's <i>The Trinity</i>
NOV 25	Christian Interiority	The <i>Gospel of Matthew</i> , The <i>First Epistle of John</i> , and Augustine's <i>The Trinity</i>
NOV 30	The Christian Distinction of Religion from State	Ambrose's <i>Epistles</i> and Augustine's <i>The City of God</i>
DEC 02	The Craftsman God and the Creator God	Plato's <i>Timaeus</i> , the book of <i>Genesis</i> , and Augustine's <i>Confessions</i>

DEC 07	The Ladder of Ascent in Medieval Christianity	Bonaventure's <i>Journey of the Mind to God</i>
DEC 09	Conclusion to the Course	n/a

Assessment:

Students who are unable to attend or submit a scheduled in-class test (i.e., Tests #1 and #2) must contact the instructor at the earliest reasonable opportunity if they will wish to submit the assessment. With the instructor's permission and pending reasonable need for accommodation, one alternate date to write and submit the missed assignment will be arranged. Students who are unable to attend Test #3 during the final exam period are likewise encouraged to reach out to the instructor to discuss accommodations, or to consult the registrar about a formally deferred examination.

Students who are unable to submit the research report by the scheduled due date may submit it late with a penalty of up to 10% a day or may contact the instructor at the earliest reasonable opportunity to discuss accommodation where appropriate.

All assessments are expected to be conducted according to standards of academic integrity. All assignments submitted must be the student's own work, and any quotations or paraphrases of work other than the student's own must be duly cited.

Students should expect to receive their first evaluated assessment (Test #1) returned in class on October 19th.

Due Date:	Assignment:	Proportion of Final Mark:	Conducted
OCT 05	Test #1	20%	In Class
NOV 02	Research Report	20%	As Homework
NOV 11	Test #2	30%	In Class
Final Exam Period	Test #3	30%	Final Exam Period

Your grade for the course will be based on three tests and a research report. The tests each cover one unit, non-cumulatively: Test #1 covers Unit One, Test #2 covers Unit Two, and Test #3 covers Unit Three. The questions on the tests will include fill-in-the-blank, short answer, and long answer format, with more of an emphasis on the former formats at the beginning of the term and more of an emphasis on the latter formats by the end of the term. The research report will be a brief (~750 word) written essay describing articles or book chapters read independently and on the topic of the course. Further details will be provided about the assignments as we proceed with the class.

Note on the use of Generative AI:

Generative AI is a powerful tool that can facilitate learning and research but it also presents significant challenges to the task of education, so it's important to be thoughtful and informed about its use. Students are welcome to use Generative AI as a tool for brainstorming about and otherwise exploring topics raised in the course, and it can be a valuable resource in this regard. However, students should be aware that (i) it is not uncommon for Generative AI outputs to contain significant errors and confabulations, so that it is important to be critical-minded about Generative AI outputs, and to take

steps to confirm significant claims in these output through other sources (e.g., your own reading, consulting with your instructors, etc.). Generative AI ought to be a supplement to and not a replacement for your own reading and other studying activities. And, crucial for the learning process and for achieving success in this course, it is important to understand that (ii) all assessment in this course will be based on the specific material taught in class and through the materials supporting the class, and this material is likely to differ in its emphases and explications from what a Generative AI will output. Accordingly, Generative AI does not provide a reliable study guide for this course, and students are both encouraged and expected to treat the explicit content taught in lectures and supporting materials as the standards for their learning and by which their assessments will be marked.

The research report which is due in the middle of the term is an assignment based on your own independent reading of some relevant sources, and is being assigned to help support the development of your own independent ability to (a) find relevant sources of information, (b) read and understand these sources, and (c) communicate your findings in writing. Accordingly, it would be unacceptable to rely on Generative AI to produce the report: both the task of reading the sources and of describing what you have read in writing are to be conducted independently by you. However, it would be entirely appropriate to use Generative AI to brainstorm possible topics for your research, to suggest sources to you, and so forth, provided you then go (a) read them yourself and (b) describe in your own writing what you have found.

As our understanding of the uses of GenAI and its relationship to student work and academic integrity continue to evolve, students are required to discuss their use of GenAI in any circumstance not described here with the course instructor to ensure it supports the learning goals for the course.

Readings:

Students will be expected to keep up on a timely basis with the work of the class, which includes the expectation that they will be independently reading the material assigned for each lecture.

Readings will be distributed electronically via the course webpage.

Academic Accommodations:

Carleton is committed to providing academic accessibility for all individuals. You may need special arrangements to meet your academic obligations during the term. The accommodation request processes, including information about the Academic Consideration Policy for Students in Medical and Other Extenuating Circumstances, are outlined on the Academic Accommodations website (students.carleton.ca/course-outline).

Communications Regarding the Course:

All students are strongly encouraged to come to the scheduled office hours with any questions they have, whether about the course material, troubleshooting issues with the course, or just informal questions about philosophy. If their course schedule or other commitments overlap with scheduled office hours, students are encouraged to speak to the instructor about meeting under other conditions. I am often available by appointment on campus on Mondays and Wednesdays after class (i.e. including after formally scheduled office hours), may be available on campus Mondays and Wednesday mornings before class by appointment, and can be available by appointment via virtual meeting on other days. Students are welcome during scheduled office hours on a “drop in” basis and do not need an

appointment, and are welcome to “drop in” after scheduled office hours on Mondays and Wednesdays – but I may or may not be there!

Students may also contact the instructor via email about any of the aforementioned concerns. Emails will be checked throughout the day at least up to 5:00pm on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Saturdays. Emails sent outside these time periods may not be received until the next of these work days.

Department of Philosophy and Carleton University Policies (Fall/Winter 2026-27)

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* after 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 exam date or 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:

The University Academic Integrity Policy defines plagiarism as '*presenting, whether intentionally or not, the ideas, expression of ideas or work of others as one's own.*' This includes reproducing or paraphrasing portions of someone else's published or unpublished material, regardless of the source, and presenting these as one's own without proper citation or reference to the original source.

Examples of sources from which the ideas, expressions of ideas or works of others may be drawn from include but are not limited to books, articles, papers, literary compositions and phrases, performance compositions, chemical compounds, artworks, laboratory reports, research results, calculations and the results of calculations, diagrams, constructions, computer reports, computer code/software, material on the internet and/or conversations

Examples of plagiarism include, but are not limited to:

- any submission prepared in whole or in part, by someone else, including the unauthorized use of generative AI tools (e.g., ChatGPT);
- using ideas or direct, verbatim quotations, paraphrased material, algorithms, formulae, scientific or mathematical concepts, or ideas without appropriate acknowledgment in any academic assignment;
- using another's data or research findings without appropriate acknowledgement;
- submitting a computer program developed in whole or in part by someone else, with or without modifications, as one's own;
- failing to acknowledge sources with proper citations when using another's work and/or failing to use quotations marks.

Plagiarism is a serious offence that cannot be resolved directly by the course's instructor.

The Associate Dean of the Faculty follows a rigorous [process for academic integrity allegations](#), including reviewing documents and interviewing the student, when an instructor suspects a violation has been committed. Penalties for violations may include a final grade of "F" for the course.

It is the responsibility of each student to understand the full 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](#))

Statement on AI:

As our understanding of the uses of AI and its relationship to student work and academic integrity continue to evolve, students are required to discuss their use of AI in any circumstance not described in the course outline with the instructor to ensure it supports the learning goals for the course.

Mental Health:

As a student you may experience a range of mental health challenges that significantly impact your academic success and overall well-being. If you need help, please speak to someone. There are numerous resources available both on- and off-campus to support you. For more information, please consult <https://wellness.carleton.ca/>.

Academic Accommodation:

Carleton is committed to providing academic accessibility for all individuals. You may need special arrangements to meet your academic obligations during the term. The accommodation request processes, including information about the Academic Consideration Policy for Students in Medical and Other Extenuating Circumstances, are outlined on the Academic Accommodations website (<https://carleton.ca/accessibility/accommodations/>). Examples of special arrangements include:

- *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. 9	Fall term begins.
Sept. 22	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.
Oct. 12	Statutory holiday. University closed.
Oct. 26-30	Fall Break – no classes.
Nov. 15	Last day for academic withdrawal from fall term courses. Last day to request Formal Examination Accommodations for December examinations and two-term midterm examinations.
Nov. 27	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. 11	Last day of fall term classes. <i>Classes follow a Monday schedule.</i> Last day that can be specified by a course instructor as a due date for term work for a fall term course.
Dec. 12-23	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. 23	All take-home examinations are due.
Jan. 6	Winter term begins.
Jan. 19	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.
Feb. 15	Statutory holiday. University closed.
Feb. 15-19	Winter Break – no classes.
Mar. 15	Last day for academic withdrawal from fall/winter and winter courses. Last day to request Formal Examination Accommodations for April examinations.
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.
Mar. 26	Statutory holiday. University closed.
Apr. 9	Last day of two-term and winter term classes. Last day that can be specified by a course instructor as a due date for two-term and for winter term courses.
Apr. 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