Ancient/Medieval Philosophy  
(PHI-200)  
Fall ‘18

Room: PH-107  
Meeting time: 9:20-10:20 MWF  
Phone: x7153

Professor David Goldberg  
Office: 319 PH

Course Objectives and Procedures:

Central to our Western methodology for analyzing the world is our acceptance that reality is rational, and open to comprehension via the use of reason. This methodology for examining existence has its early surfacing with the Greek philosophers from around 600 BCE, philosophers who lived in the city-states surrounding the Aegean, and in particular those known as the Ionian Greeks. Historically the inauguration of the reasoned approach towards existence has been placed with an obscure Milesian figure by the name of Thales, and it is with this figure that our study of Ancient Philosophy will begin.

Thales will serve as an embarkation point from which we can survey an historical period extending for approximately 2000 years, from 600 BCE to 1400 CE. Our examination will begin with one of the most prolific periods of Western philosophic thought: 600-320 BCE. Focus will center on the major Pre-Socratics; Socrates as presented through the Dialogues of Plato; and the philosophy of Plato's student Aristotle.

After Aristotle we will briefly look at Hellenistic Philosophy and then examine a period of intellectual inquiry that has been described as a dark fall into stagnation (hence its name ‘the Dark Ages’), but to the contrary we will see that much was accomplished during the Medieval period. Emphasis will be placed on the impact that the early Greeks had on Medieval thought, and on the influence that these thinkers had on their world and ours.

Our primary goals throughout the course will be to understand the particular philosopher’s argument; their contextual connection to the time period in which they flourished, as well as the predecessors who supplied the ground from which they developed as well as the impact that philosophers have had on the traditions and cultures to which they belonged. Philosophical conceptualization does not occur in isolation, hence we will emphasize the contextualization of philosophic thought.

Classes will consist of lectures and discussions on the selected texts. Students are encouraged to interrupt the lecture at any time to pursue questions relevant to the material under discussion. I believe that education works best when a dialogue is established, hence discussion will be encouraged. As the material being read is undoubtedly new to many students I would recommend three procedures to facilitate comprehension and involvement: first, and I cannot stress this enough, keep abreast with the reading assignments as this will enable more lively participation in class discussions and easier comprehension of the philosophic thought; second, a single surface reading will not be sufficient to grasp the material so be prepared to read a piece two or more times; and finally take notes as you go over the assigned readings, notes that clarify the material and include any questions that you might have.
Required Texts:


Paper, Exams and Grading:

There will be 2 essay exams, midterm and final. These will be take-home exams in which you will be given a week to return your answers. Each exam will cover the arguments of the philosophers we have discussed for that period. You will also have a research paper due at the end of the 13th week of class, a paper of between 5-10 typed pages. Your topic can encompass any of the authors or topics from the time period under discussion, but before writing a paper, you must submit a synopsis of your plan via email by October 14: write a thesis statement encapsulating the main point you will make in your paper and present an outline showing how you will organize your paper and what points you will use to support your thesis. Thesis/outline can be submitted at any time before the due dates listed on the schedule, but the earlier, the better. Papers may be submitted at any time after you have had your thesis and outline approved as long as they are in by the deadlines listed in the schedule.

Course Expectations:

1. Assignments:

You are responsible for coming to class prepared so as to actively contribute to discussion on the topics at hand. The best way to prepare is to read the assigned material thoroughly. Thorough reading is aided by note-taking: write down questions that occur to you as you read, rephrase the author’s arguments in your own words to ensure that you understand them, etc. Bring these notes to class so you can refer to them during discussion. It is absolutely crucial that you keep up with the readings to enhance the quality of class discussions and to facilitate comprehension. The quality of your reading will directly and substantially affect your course grade.

2. Attendance:

Consistency of attendance is central to the educational process and my experience in the past has shown that students who attend on a regular basis do much better than those who do not. In my older age I have become jaded by attendance policies and consider it your job as an adult learner to avoid missing classes, but let it be known that though I have decided to have no policy, your absences will be noticed and will indirectly affect your grade.

3. Exams and paper:

As indicated, grading will be accomplished via 2 essay exams and a research paper. The 2 essay exams will be take-home and submitted electronically. Your research paper will be a philosophical examination of an approved topic relating to the authors discussed during the course of the class. Deadline dates are set for
a reason, extensions will only be given under extreme circumstances and with prior permission.

Academic integrity is an issue that I take very seriously. Philosophy papers often rely on a number of sources for information and substantiation of a position; hence you must be very careful to properly cite your use of a passage or thought derived from someone else. For information on plagiarism see the College Catalogue, or a good writing guidebook such as Diana Hacker *Rules for Writers*. Also, remember that the Internet has made it both easy to find information, as well as to check for sources. Do not think that because you found information at some obscure WEB site that there is no need to reference the material. One final point, your papers will be submitted to turnitin.com, a subscription site that is both a learning tool and a source for checking for plagiarism.

4. **Grading:**

Your final grade will be determined according to the follow:

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<tr>
<td><strong>Midterm Exam</strong></td>
<td>30%</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Final Exam</strong></td>
<td>30%</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Research Paper</strong></td>
<td>40%</td>
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5. **Classroom expectations:**

First, it is desirable that a certain demeanor be maintained in the classroom. Please refrain from holding conversations during the class with other members of the course. This is disturbing for both your fellow students and myself, and distracts from the academic environment. If you have a question about the material ask me, not your classmate, as chances are others will also have the same issue.

Use of cell-phones and computers in class will not be tolerated. As I have aged I have become increasingly curmudgeonly in regards to this, as they tend to be a disturbance and distraction not only to the user, but also to the entire class. So all cell-phones must be turned off during class, no exceptions, and notes must be taken the old-fashioned way. Anyone caught using a cell-phone in class will incur a penalty on their final grade.

Office hours: My office is Patterson 319 and I will have office hours Monday, Wednesday and Friday from 11:00-12:00 or by appointment. I can also be reached via e-mail at goldbedw@westminster.edu and my phone extension is 7153.

If you are having any difficulty, or would just like to converse on philosophical issues, please feel free to contact me.
## Tentative Chronology

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<th>Week</th>
<th>Assignment</th>
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| 1    | Introductory remarks, mythological dogmatism versus philosophical rationalism  
The Early Ionian Philosophers: Thales, Anaximander and Anaximenes |
| 2    | Three Solitary Figures: Pythagoras, Xenophanes, Heraclitus |
| 3    | The Monists: Parmenides and Zeno |
| 4    | The Pluralists: Empedocles, Anaxagoras, Democritus |
| 5    | Plato: *Euthyphro* and *Apology* |
| 6    | *Crito* and *Phaedo* |
| 7    | *Republic* sections  
**Midterm exam** |
| 8    | Aristotle *Categories*  
**Research paper topic submitted** |
| 9    | Aristotle's *Physics* |
| 10   | Aristotle's *Metaphysics* |
| 11   | Aristotle *Ethics* |
| 12   | Aristotle *Politics* |
| 13   | Medieval Philosophy  
**Research paper due** |
| 14   | Medieval Philosophy |
| 15   | Medieval Philosophy  
**Final Exam** |