

Faculty of Arts
Department of Philosophy

PH 8115 Ancient Philosophy

Winter 2018

Fridays 10am - 1pm

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Please use your Ryerson e-mail account and state your course and student number.

Calendar Description

This course involves a critical study of selected themes and doctrines in ancient Greek philosophy, with a focus on such seminal thinkers as Socrates, Plato, and/or Aristotle. Typical issues include: the nature of reality; the relation between universals and particulars; the nature of the soul and its relation to the body; the difference between knowledge and true belief, and between the different kinds of knowledge (philosophical, practical, mathematical, knowledge of the natural world); the nature of the good life and of virtue; the roles that reason, emotions, and appetites play in the virtuous person; the kinds of social, economic, and political structures that characterize the best society.

Course Details

Two of Plato's most important dialogues, the *Theaetetus* and the *Sophist*, form a sequence, followed by the *Statesman* and possibly by a lost or unwritten fourth dialogue, the *Philosopher*. In the *Theaetetus*, Socrates raises the question of how to define knowledge. No definition turns out to be satisfactory, and we will ask why. Also, it will become obvious that the *Theaetetus* covers at best a rather limited kind of knowledge: theoretical, propositional knowledge. The *Sophist* may then be seen as introducing further question about this sort of knowledge: the difference between appearance and reality, and the business of "alternative facts", as one might put it nowadays, that the sophists allegedly engage in. The *Statesman* will introduce practical knowledge and political expertise. We will read these three dialogues in sequence, with a view to a possible overarching development.

A course website is accessible via <http://my.ryerson.ca>.

Required Texts

Any edition of the *Theaetetus*, the *Sophist*, and the *Statesman* with Stephanus pagination will be okay (google “Stephanus pagination” if you don’t what this is). However, it will be beneficial if we all use the same translation and edition, so that it is easier to be “on the same page”. I recommend the following two translations:

Plato: *Theaetetus and Sophist*, tr. Christopher Rowe. Cambridge University Press 2015.

Plato: *Statesman*, tr. Christopher Rowe. Hackett 1999.

Schedule

- 1 01/12 *Theaetetus* 142a-151d: Introduction
- 2 01/19 *Theaetetus* 151d-187a: Knowledge as perception
- 3 01/26 *Theaetetus* 187a-201c: Knowledge as true belief
- 4 02/02 *Theaetetus* 201c-210d: Knowledge as true belief with an account

02/04: *Essay on Theaetetus due*

- 5 02/09 *Sophist* 216a-235a: Several definitions of the sophist
- 6 02/16 *Sophist* 235a-244b: Puzzles about not-being

Study Week

- 7 03/02 *Sophist* 244b-251a: Battle of the gods and giants, late learners
- 8 03/09 *Sophist* 251a-268c: Blending, speech, final definition of the sophist

03/11: *Essay on Sophist due*

- 9 03/16 *Statesman* 257a1-277c: The statesman as a herdsman
- 11 03/23 *Statesman* 277d-297b: Example of weaving, forms of constitution
- 12 03/30 *Statesman* 297b-311c: The right constitution, final account of statesmanship

04/06: *Essay on Statesman due*

Evaluation

Grades will be calculated as follows:

- Participation: 10%
- Essay on the *Theaetetus* (due Feb 4th): 30%
- Essay on the *Sophist* (due Mar 11th): 30%
- Essay on the *Statesman* (due Apr 6th): 30%

Participation in in-class discussions will be essential for success.

The Essays should be about 1500 words each. Discuss a specific (and manageable) question raised in or by the dialogue; for the *Sophist* and the *Statesman*, connect to your discussion of the previous dialogues. Cite and explain passages from the text; raise questions; consider possible objections to Plato’s and to your own views.

All written assignments must be submitted online. They will be evaluated for clarity of organization, logic, syntax, grammar, and content. MS Word and Adobe pdf are acceptable formats. Further formal requirements: 12pt, double spaced, reference list with proper bibliographical details for all material quoted and used.

All written assignments will be checked for plagiarism.

Missed Classes and/or Evaluations

Students are required to inform their instructors of any situation which arises during the semester which may have an adverse effect upon their academic performance, and must request any considerations and accommodations according to the relevant policies and well in advance. Failure to do so will jeopardize any academic appeals.

- *Medical certificates* – If a student misses the deadline for submitting an assignment, or the date of an exam or other evaluation component because of illness, he or she must submit a Ryerson Student Medical Certificate AND an Academic Consideration form within 3 working days of the missed date. Both documents are available at www.ryerson.ca/senate/forms/medical.pdf. If you are a full-time or part-time degree student, then you submit your forms to your own program department or school. If you are a certificate or non-certificate student, then you submit your forms to the staff at the front desk of the Chang School. If you need clarification, speak to your professor.
- *Religious observance* – If a student needs accommodation because of religious observance, he or she must submit a Request for Accommodation of Student Religious, Aboriginal and Spiritual Observance AND an Academic Consideration form within the first 2 weeks of the class or, for a final examination, within 2 weeks of the posting of the examination schedule. If the required absence occurs within the first 2 weeks of classes, or the dates are not known well in advance as they are linked to other conditions, these forms should be submitted with as much lead time as possible in advance of the required absence. Both documents are available at <http://www.ryerson.ca/senate/forms/reobservforminstr.pdf>. If you are a full-time or part-time degree student, then you submit the forms to your own program department or school. If you are a certificate or non-certificate student, then you submit the forms to the staff at the front desk of the Chang School.
- *Students who need academic accommodation support* should register with the [Academic Accommodation Support office](#) (formerly called the Access Centre). Before the first graded work is due, registered students should inform their instructors through an “Accommodation Form for Professors” that they are registered with Academic Accommodation Support and what accommodations are required.

Student Code of Academic Conduct

Ryerson's Policy 60 (now called the *Academic Integrity policy*) applies to all students at the University. The policy and its procedures are triggered in the event that there is a suspicion that a student has engaged in a form of academic misconduct.

Forms of academic misconduct include plagiarism, cheating, supplying false information to the University, and other acts. The most common form of academic misconduct is plagiarism. Plagiarism is a serious academic offence and penalties can be severe. In any academic exercise, plagiarism occurs when one offers as one's own work the words, data, ideas, arguments, calculations, designs or productions of another without appropriate attribution or when one allows one's work to be copied.

All academic work must be submitted using the citation style approved by the instructor. Students may refer to the Ryerson Library's list of [Citations and Style Guides](#) for more information.

It is assumed that all examinations and work submitted for evaluation and course credit will be the product of individual effort, except in the case of group projects arranged for and approved by the

course instructor. Submitting the same work to more than one course, without instructor approval, is also considered a form of plagiarism.

Students are advised that suspicions of academic misconduct may be referred to the Academic Integrity Office (AIO). Students who are found to have committed academic misconduct will have a Disciplinary Notation (DN) placed on their academic record (not on their transcript) and will be assigned one or more of the following penalties:

- A grade reduction for the work, include a grade of zero for the work.
- A grade reduction in the course greater than a zero on the work. (Note that this penalty can only be applied to course components worth 10% or less, that any additional penalty cannot exceed 10% of the final course grade, and that information explaining that such a penalty will be assigned must be included on the course outline.)
- An F in the course.
- More serious penalties up to and including expulsion from the University.

All written assignments will be checked for **plagiarism**. One of the means for doing this will be turnitin.com. This is a plagiarism prevention and detection service to which Ryerson subscribes. It is a tool to assist faculty members in determining the similarity between students' work and the work of other students who have submitted papers to the site (at any university), internet sources, and a wide range of journals and other publications. While it does not contain all possible sources, it gives faculty some assurance that students' work is their own. No decisions are made by the service; it simply generates an "originality report," and faculty must evaluate that report to determine if something is plagiarized.

Students who do not want their work submitted to this plagiarism detection service must, by the end of the second week of class, consult with the instructor to make alternate arrangements.

Important Resources Available at Ryerson

- The Library provides research workshops and individual assistance. Inquire at the Reference Desk on the second floor of the library, or go to www.ryerson.ca/library/info/workshops.html
- [Student Learning Support](#) offers group-based and individual help with writing, math, study skills and transition support, and other issues.