6AAN4053 Facts and Values
Syllabus – Academic year 2016/17

Basic information

Credits: 15
Module Tutor: Dr Shaul Tor
Office: B12, North Wing (Classics Dept.)
Consultation time: Tuesday and Thursday 13:00-14:00
Semester: 1
Lecture time and venue: Tuesday 10:00-12:00, Philosophy Building, Room 605

Module description (plus aims and objectives)

This part of the module offers an introduction to two of the most towering figures in the history of Western philosophy – Plato and Aristotle. We will explore some of their most fascinating and enduringly influential works and their negotiation of questions of ethics and politics, as well as theology, ontology and epistemology. These sessions aim to equip students with the ability to apply a range of critical perspectives and methods to ancient philosophical texts. In the process, students will acquire methodological tools which will both enable them to pursue further independent study of such texts and prepare them for further study in the history of philosophy.

Assessment methods and deadlines

• Summative assessment: one three-hour exam in May/June (Period II)
• Formative assessment: one 2,500-word essay
Outline of lecture topics (plus suggested readings)

**Week One:** Socrates in Plato’s *Apology*: philosophy as conversation & philosophy to the death  
Suggested reading:  
- **Primary:**  
  - Plato’s *Apology* (J. M. Cooper (ed.), *Plato: Complete Works* (Cambridge, 1997), pp. 17-36) [available as electronic resource]  
- **Secondary:**  
- **Further:**  

**Week Two:** Socrates in Plato’s *Euthyphro*: what is piety?  
Suggested reading:  
- **P:**  
  - Plato’s *Euthyphro* (Cooper, pp. 1-16) [available as electronic resource]  
- **S:**  
- **F:**  

**Week Three:** Plato’s *Meno*: virtue, paradox & recollection  
Suggested reading:  
- **P:**  
  - Plato’s *Meno* (Cooper, pp. 870-897, esp. 80c-86c = pp. 879-886) [available as electronic resource]  
- **S:**  
- **F:**  
  - Audio: M.M. McCabe on knowledge in Plato, episode 23 of Peter Adamson’s *History of Philosophy Without any Gaps* (http://www.historyofphilosophy.net)
Outline of lecture topics (plus suggested readings)

**Week Four: Plato’s Republic: Justice, Politics & the tripartite soul**

Suggested reading:
- P:
  - Plato’s *Republic*, Book 2 357a – Book 5 471c (Cooper, pp. 998-1098) [available as electronic resource]
- S:
- F:

**Week Five: Plato’s Republic: Philosopher Kings & the images of Sun, Line & Cave**

Suggested reading:
- P:
  - Plato’s *Republic*, Book 5 471c – Book 7 (Cooper, pp. 1098-1155) [available as electronic resource]
- S:
- F:

**Week Six: Aristotle on nature**

Suggested reading:
- P
  - Aristotle, *Physics* Book II [available as electronic resource]
- S
- F
  - Aristotle, *Parts of Animals* 1.1; 1.5 [available as electronic resource]
Outline of lecture topics (plus suggested readings)

**Week Seven**: Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* (1): human flourishing and the choice of lives

Suggested reading:
- **P**
  - Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* Book 1 and Book 10.6-8 [available as electronic resource]
- **S**
- **F**

**Week Eight**: Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* (2): virtue as the mean

Suggested reading:
- **P**
  - Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* Book 2 and Book 3.6-9 [available as electronic resource]
- **S**
- **F**

**Week Nine**: Aristotle, *Politics* (1): the human-being as a ‘political animal’

Suggested reading:
- **P**
  - Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* Book 1.3 and 10.9 [available as electronic resource]
  - Aristotle, *Politics* 1.1-3, 1.12-13, 3.1-5 and 7.1-3 [available as electronic resource]
- **S**
- **F**
Outline of lecture topics (plus suggested readings)

Week Ten: Aristotle, Politics (2): Aristotle’s theory of natural slavery

Suggested reading:

- **P**
  - Aristotle, Politics 1.2-8 and 13; 3.5 [available as electronic resource]
  - [Hippocrates], *Airs, Waters, Places* [available as electronic resource]

- **S**

- **F**
  - P. Garnsey, *Ideas of Slavery from Aristotle to Augustine* (Cambridge, 1996), ch. 8

- **For Airs, Waters, Places, and Hippocratic thought in general:**
Additional suggested readings

**NOTE:** the following list is meant to offer nothing more than orientation and guidance for further possible avenues of research. The idea is **not** at all that students should strive to work through all or a large quantity of it!

**General:**

- For excellent and free introductory podcasts, look into Peter Adamson’s *History of Philosophy Without any Gaps* ([http://www.historyofphilosophy.net/](http://www.historyofphilosophy.net/))

**Socrates & Plato**

**Translations**

- J. M. Cooper (ed.), *Plato: Complete Works* (Cambridge, 1997) [available as electronic resource]
- Translations of the dialogues are also available on:
  - Perseus: [http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/](http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/)

**Collections**

- D.N. Sedley (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Greek and Roman Philosophy* (Cambridge, 2003) [available as electronic resource]

**Aristotle**

**Translations**

- Translations of Aristotle’s works are also available on:
  - Perseus: [http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/](http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/)

**Collections**

- G. Anagnostopoulos (ed.), *A Companion to Aristotle* (Chichester and Malden, MA, 2009)
- J. Barnes (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Aristotle* (Cambridge, 1995) [available as electronic resource]
- D.N. Sedley (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Greek and Roman Philosophy* (Cambridge, 2003) [available as electronic resource]
Suggested essay questions: formative

- What is the philosophical life according to the Socrates of Plato’s *Apology*?
- What did Socrates look for in a definition and why?
- Socrates and Euthyphro fail to find a satisfactory definition of ‘piety’. Might they still benefit from their conversation?
- Does Socrates’ ‘theory of recollection’ answer Meno’s paradox?
- How does Plato argue in the *Republic* that justice is intrinsically desirable?
- Does Plato mount a convincing case for the view that philosophers should be entrusted with political power?
- Why does Plato introduce the images of Sun, Line and Cave in that order?

- What is the significance of Aristotle’s conception of nature either for his ethics or for his politics?
- Does Aristotle offer competing accounts of ‘flourishing’ or ‘happiness’ (*eudaimonia*) in Books 1 and 10 of the *Nicomachean Ethics*?
- What is the purpose of the doctrine of the mean? How does Aristotle think that it will help us either to understand better what virtue is or to become better people?
- How does Aristotle see the relationship between ethics and politics?
- ‘Aristotle’s theory of natural slavery is little more than the expression of unreflective biases.’ Is this a fair assessment?