

PIU11031 History of Western Philosophy I

Credits:	5 ECTS
Contact Hours:	22 hours of lectures Students also meet for weekly tutorials with departmental teaching assistants.
Pre-requisite:	none
Semester:	Michaelmas
Module Leader:	Professor Vasilis Politis
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Lecturer(s):	Professor Paul O'Grady
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Module Outline:

The course is divided into two parts.

Component 1: Introduction to Ancient Philosophy (Professor Vasilis Politis)

The aim of these lectures is to provide an introduction to select themes and philosophers from Ancient Greek Philosophy, based on primary texts primarily (also select secondary readings). We begin with Heraclitus, his method in philosophy, his view of change, and his idea of the unity of opposites.

We proceed to Parmenides, his argument for the unreality of change, and Aristotle's response to this argument. We turn to some themes in Plato: The 'What is X?' question. *Aporia* and its place in philosophical enquiry. Essences and Forms. Desire and the good. We conclude with two themes from Aristotle: Aristotle's essentialism. Aristotle's eudaemonism.

Learning Outcomes:

On successful completion of this part of the module students will:

- Be able to read and engage critically with a number of primary texts
- Be able to identify and frame philosophical questions regarding those texts

Recommended Reading List

A complete reading list will be posted on blackboard.

Component 2: Introduction to Medieval Philosophy (Professor Paul O'Grady):

The time scale of medieval philosophy is very long, from Augustine (354-430) to William of Ockham (d.1347). The philosophers of this period built on and developed ancient philosophy, especially the thought of Plato and Aristotle, mediated through later Greek schools, such as Neoplatonism. Many of the major philosophers of the period were concerned with relating philosophy to the Abrahamic religious traditions of Judaism, Christianity and Islam.

Given the diversity of strands and figures in this period, the course will begin and end with a survey of main figures and historical movements, but will focus on two key figures of the period. We will begin with Augustine, examining how he brought Greek philosophy into dialogue with Christianity and looking specifically at his rejection of skepticism and his positive account of knowledge. Then we will move on to Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274) and explore his general metaphysical system.

Hence this course will examine an influential epistemological position and an influential metaphysical position from the medieval period.

Learning Outcomes

At the end of this component students will be able to:

- Characterize the main figures and movements of medieval philosophy
- Critically evaluate Augustine's epistemology
- Critically evaluate Aquinas's metaphysics

Recommended Reading List

As advised/circulated by lecturer during the lecture series.

Assessment for this Module:

- Coursework: 1 essay from EITHER Component 1 OR Component 2 - 50%
- Examination: 1 examination question (1 hour) for the component for which an essay was **not** submitted - 50%

Important Note: For this module, students must not attempt to answer an examination question for the same component as that for which they have submitted an essay. To do so is to be liable to be penalised by 10 marks for the examination question attempted.

Essays must not exceed 1,500 words in length. The word count includes footnotes but it does not include the bibliography. Essays that go over the limit will be liable for a 5 mark deduction