

PIU11053 — History of Philosophy I A

Module Information	
Module Code	PIU11053
Module Title	History of Philosophy (Plato on Good and Evil)
Department	Philosophy
Year Group	Junior Freshman
Module Personnel	Professor Vasilis Politis and Dr. Jamie Turner
Academic Year	2026-27
Credit Weighting	5 ECTS
Semester	1
Contact Hours	20 hours of lectures and four hours of tutorials

Module Content	
Module Description	Component 1: Ancient Philosophy The aim is to explore and obtain an overview of Plato's ethics and moral psychology, by attending especially to his thoughts on the Good and on Evil. For Plato, the Good is the final object of all desire, or desire of a person who is not evil. So, it is an ethical principle, but it is also the ultimate cause of all things. This means it is also a metaphysical principle. Since Aristotle, ethics and metaphysics have come apart; but for Plato they are inseparably connected. Regarding Plato on the Good, critical questions include: • Does everyone desire the Good? Or only those who are not Evil? • Where regarding us is Evil? In our actions? In our soul? What is the soul? • Is the Good objective/real? • Is the Good absolute (i.e. unmixed with Evil)? • What is it to know the Good? • Is knowing the Good necessary for being good? Is it sufficient? Regarding Plato on evil, critical questions include:

Module Content

- Where regarding us is the Good? In our actions? In our soul? What is the soul?
- Can one desire something Evil, if one believes that it is evil?
- What is Evil in the soul? Is it simply an ignorance of the Good? Is it simply one's soul being disorderly, as a result of not being ruled by reason?
- Does an evil person desire the Good?
- Is an evil person actively opposed to the Good? Is he in rebellion against the Good?

Component 2: Medieval Philosophy

The philosophers of this period build on and develop the work of ancient philosophy, especially Plato and Aristotle, mediate through later Greek schools, such as Neoplatonism. Given the diversity of figures and strands in this period, this course will focus on two distinct and influential figures: Avicenna/Ibn Sina (980-1037) and Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274). We will be focusing on three major philosophical areas with respect to both thinkers: epistemology, metaphysics, and place of religion.

The aim is to introduce students to different theories in epistemology, metaphysics, and on the relationship between faith and reason, developed by the great medieval philosophers, Avicenna and Aquinas. Students will learn to articulate the major philosophical theories developed by Avicenna and Aquinas, critically evaluate competing medieval theories of knowledge, causation, God, and the relationship between faith and reason and identify some ways in which medieval philosophy developed ideas that continue to hold influence on contemporary philosophical thought.

Module Learning Aims

See above.

Learning Outcomes

See above.

Indicative Reading / Resources

TBA for Component 1.

Component 2: All the reading materials for the module will be made available online. Students will be expected to engage primary source material from both Avicenna and Aquinas.

Assessment	
Assessment Components	Exam worth 50% and Essay worth 50%.
Assessment Details	While students can choose which component their essay concerns, their exam answer must concern the component on which they did not write their essay. Word-limit for the essay: 1,000 words Final exam: One hour

Additional Information	
Prerequisites	None.
Co-requisites	None.