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**JOHN CABOT UNIVERSITY**

COURSE CODE: "PH 210"  
 COURSE NAME: "Ancient Philosophy"  
 SEMESTER & YEAR: Summer Session II 2022

**SYLLABUS**

**INSTRUCTOR:** Kristopher Gordon Phillips  
**EMAIL:** kristopher.phillips@johncabot.edu  
**HOURS:** MTWTH 9:00 AM 10:50 AM  
**TOTAL NO. OF CONTACT HOURS:** 45  
**CREDITS:** 3  
**PREREQUISITES:**  
**OFFICE HOURS:**

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**COURSE DESCRIPTION:**

The philosophers of ancient Greece and Rome debated fundamental questions with an imagination, subtlety, and daring that have captured the attention of thoughtful people in every epoch. For example, they considered the nature and origin of the universe, what changes and does not change, as well as what causes change, how perception and reasoning produce knowledge, the relation between the soul and the body, the meaning of justice and beauty, and the nature of the good life. Through a careful reading of selected texts – in the form of dialogues, poems, aphorisms, or treatises – the course will introduce you to the great questions and controversies of ancient philosophy.

**SUMMARY OF COURSE CONTENT:**

This course is focused on Greek philosophy from antiquity. We will specifically discuss the nature of metaphysics and epistemology and their relation to human flourishing and the pursuit of the good life. We will begin with some of Plato's dialogues which represent the historical Socrates, then move on to Platonic dialogues which use Socrates as a mouthpiece for Plato himself. In doing so, we will attend to the nature and practice of philosophy as a way of life, the role of education in liberating oneself from custom and habit, and the obligations philosophers have to their interlocutors. Following our discussion of Plato, we will turn to Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics*, and conclude the course with a discussion of Epicurean, and Stoic views on the nature of the life well lived. My hope is that you will leave this class not only with a basis in ancient philosophical thought, but a new understanding of what it means to *live philosophically*.

**LEARNING OUTCOMES:**

- **Critical Thinking:** You should begin to be able to differentiate between good and bad reasons for holding philosophical beliefs and will be able to seek out and identify the assumptions that lie at the basis of philosophical positions.
- **Inquiry and Analysis:** You should begin to be able to break complex philosophical problems into their components, and will be able to identify the consequences and implications of philosophical positions.
- **Writing:** You should be able to express some abstract and complex philosophical ideas in clear, precise, and logical prose.
- **Reading Comprehension:** You should be able to analyze and interpret abstract and difficult philosophical writing.

**TEXTBOOK:**

Book Title	Author	Publisher	ISBN number	Library Call Number	Comments	Format	Local Bookstore	Online Purchase
Theaetetus	Plato; Levitt (trans)	Hackett Publishing	978-0872201583			Hard Copy		
Republic	Plato; Grube (trans)	Hackett Publishing	978-0872201361			Hard Copy		
Five Dialogues	Plato; Grube (trans)	Hackett Publishing	978-0872206335			Hard Copy		
Nicomachean Ethics	Aristotle; Irwin (trans)	Hackett Publishing	978-1624668159			Hard Copy		
The Epicurus Reader: Selected Writings and Testimonia	Inwood (trans)	Hackett Publishing	978-0872202412			Hard Copy		
The Handbook (The Encheiridion)	Epictetus; White (trans)	Hackett Publishing	The Handbook (The Encheiridion)			Hard Copy		

**REQUIRED RESERVED READING:**

NONE

**RECOMMENDED RESERVED READING:**

NONE

**GRADING POLICY****-ASSESSMENT METHODS:**

Assignment	Guidelines	Weight
Introductory Self Reflection Paper and Meeting	I ask that you write a short reflection on what you hope to get out of this class (about 500 words), addressing a-d below. You and I will meet one-on-one at the start of the semester to determine: (a) What are your reasons for taking this class? (b) What do you hope to get out of this class? (c) Where and how do you think you can improve on your academic work? (d) What do you think I hope you'll take away from the class?	5
Plato Paper	You will write a focused paper (~1000 words) on a central argument in Plato.	20
Aristotle	You will write a focused paper (~1000 words) on a central argument in Aristotle	20

Paper		
Midpoint Reflection paper	I ask that you reflect carefully on your performance in the class. Consider what you wrote in your introductory reflection. How are you progressing on your goals? Where can you improve further? How can I facilitate your development?	5
Epicurus Paper	You will write a focused paper (~1000 words) on a central argument in Epicurus' writing.	20
Epictetus Paper	You will write a focused paper (~1000 words) on a central argument in Epictetus.	20
Final Reflection and Meeting	You are responsible for working with me to determine your final grade in this class. We will come to an agreement based on a formal self-assessment, the collected feedback you received from me over the course of the term, and a final discussion. I reserve the right to adjust the final grade, but I will not do so without telling you first.	10

**-ASSESSMENT CRITERIA:**

**A** Work of this quality directly addresses the question or problem raised and provides a coherent argument displaying an extensive knowledge of relevant information or content. This type of work demonstrates the ability to critically evaluate concepts and theory and has an element of novelty and originality. There is clear evidence of a significant amount of reading beyond that required for the course.

**B** This is a highly competent level of performance and directly addresses the question or problem raised. There is a demonstration of some ability to critically evaluate theory and concepts and relate them to practice. Discussions reflect the student's own arguments and are not simply a repetition of standard lecture and reference material. The work does not suffer from any major errors or omissions and provides evidence of reading beyond the required assignments.

**C** This is an acceptable level of performance and provides answers that are clear but limited, reflecting the information offered in the lectures and reference readings.

**D** This level of performance demonstrates that the student lacks a coherent grasp of the material. Important information is omitted and irrelevant points included. In effect, the student has barely done enough to persuade the instructor that s/he should not fail.

**F** This work fails to show any knowledge or understanding of the issues raised in the question. Most of the material in the answer is irrelevant.

**-ATTENDANCE REQUIREMENTS:****ATTENDANCE REQUIREMENTS AND EXAMINATION POLICY**

Philosophy is best done in open, careful dialogue with one another. I know not everyone is comfortable speaking in front of their peers, but I want to encourage you to genuinely engage one another regarding the ideas in the class. There are a number of ways one can be an active participant in the course. Whether that is asking questions in class, organizing discussion boards, setting up study groups, visiting during student hours, or something else you come up with, I'd like to see you really engage with both the material and one another. In order to do this, I expect you to be present, and prepared for class each day. This is an accelerated course in a short term, and we meet for two hours each day, as such missing class will put you at a significant disadvantage. Please do your best to be present each day.

That said, life does happen, and things come up. I am happy to work with you, but you *must* contact me if you are going to miss class or turn in an assignment late. I do not need specifics regarding *why*, but we need to set up a plan to ensure that you will be able to make up the content you miss, or have a plan to turn in your assignment.

Uni Policy: You cannot make-up a major exam (midterm or final) without the permission of the Dean's Office. The Dean's Office will grant such permission only when the absence was caused by a serious impediment, such as a documented illness, hospitalization or death in the immediate family (in which you must attend the funeral) or other situations of similar gravity. **Absences due to other meaningful conflicts, such as job interviews, family celebrations, travel difficulties, student misunderstandings or personal convenience, will not be excused.** Students who will be absent from a major exam must notify the Dean's Office prior to that exam. Absences from class due to the observance of a religious holiday will normally be excused. Individual students who will have to miss class to observe a religious holiday should notify the instructor by the end of the Add/Drop period to make prior arrangements for making up any work that will be missed.

**ACADEMIC HONESTY**

**As stated in the university catalog, any student who commits an act of academic dishonesty will receive a failing grade on the work in which the dishonesty occurred. In addition, acts of academic dishonesty, irrespective of the weight of the assignment, may result in the student receiving a failing grade in the course. Instances of academic dishonesty will be reported to the Dean of Academic Affairs. A student who is reported twice for academic dishonesty is subject to summary dismissal from the University. In such a case, the Academic Council will then make a recommendation to the President, who will make the final decision.**

**STUDENTS WITH LEARNING OR OTHER DISABILITIES**

**John Cabot University does not discriminate on the basis of disability or handicap. Students with approved accommodations must inform their professors at the beginning of the term. Please see the website for the complete policy.**

**SCHEDULE**

I tend to prefer to give you agency in determining how the course progresses. To facilitate this, I do not include specific dates for various reading assignments - one the one hand, if there is a passage or concept on which we need more time, I'd like to encourage you to take that time. On the other hand, if there is a subject we are not particularly enjoying, I'd rather not belabor it because of a rigid commitment to a pre-existing schedule. To that end, I include a rough and ready schedule of readings in chronological order, but without dates:

**Tentative List of Readings:**

Plato: *Theaetetus*

Plato: *Apology*

Plato: *Phaedo* (selections)

Plato: *Republic* (Books V-VII)

**[Plato Paper]**

Aristotle: *Nicomachean Ethics* Book I

Aristotle: *Nicomachean Ethics* Book II

Aristotle: *Nicomachean Ethics* Book III

Aristotle: *Nicomachean Ethics* Book VI

Aristotle: *Nicomachean Ethics* Book VIII

Aristotle: *Nicomachean Ethics* Book X

**[Aristotle Paper]**

Epictetus: *Encheirideon* (all)

**[Epictetus Paper]**

Epicurus: *Extant Letters*

Epicurus: *Testimony from Cicero, Lucretius, Plutarch*

Epicurus: *Fragments and Testimonia from Known Works*

Epicurus: *Fragments and Testimonia from Uncertain Works*

**[Epicurus Paper]**