

**PHIL3152**  
**Topics in Ancient Western Philosophy 古代西方哲學專題**

**Course Outline**

<b>Time : M 1:30-4:15</b>	<b>Location Li</b> Dak Sum 214
<b>Instructor: Gregory S. Moss</b>	
<b>Office: Room 436, Fung King Hey Building</b>	
<b>Office Hours: Per Appointment</b>	

**Course overview**

This course will focus on central Metaphysical and Epistemological problems of Ancient Greek Philosophy. In particular, we will focus on the problem of participation as it arises in Plato's dialogue *The Parmenides*. Following the *Parmenides*, the course will focus on grappling with Aristotle's solution to the Platonic problem of participation in his *Metaphysics*. The course will finish with readings from Neo-Platonic metaphysics, including selections from Plotinus, Pseudo-Dionysius, and Meister Eckhart.

Advisory to Majors: to be taken in year 2 or above.

**Learning outcomes (as shown on CUSIS)**

1. Demonstrate familiarity with the primary/secondary source texts.
2. Be able to articulate and defend a philosophical thesis of their own.
3. Students will demonstrate familiarity with the main ideas and theories of Ancient Greek Philosophy, especially with regard to the topics listed below.
4. In their papers, students should demonstrate the ability to understand the main arguments in select texts by Ancient Greek philosophers, as well as to identify and clearly explicate a significant problem in their philosophy and formulate and defend a thesis of their own concerning the problem.

**Topics**

1. General Conception and Characterization of Greek Philosophy
2. Greek Idealism
3. The Pre-Socratic Influence on Plato's Theory of Forms
4. Plato's Theory of Forms
5. The Problem of Participation
6. Plato's Dialectical Methodology
7. Aristotle's Science of Being and *Pros Hen* Unity
8. The Problem of the Genus of Being in Aristotle's *Metaphysics*
9. Aristotle's Solution to the Problem of Participation

10. Platonic and Aristotelian Theology
11. Plotinus' Theory of Categories
12. Forms of Christian Neo-Platonism (Pseudo-Dionysius and Meister Eckhart)

### **Learning activities**

Attend lectures and participate in class discussions.

### **Assessment scheme**

<i>Task nature</i>	<i>Weight</i>
Argument Critique	20%
Seminar Paper	40%
Final Exam (Online)	40%

**Backup plan for assessment in case face-to-face teaching and assessment is not possible due to the pandemic (no need to fill in if the class and related assessments are to be conducted online)**

<i>Task nature</i>	<i>Weight</i>
Argument Critique	20%
Seminar Paper	40%
Final Exam (Online)	40%

### **Critical Remarks on Assessment Scheme (if any)**

#### **Class Participation:**

Attendance is mandatory and *absence will damage your grades*. Two unexcused absences are permitted. For each unexcused absence beyond two, one-half a letter grade will be deducted from your final grade. In case of emergencies, either notify me of your absence ahead of time, or plan to bring some formal documentation of your absence. Without documentation, I will not accept absences as excused.

#### **Argument Critiques:**

The Argument Critiques consist of three parts. In respect to the papers, I shall provide you with passages from the texts which we are reading, and I will ask you to choose one passage to work on. You will formulate the argument contained in that passage, and formulate a critique of that passage. The last stage consists in formulating a reply to the criticism that you raise. I encourage you to utilize the texts that we are reading in formulating the criticisms; you are encouraged to employ the philosophers against each other. Argument Critiques should be 3-4 double spaced pages in length.

#### **Seminar Paper:**

The term paper will require students to uncover a philosopher problem in one of the texts that we have read together and clearly explicate that problem. Following the explication of the problem, students should work through various solutions to the problem and clearly formulate their own thesis concerning that problem. I highly recommend that students use one of their Argument Critiques as a possible groundwork for their Term Paper. The term paper requires students to consult and cite at least one

work of secondary literature in addition to the required readings. The term paper should not be more than 5-7 double spaced pages.

### **Final Exam:**

The final exam is a long essay exam that will be comprehensive, and requires students to synthesize all the readings and lectures from the semester. The final will require students to reconstruct the philosophical positions of the main figures of the course, and to evaluate the various ways they attempt to solve the main philosophical problems with which they are grappling.

### **Late Work/Make-Ups:**

Late assignments will be penalized one-half a letter grade for each day the paper is tardy. If students would like a grade changed, students must provide me with a detailed written argument for why the grade should be changed, otherwise I will not consider it.

### **Grade Descriptor**

Please refer to: [http://phil.arts.cuhk.edu.hk/~phidept/UG/Grade\\_descriptors.pdf](http://phil.arts.cuhk.edu.hk/~phidept/UG/Grade_descriptors.pdf)

### **Required Texts:**

*All readings will be posted on Blackboard.*

II. Plato

Title: *Parmenides*

III. Aristotle

Title: *Metaphysics*

III. Plotinus

Title: *Enneads*

IV. Pseudo-Dionysius

Title: *The Mystical Theology*

V. Author: Meister Eckhart

*On Detachment and Sermons*

### **Recommended Resources:**

I. Author: Various (Translated by Jonathan Barnes)

Title: *Early Greek Philosophy*

Penguin Classics

[https://www.amazon.com/Early-Greek-Philosophy-Penguin-Classics/dp/0140448152/ref=sr\\_1\\_8?ie=UTF8&qid=1483174856&sr=8-8&keywords=presocratics](https://www.amazon.com/Early-Greek-Philosophy-Penguin-Classics/dp/0140448152/ref=sr_1_8?ie=UTF8&qid=1483174856&sr=8-8&keywords=presocratics)

Author: R.E. Allen

Title: *The Dialogues of Plato, Vol. 4: Plato's Parmenides, Revised Edition* (Translation with Commentary)

Yale UP

[https://www.amazon.com/Dialogues-Plato-Platos-Parmenides-Revised/dp/0300066163/ref=sr\\_1\\_2?ie=UTF8&qid=1483176603&sr=8-2&keywords=R.E.+Allen+Plato+Parmeni](https://www.amazon.com/Dialogues-Plato-Platos-Parmenides-Revised/dp/0300066163/ref=sr_1_2?ie=UTF8&qid=1483176603&sr=8-2&keywords=R.E.+Allen+Plato+Parmeni)

[des](#)

Author: Edward Halper

Title: *Aristotle's Metaphysics: A Reader's Guide*

Bloomsbury

[https://www.amazon.com/Aristotles-Metaphysics-Readers-Guide-Guides/dp/1441107134/ref=sr\\_1\\_fkmr0\\_1?s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1483176277&sr=1-1-fkmr0&keywords=Edward+Halper+one+and+many+in+Aristotle%27s+metaphysics](https://www.amazon.com/Aristotles-Metaphysics-Readers-Guide-Guides/dp/1441107134/ref=sr_1_fkmr0_1?s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1483176277&sr=1-1-fkmr0&keywords=Edward+Halper+one+and+many+in+Aristotle%27s+metaphysics)

### Course schedule

All classes will take place face to face unless directed otherwise by the instructor.

1	Introductory Lecture	Assignments
2	Plato, <i>Parmenides</i>	
3	Plato, <i>Parmenides</i>	
4	Plato, <i>Parmenides</i>	
5	Plato, <i>Parmenides</i>	
6	Aristotle, <i>Metaphysics</i>	Argument Critique I Due
7	Aristotle, <i>Metaphysics</i>	
8	Aristotle, <i>Metaphysics</i>	
9	Aristotle, <i>Metaphysics</i>	
10	Aristotle, <i>Metaphysics</i>	
11	Aristotle, <i>Metaphysics</i>	Seminar Paper Due
12	Plotinus, <i>Enneads</i>	
13	Pseudo-Dionysius, <i>Mystical Theology</i> /Meister Eckhart, <i>On Detachment</i>	
14	Final Exam (Online)	Final Exam Due

### Details of course website

We will use Blackboard for this course. Lecture notes and information on assignments and examinations will be posted on the website.

### Contact details for teacher(s) or TA(s)

<b>Teacher</b>	
Name:	Moss, Gregory
Office location:	436, Fung King Hey Building
Telephone:	3943 9875
Email:	gsmoss@cuhk.edu.hk

<b>TA</b>	
Name:	Edward Kwok
Office location:	
Telephone:	
Email:	

### Academic honesty and plagiarism

Attention is drawn to University policy and regulations on honesty in academic work, and to the disciplinary guidelines and procedures applicable to breaches of such policy and regulations. Details may be found at <http://www.cuhk.edu.hk/policy/academichonesty/>

With each assignment, students will be required to submit a signed declaration that they are aware of these policies, regulations, guidelines and procedures. For group projects, all students of the same group should be asked to sign the declaration.

For assignments in the form of a computer-generated document that is principally text-based and submitted via VeriGuide, the statement, in the form of a receipt, will be issued by the system upon students' uploading of the soft copy of the assignment. Assignments without the receipt will not be graded by teachers. Only the final version of the assignment should be submitted via VeriGuide.