

PHIL 2210.001: Early Modern Philosophy

This course is an introduction to philosophy. We will survey the fundamental areas of philosophy including the following: philosophy of religion, ethics, freedom of the will, personal identity, and philosophy of mind. Our focus will be on arguments, their analysis and evaluation. Our approach will also be a historical one. We will begin with Greek philosophy, Plato and Aristotle, then we will consider medieval philosophy, Anselm. Turning out attention to modern philosophy we will examine Descartes and Kant. We will discuss nineteenth century philosophy in Marx and Nietzsche. An examination of twentieth and twenty first century philosophy will round out the course—Heidegger, Foucault, Quine, Nelson Goodman, and others.

PHIL 2210.002: Early Modern Philosophy

Early modern philosophy is typically defined as the European philosophical tradition spanning from René Descartes to Immanuel Kant. This period is defined by the emergence of experimental and mathematical sciences developed in part by figures such as Copernicus, Kepler, Galileo, Bacon and Newton. These scientific discoveries implied a revolutionary overturning of religious orthodoxy throughout Europe, which in turn called for philosophical reflection: What of old religious beliefs can be maintained in the face of the successes of the natural sciences? Is there such a thing as a soul? How is the concept of a soul related to personal identity? Is knowledge possible, and if so, what are its limitations? What is the ultimate nature of reality? Does God exist? Do *I* exist? These questions were raised and addressed by a series of philosophers we will examine in this course: Montaigne, Bacon, Galileo, Descartes, Princess Elisabeth, Amo, Spinoza, Leibniz, du Châtelet, Locke, Berkeley, Hume, and Kant. Throughout our readings we will address questions related to epistemology (the study of knowledge), metaphysics (the study of ultimate reality), and philosophy of mind. While one of the goals of the course will be to respect the historical circumstances of the authors in question, another aim is to show that the concerns of this period of philosophers remain relevant today.

Philosophy 2220: Greek Philosophy

In this course, we will attempt to develop an original path of questioning in critical dialogue with the ancient Greek philosophers, with the aim of locating ourselves and the problems of contemporary life more centrally within the problematics that they already pursued more than two thousand years ago. Issues to be discussed include, among others: the nature of thought, reason and the soul; the structure of time and space; language, meaning, and truth; being, change and becoming; ethics and the good; life and death. Readings are from various Pre-Socratic philosophers, Plato, Aristotle, and Plotinus. Course requirements: class attendance, weekly short reading responses, three short tests and final examination.

PHIL 2225: Greek Thought
MWF 12–12:50pm
Fall 2026

An introductory survey of early and classical Greek philosophy, organized around a single question: What is the nature or source of all things? Is there a principle underlying all of nature, despite the appearance of change and plurality? If so, how many principles are there, and what are they? Thales, often regarded as the first Greek philosopher, thought that everything is water. What made him say this? What led others to identify air as fundamental, or the *apeiron*, the unlimited, which is prior to any element?

We will explore the history of Greek thought as an ongoing attempt to answer these questions. By learning how Greek philosophers thought about these matters, we will also seek a better understanding of what it is to think philosophically. What does it mean to make a case for a position, and what ways are available for us to argue? What are the limits of speculation and its ultimate point? Finally, what does any of this have to do with human happiness? Does thinking about the nature of things make us better at living our lives, or does it render us indifferent to human concerns?

The course is divided into three parts:

- Part I – Early Greek thinkers (the so-called Presocratics)
- Part II – Plato and the figure of Socrates in his writings
- Part III – Aristotle

Grades will be based on class participation (20%), weekly quizzes (40%), and a midterm and final exam (40%).