

PHIL 353: The Presocratic Philosophers

Term: Winter 2016

Time and place: Monday, Wednesday, and Friday 15:35 to 16:25; EDUC 539

Credits: Three

Prerequisites: None, though previous instruction in philosophy is **strongly recommended**

Instructor: Dr. Antoine Panaioti

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Office hours: Thursday 12:40 to 14:10 at Leacock 923, or by appointment

I) Course Description

This term, PHIL 353 will consist in a survey of prominent figures in the history of Early Greek Thought, with a focus on cosmology and ontology. Following a brief introductory segment on our sources for Presocratic philosophers, methodological issues surrounding the interpretation of the

be closely scrutinizing the pronouncements and/or arguments of such eminent Early Greek Thinkers as Thales, Anaximenes, Heraclitus, Parmenides, Empedocles, Anaxagoras, Democritus, and Pythagoras, amongst others.

II) Course Goals

The purpose of this course is to provide students with thorough instruction in the study of Early Greek Thought. More generally, the course is designed to help students refine their reading and writing skills, develop critical thinking, and gain a greater ability to present analytically rigorous, yet historically sensitive philosophical reconstructions of important arguments and theories. Such skills are highly transferable. Ultimately, students are expected to succeed in composC>300520051h(nts)

IV) Evaluation

Evaluation for PHIL 353 breaks down as follows:

- A) Participation (40%) lecture attendance will not be monitored, though question/comment submission and conference participation will be.
- B) Short Essay (20%) this will be due at the beginning of class on Friday, February 26, immediately before reading week; further details will be provided on Wednesday, February 17.
- C) Final Research Paper (40%) 3,000-word essay on the topic of your choice (research proposals due Friday, April 08); electronic submissions due Thursday, April 28.

V) Course Material

The following title should be purchased at the Word Bookstore (469 Milton Road; cash payment only):

Graham, D. W. (ed.). *The Texts of Early Greek Thought*, Part I. Cambridge: Cambridge

02/01 05: **Heraclitus**, *Texts*, pp. 135 200

02/08 12: **Heraclitus** continued

*The Oxford
Handbook of Presocratic Philosophy*, edited by P. Curd & D. W. Graham, Oxford,
Oxford University Press, 2008, pp. 169 188

Part II: The Eleatics

02/15 19: **Parmenides**, *Texts*, pp. 203 245

02/22 26: **Parmenides** continued, **Melissus, & Zeno**, *Texts*, pp. 245 270 & 462 285

March Break

Part III: Cosmology after the Eleatics

03/07 11: **Empedocles**, *Texts*, pp. 326 433

03/14 18: **Anaxagoras**, *Texts*, pp. 371 325

03/21 25: **Leucippus & Democritus**, *Texts*, pp. 516 629

03/28 04/01: **Leucippus & Democritus** continued

Part IV: Pythagoras and his School

04/04 08: *Readings TBD*

04/11 15: *Ibid.*

Please note that the course outline is subject to revision. All changes will be announced in class
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VII) McGill Policy Statements

1. McGill University values academic integrity. Therefore, all students must understand the meaning and consequences of cheating, plagiarism and other academic offences under the Code (for more information).

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