PHH 3100.0001: Ancient Philosophy

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Text Books:
A. A History of Philosophy, Vol. I, F. Copleston
B. The pre-Socratics Philos0phers, Kirk, Raven and Schofield
C. Collected Dialogues, edited by Hamilton and Cairns
D. The Philosophy of Aristotle, R. Bambrough

Course Description:

The course deals with ancient (Greek) philosophy. It is divided into three sections, (i) The pre-Socratics, (ii) Plato’s philosophy through the main dialogues, and (iii) Aristotle’s metaphysics and logic.

Section One: The pre-Socratics

Importance of the History of Philosophy, the cradle of Western philosophy, and meeting place of East and West pp. 1-21A

Thales: The first thinker to raise a proper philosophical question: What is primary ‘stuff’, the origin (ἀρχή) of everything and underlying unity of different things: Water as the origin of everything, pp. 22-24A, 76-80B

Anaximander: Apeiron (not bounded, unbounded), pp. 26A, spatially infinite, pp. 24-26A, pp. 100-117B

Anaximenes: Retrogression from Anaximenes: It is neither water (Thales) nor Apeiron, but air, pp. 26-28A, pp. 144-151B

Heraclitus: All things are in flux: One cannot step twice into the same river- unreality of reality, pp. 38-46A, p. 188, 191, 195B

Parmenides: Belongs to the Eleatic school, his Hexameter Poem: opinions of mortals as against well rounded Truth (aletheia); It is or it is not. Parmenides uses it in existential sense or predicative sense or both. Pp. 47-53A, pp. 242-262B.

Zeno: Zeno’s four paradoxes in pairs of two as proofs against multiplicity as against unity pp. 55. 59A, pp. 265-279B
Section Two: Socrates and Plato

Life, activities, and teachings of Socrates through the eyes of Plato and Socrates; the importance of Socrates in the history of philosophy considered as a transition from pre-Socratics to Socrates and in the Western philosophy, pp. 96-1115A

Plato’s Life and his Works, Chronology of his works, Plato’s works division into four periods or groups pp. 132-141(A)

Plato: the Father of Idealism (theory of ideas as ontology and epistemology

Basic contentions: (1) Knowledge is possible through ideas

(2) In order to know ideas must exist (world of ideas and world of sensible entities)

(3) Ontology is prior to epistemology

Before analyzing the individual dialogues as to Plato’s Theory of Knowledge, and Doctrine of Forms, we have to study:

Theory of Knowledge, pp. 142-162A (First Period)

Theory of Forms (Metaphysics, Ontology) (Second Period), pp. 163-206A

Analyzing Plato’s select Dialogues:

Apology, Phaedo, Laches, Lesser Hippias, First Period, C

Meno, Georgias, Meno, Theatetus, Second Period, the period of transition C

Republic, Symposium, (Love, Lover and Beloved), Phaedrus, Period of Maturity

Laws, Parmenides and Letters, Works of Old Age, C

Section Three: Philosophy of Aristoteles

Life and Writings of Aristoteles, pp. 266-275A, pp. 18-39D


Book IX, pp. 104-117D

Logic: Ten Categories, Primary Substance and Secondary Substances; Their importance from the points of Metaphysics and Epistemology, pp. 277-286A

Posterior Analytics and Nature of knowledge, pp. 160-204D

Take Home Exams and Grading Scale: There are three exams and one research paper (7-10 pages and 5 to 7 sources):

Each exam carries 20% of the final grade and Research paper carries 40% of the final grade

Exam One: pre-Socratics due on October 15, 2015
Exam Two: Socrates and Plato due on Tuesday, Nov 22, 2015

Exam Thee: Aristoteles’ Philosophy, Tuesday, December 8, 2015

Research Paper: The topic of the research material must have been approved by the instructor Thursday, Nov 17, 2015 and is due on Tuesday, Dec. 15

MERRY CHRISMAS