

PHIL 3310 Ancient Philosophy

David Kaplan, Ph.D.

Office Hours: M-W-F 1:00-2:00, 3:00-4:00 PM

Room: EESAT 225d

Email: dkaplan@unt.edu

Phone: (940) 565-3521

This class will examine the writings of the two greatest ancient Greek philosophers, Plato and Aristotle. The goal of this course will be to read these philosophers not as ancient philosophers, who can only be understood in the context of their times, but as our contemporaries, who have something vital to share with us today. We will examine how issues in philosophical anthropology (Who am I? What is human nature?), ethics and political philosophy (How should I lead a just and virtuous life? What is a good government?), epistemology (What do I know? What is truth?), and metaphysics (What is reality?), are interrelated for the Ancient Greeks, as they are for us, too. We will focus especially on the moral and political dimensions of Plato and Aristotle. We will then consider MacIntyre's critique of Enlightenment morality and recovery of ancient Greek virtues. MacIntyre will serve as our vehicle for treating ancient philosophy as contemporary philosophy, helping us sort out which aspects should be retained and which should be left behind in the ancient world.

Texts: The Republic. Plato (Hackett)

The Nicomachean Ethics. Aristotle (Hackett)

After Virtue. Alasdair MacIntyre (Notre Dame University Press)

Requirements: First, you are expected to attend every class. You are allowed six unexcused absences; your grade will be lowered by one-half grade for each additional absence. Second, you are expected to have read the assigned readings before every class and to bring them with you to class. Third, you are expected to participate in every class by asking relevant questions, making appropriate comments, and listening respectfully to others.

Your grade will be based on weekly homework assignments, and two (six-seven page) essays. The homework will consist of your written summary, comments, and questions about the week's reading assignment. The essays will be graded by the standard lettering system. There will be no mid-term or final exam.

Papers 75%

Homework 25%

Participation to be used to determine borderline grades