

"Ancient Metaphysics and Natural Philosophy"

(From: Philosophic Classics, Volume I: Ancient Philosophy, 4/E)

PRESOCRATICS - must check to see what fragments are available

Thales. Anaximander. Anaximenes.

Pythagoras.

Xenophanes.

Heraclitus.

Parmenides. Melissus.

Zeno of Elea.

Empedocles.

Anaxagoras.

Democritus (and Leucippus).

PLATO.

*Phaedo*.

*Meno*.

*Republic* (Book I, 336b-349b; 350d-354b; II, 357a-362c; 367e-376e; III, 412b-445e; V, complete: 449-480a; VI-VII, 502c-521b).

[two lectures]

*Parmenides* (127-135).

*Theaetetus* (selections).

*Timaeus* (27d-34b).

ARISTOTLE.

*Physics* (Book II complete). [two lectures]

*Metaphysics* (Books I and XII complete).

*On the Soul* (Books II, 1-3; III, 4-5).

**Add also [course pack]:**

On Generation and Corruption (Part?)

Meteorology (Book IV)

LATER GREEK

Lucretius (& Epicureanism)

Explanation:

I have selected "Ancient Metaphysics and Natural Philosophy" as a theme for three reasons. First, it gives some focus to the material. Philosophy include

of sub-subjects and rather than face a bewildering array we shall instead focus on a few topics pertaining to the nature of the world in the broad sense. Second, the topic I find most interesting, and so I hope some of my interest will rub off. Third, that connects with the history of science, which is another good thing to learn.

<u>Lecture</u>	<u>Topic</u>	<u>Handouts</u>	<u>In</u>
1	Introduction	Course outline, map	
2	Thales/Anaximander/Anaximenes		
3	Pythagoras	Music?	
4	Xenophanes		
5	Heraclitus		World Picture
6	Parmenides/Melissus		
7	Zeno	Paradox illustrations	
8	Empedocles & vocabulary quiz		
9	Anaxagoras	On Pericles	
10	Leucippus/Democritus	Atomism timeline, study guide	
11	Plato's Meno	On Socrates	
12	Test #1		
13	Plato's Phaedo		
14	Plato's Republic #1		
15	Plato's Republic #2		
16	Plato's Parmenides & voc quiz		
17	Plato's Theaetetus		
18	Plato's Timaeus	Platonic solids, triangles, study guide	
19	Aristotle's Physics #1		
20	Test #2		
21	Aristotle's Physics #2		
22	Aristotle's Metaphysics	What is metaphysics?	
23	Aristotle's On the Soul	Idealism and Materialism	
24	Aristotle's On Generation & Corruption		
25	Aristotle's Meteorology	Ancient chemistry??, study guide	
26	Lucretius & Epicureanism #1, vocabulary quiz		
27	Lucretius & Epicureanism #2		
28	Discussion		Tie in
29	Buffer Day/tutorial		
30	Test #3		
Course evaluation			
Tests		3x20%	

Quizzes	3x5%
World picture project	5%
Tie in project	10%
Conduct, participation, etc.	10%

The Buffer Day is just in case I need more time to finish a topic or other. I do not need it for that. If that's so, the class is turned into a tutorial/review term test. The discussion day is to discuss your tie-in projects with your class. Please come prepared to discuss your projects. These projects tie ancient philosophy to other disciplines in your CEGEP program. Rhetoric, poetry, mathematics, chemistry, religion, political thought, astronomy, etc. are all suitable. Please submit a paper (usual style) consisting of a careful research report on your tie-in. Pick an interesting thesis statement, and defend it. Consult your instructor for advice on bibliography items; however, much of this project is up to you. Effort and thought "see the big picture" will be the main component of your grade, assuming it is well written and interesting.

World picture project. This homework assignment is designed to help you practice writing about and, if necessary, researching unfamiliar topics. Please submit a typed, double-spaced, 12 point font, etc. etc. paper of approximately 1000 words on the question "you think the world is like in the broadest outline?" Here are some questions to spur your thoughts. Please note that you realistically do not have to answer all, or even any of them; these will help focus you on the sorts of details I have in mind to consider. Note also that your evidence for many of these claims may be difficult to come by; the justification of what you hold will come later. More on this sort of thing in the lectures. As we go through this course we shall investigate these sorts of questions historically discussed in ancient Greece. All of the below should be taken as "that ..." and the like.

- Is the world finite or infinite in time? space?
- If you think the world is finite in extent, what happens if you were to go to the edge (if there is an edge ...) and throw a rock?
- What is the world made of? What sorts of stuff are there?
- Was the world created or not? By what, if it was? How did it come to be (either in its present form)?
- Is the world full everywhere, or are there places where there is nothing?
- Have there always been humans? Other living creatures?
- What sorts of things are the sun, moon, and stars?
- Are there any gods? What is their role in the world, if any?

Review Questions for Test #1 (of varying length and difficulty)

1. Explain the three reasons Aristotle gave for Thales' hypothesis concerning
2. What do you think the point of Plato's including the fact that the mocker of his "well experience" was a "witty and attractive servant-girl"?
3. What is a difference between "the unbounded" and "the infinite"? Does this understanding of Anaximander?
4. Explain in your own words Anaximenes' "indifference argument".
5. What is an *arche*? What is *apeiron*?
6. Are the gods still believed in today anthropomorphic? Does Xenophanes' criticism apply?
7. Why do you suppose Xenophanes, Parmenides and Empedocles wrote in verse?
8. Does Parmenides use an "indifference argument"? To what end?
9. Explain the "arrow" paradox of Zeno.
10. Explain how Zeno and Parmenides' books illustrate the thesis that Zeno introduced dialectic.
11. What are the Empedoclean elements?
12. Why was Anaxagoras accused of blasphemy or atheism?
13. Was the above charge just? Discuss with reference to *nous*.
14. What is the evidence that Anaxagoras was interested in nutrition?
15. Discuss Anaxagoras' principle of "everything in everything" in the light of modern science.
16. According to Democritus, in what way is there really only atoms and void?
17. How are Democritean atoms like modern elementary particles?
18. Aristotle was to argue later that Democritus did not provide an adequate philosophy on the grounds that he did not explain the origin of motion of the criticism fair to Democritus? Why or why not?

Review Questions for Test #2 (of varying length and difficulty)

1. Why do the characters in the Meno inquire into what knowledge is?
2. Explain why or why not you think that Socrates is portrayed as giving the leading questions in the Meno.
3. Why does the Platonic Socrates in the Phaedo reject the Pythagorean view of a kind of attunement?
4. Socrates was made fun of in Aristophanes' The Clouds. Therein he's depicted as a natural philosopher. Do you think this lends support to the historical plausibility of the discussion in the Phaedo that Socrates once was concerned with speculation about the world and then gave it up? Why or why not?
5. Why does Plato think we cannot get the idea of equality from examining the sensible things? How does he think we can get it?
6. Do you think a materialist can answer the criticism the Platonic Socrates makes in the Phaedo 98d-99b? How?
7. Explain how Plato relates human natures to human occupations in the Republic.
8. Why does Plato have Parmenides help Socrates reject the idea that the Forms are particulars that they are connected to?
9. Why do Socrates and Theaetetus reject the idea that perception is knowledge?
10. In what ways are the Platonic triangles of the Timaeus like the Democritean atoms? In what ways not?
11. Why, according to Plato, is the universe imperfect?

### Review Questions for Test #3

1. It is often said that "Aristotle's law of motion" can be written in modern form  $F = kv$  where  $F$  represents a force,  $k$  a constant representing the resistance of a medium and  $v$  is the velocity of a moving object. What features of the Aristotle's law of motion does this account for, and what does it leave out?
2. Why do you suppose Aristotle felt the need to include a lecture on what we call "metaphysics" in his work? How does it relate to his Physics?
3. Aristotle claims that there cannot be void for any motion in it would be infinite. What do you suppose Democritus's response to this might have been if he had given one?
4. Why do you suppose Aristotle is ambivalent about the immortality of the soul?
5. In the works we have read, does Plato ever offer any views on the subject of Generation and Corruption? Why or why not?
6. Does Meteorology IV commit Aristotle to believing that the elements can transform into one another?
7. Why does Lucretius believe religion to be harmful?
8. How does Lucretius explain free will?
9. What is the difference in views concerning the natural motion of atoms between Aristotle and Democritus?