Course Description:
This course will deal with important texts in ancient metaphysics and epistemology, and is not intended as an introduction to ancient philosophy: I will assume that you are already familiar with some of Plato’s dialogues, and have read at least one or two works by Aristotle. The goal of the course is not to tell a unified story of Plato’s influence on Aristotle, but to follow each thinker along his own path and into his own problems. There will of course be common issues and even references (e.g., by Aristotle to Plato), but these will not be our main interest.

We will focus on the question of Being: what does “Being” mean for each thinker? This is the “metaphysical” question of our course. Hand in hand with this question, we find the problem of Knowing: “Knowing” somehow stands in a unique relation vis-à-vis Being. The course starts with a discussion of Parmenides, Zeno, and Heraclitus, since they are indispensable for understanding such works as Plato’s Parmenides, Theaetetus, and Sophist. These dialogues and hence the later theory of forms will be the main topic of our second unit. In the third and final unit, we will turn to Aristotle, examining the epistemological texts of the Organon before turning to an investigation of Aristotle’s theory of substance in the Physics and Metaphysics.

The texts in this course are hard—but we will deal with them appropriately, moving at a reasonable speed, and on the understanding that one has to encounter these texts for the first time. The goal is that by May, you will understand in what sense “Being” is a question and how Plato and Aristotle go about addressing, if not answering, this question, each in his own ingenious way.
TENTATIVE SCHEDULE

I. Elea & Ephesus

JAN
WEEK 1
T28  Introduction: Parmenides
R30  Parmenides

FEB
WEEK 2
T4  Zeno/Heraclitus
R6  Heraclitus

WEEK 3
T11  Phaedo (selections)
R13  Republic (selections)  class canceled due to weather

WEEK 4
T18  Republic  Parmenides; Short Discussion #1 due at beginning of class
R20  Parmenides

WEEK 5
T25  Parmenides
R27  Parmenides

MAR
WEEK 6
T4  Theaetetus
R6  Theaetetus

WEEK 7
T11  Theaetetus
R13  Sophist

WEEK 8  SPRING BREAK

WEEK 9
T25  Sophist;  ***Midterm Paper due at beginning of class***
R27  Sophist/Plato Review
III. Aristotle

APR
WEEK 10
T1 Categories; Prior Analytics, selections
R3 Posterior Analytics, selections

WEEK 11
T8 Posterior Analytics; Physics I, selections
R10 Physics II-IV, selections

WEEK 12
T15 Metaphysics A, α
R17 Metaphysics B, Γ; Short Discussion #2 due at beginning of class

WEEK 13
T22 Metaphysics Δ, E
R24 Metaphysics Z

WEEK 14 Metaphysics Z (H Θ)
T29

MAY
R1

WEEK 15 Metaphysics Λ
T6
R8

***Wednesday, 14 May, Final Term Paper due at 5 PM***

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D.E.C. Category & Course Objectives:
D.E.C. Category I: “Category I courses consider the Western cultural tradition through specialized study of a European nation or area from one or more viewpoints (e.g., historical, artistic, social, political).”

Required Texts:
Hesiod, Works & Days, Theogony, Hackett (0872201791)
Curd and McKirahan, A Presocratics Reader, Hackett (1603843051)
Plato, Complete Works, Hackett (0872203492)
Aristotle, Selections, Hackett (0915145677)
Inwood and Carson, Hellenistic Philosophy, Hackett (0872203786)

NOTE: ONLY THESE EDITIONS/TRANSLATIONS ARE ACCEPTABLE. BRING YOUR BOOK TO CLASS

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1 TBD; it is premature to tell exactly how much of which texts of Aristotle it will be make sense to read, so this section of the Syllabus is very tentative.
**Evaluation:**
Final Paper (7-10 pp.): 30%
Midterm Paper (5-8 pp.): 20%
2 short discussions (2-3 pp.): 15% each
2 text summary presentations: 10%
Attendance and participation: 10%

**Class Preparation, Presentations, Participation, and Procedures:**

*Preparation.* This course will involve a good bit of reading as well as class participation. It is therefore important that you are prepared to devote at least seven hours to reading per week. You will *not* need seven hours to read the material, of course, but I would like you to *review* your readings more than once, either before or after class.

*Presentations.* Given the seminar-like structure, you will present a brief summary, including a handout with the main points (no more than one page, please), to the class *twice* during term. I will try my best to accommodate your individual interests, but the second round of presentations will begin in the second half of term when everyone has had a chance to do one presentation. The presentation should last about *ten* minutes, and no more than 15; it will be marked P/F. The purpose of the presentations is to stimulate discussion based on your *interest*, and can consist largely in raising problems and asking questions.

*Participation.* Given the small size of the class, I will expect everyone to pull their weight. By “participation”, I mean: being in class, awake, prepared, with your *book open to the passage being discussed*, and fully engaged. Participation does not necessarily mean “talking”, and it’s fine not to speak every class. But hopefully, the topics themselves will draw all of us in at full power.

*Procedures.* I will begin each class with attendance and a statement of the agenda. The first order of business will usually be that day’s student summary of the reading. We will then open the floor to discussion, interspersed with shorter or longer lecture-sections by the instructor, as needed.

For class to proceed smoothly, it is important that certain rules be respected. Basically they reduce to this principle: don’t act in a way you would object to in a classmate or me, to wit:

1) I *will be on time*; class will start no later than 11:35. In the event I have to be late, I will do everything possible to notify you in advance. Please do likewise.

2) I *will not be using any electronic devices*, just good old-fashioned books, paper, and pen, i.e., *no laptops or tablets*. If there is a special reason you might *have* to use one, please see me individually (see DSS Statement, below). **TURN OFF ALL ELECTRONIC DEVICES BEFORE AND FOR THE DURATION OF THE CLASS.**

3) I *will not eat* in class, but will likely indulge in a beverage. You may do the same.

4) I *will not leave the classroom* except in a serious emergency; getting up, exiting, and re-entering the classroom is extremely disturbing and distracting to me and to your classmates.
5) Finally, I will never, ever forget my book!

*Note: Violations of these policies will negatively affect your grade.*

**In short, come to class prepared to focus on the task at hand, be respectful to all and sundry, and do not do anything to distract others from learning.**

**Tardiness, Attendance and Makeup Policy**
Class attendance is mandatory, and your illness is the only acceptable reason for an absence, save for a death in the immediate family. If you are sick and cannot come to class, you must provide me with a medical note. For every two unexcused absences, your final grade will be reduced by a partial letter grade (i.e., from an A- to a B+, or from a D to an F). Occasional tardiness is understandable, but if you are habitually late, this will negatively affect your grade (three times late [after I take attendance] = one absence).

**Blackboard**
Please update your email address on Blackboard. Reading guidelines; paper topics; and occasional secondary sources will be posted on Blackboard, as well as announcements.

**Disability Support Services (DSS) Statement**
If you have a physical, psychological, medical or learning disability that may impact your course work, please contact DSS, 128 ECC Building, at 632-6748. They will determine with you what accommodations are necessary and appropriate. All information and documentation is confidential. Students who require assistance during emergency evacuation are encouraged to discuss their needs with DSS and me. For procedures and information, go to the following website: [http://www.ehs.sunysb.edu](http://www.ehs.sunysb.edu), and search “Fire Safety and Evacuation and Disabilities”.

**Academic Integrity Statement**
Each student must pursue his or her academic goals honestly and be personally accountable for all submitted work. **REPRESENTING ANOTHER PERSON’S WORK AS YOUR OWN IS ALWAYS WRONG, AND PLAGIARISM IS GROUNDS FOR AUTOMATIC FAILURE OF THIS COURSE.** Any suspected instance of academic dishonesty will be reported to the Academic Judiciary. For more comprehensive information on academic integrity, including categories of academic dishonesty, please refer to the academic judiciary website at [http://www.stonybrook.edu/uaa/academicjudiciary/](http://www.stonybrook.edu/uaa/academicjudiciary/)

**Critical Incident Management**
Stony Brook University expects students to respect the rights, privileges, and property of other people. Faculty are required to report to the Office of Judicial Affairs any disruptive behavior that interrupts their ability to teach, compromises the safety of the learning environment, and/or inhibits students’ ability to learn.

**Late Work Policy**
No late papers will be accepted, and **NO EXTENSIONS WILL BE GRANTED**, except for documented medical reasons or the death of an immediate family member. If you know that you will be away on the due date of a paper, it is your responsibility to inform me directly of this fact and arrange to turn in your paper or take the exam ahead of time.