

**WILLIAM RAINEY HARPER COLLEGE**  
**LIBERAL ARTS DIVISION**  
**GENERAL COURSE OUTLINE**

PHI	231	History of Philosophy: Ancient and Medieval	3-0	3
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Course Prefix	Course Number	Course Title	(Lec-Lab)	Semester Hours
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**COURSE DESCRIPTION**

Surveys the major figures and schools in Western philosophical tradition from the pre-Socratic Greeks through the 14th century. Emphasis on interpreting philosophical reflection in light of the social, political, religious and cultural context from which it arises. IAI H4 901

**TOPICAL OUTLINE**

- I. Introduction
  - A. Philosophy and Culture: The Role of Philosophy
  - B. Philosophy as a Historical Process
    - 1. History as the appropriation and transcendence of the past
    - 2. The philosophy of the history of philosophy
  - C. The Problem of Historical Knowledge
    - 1. Subjective viewpoints and objective truth
    - 2. The role of historical interpretation
    - 3. The limitations of historical knowledge
    - 4. Towards a critical-historical method of interpreting the history of philosophy
  - D. The Sources of History of Philosophy
    - 1. Primary source texts
    - 2. Secondary source texts
- II. Early Greek Cosmology--The Pre-Socratic
  - A. General characteristics
  - B. Thales of Miletus
  - C. Anaximander
  - D. Anaximenes
  - E. The Pythagorean Brotherhood
  - F. Heraclitus
  - G. The Eleatics: Parmenides, Zeno, Xenophanes
  - H. Empedocles
  - I. Anaxagoras
  - J. Democritus
  - K. The significance of pre-Socratic philosophy
- III. Classical Hellenic Philosophy
  - A. General Characteristics
  - B. Socrates
  - C. Plato
  - D. Aristotle
  - E. The Contributions of Plato and Aristotle
- IV. Hellenistic Philosophy
  - A. General characteristics of the time
  - B. Epicureanism
  - C. Stoicism
  - D. Skepticism

- V. Jewish-Greek Religion and Philosophy
  - A. General characteristics
  - B. Gnosticism
  - C. Philo
  - D. Plotinus and Neo-Platonism
- VI. The Greek-Christian Transition
  - A. General characteristics
  - B. The Patristics
  - C. The Apologists
  - D. St. Augustine
  - E. The Significance of the Augustinian Synthesis
- VII. The Development of Medieval Scholasticism
  - A. General Characteristics
  - B. John Scotus Erigena
  - C. Anselm of Canterbury
  - D. Peter Abelard
  - E. Anti-Scholastic Tendencies of the 12th Century
  - F. Arabian Philosophy and the Rediscovery of Aristotle's Writings
  - G. The 13th Century--the Culmination of Medieval Philosophy
    - 1. Albertus Magnus
    - 2. St. Thomas Aquinas
    - 3. Duns Scotus
    - 4. William of Occam
  - H. Later Scholasticism
- VIII. The Transition to Renaissance and Modern Philosophy

#### METHODS OF PRESENTATION

1. Lecture/discussion method
2. Films, AV units, visiting lecturer, when appropriate and available
3. Student presentation, when appropriate

#### STUDENT OUTCOMES: (*The student should . . .*)

1. Explain the central philosophical issues or questions of the period.
2. Explain the relationship between philosophy and the social, political, religious and cultural contexts of the period.
3. Analyze the development of philosophy within the period.
4. Evaluate the main arguments or ideas of at least three primary sources from the period.
5. Support a position with research and argumentation.
6. Write at least ten pages, of approximately 300 words each, of college-level writing in the process of demonstrating the accomplishment of the other outcomes.

#### METHODS OF EVALUATION

1. Written examinations, primarily interpretive and critical essay
2. Short term papers on approved topics
3. Class participation

#### TEXTBOOKS/INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS

Stumpf-Fieser, *Socrates to Sartre and Beyond*, 8<sup>th</sup> Edition, McGraw Hill, 2007. Plato, *The Republic*

Rosen, Stanley, *The Examined Life: Readings from Western Philosophy from Plato to Kant*, Random House, 2000.

PREPARED BY: Colleen Burns

Semester      Fall      Year      2015  
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