



History of Western Philosophy I | PIU11031

Year	Junior Fresher
ECTS Credits	5
Contact Hours	24 hours (20 x lectures and 4 x tutorials)
Pre-requisite	None
Semester	1
Module Leader & Lecturer	Professor Paul O’Grady; Dr. Samantha Fazekas
Contact Email	pogradey@tcd.ie ; sfazekas@tcd.ie

Module Outline:

Component 1 (Ancient Philosophy):

This component will offer an introduction to ancient philosophy. Specifically, we will focus on the commonalities and differences between Plato and Aristotle. To this end, we will first familiarize ourselves with the central tenets of Plato’s thought: his definition of philosophy as the love of wisdom and the theory of the forms. Then we will familiarize ourselves with the central tenets of Aristotle’s thought: his distinction between potentiality and actuality, his conception of first principles, and his account of the human good.

Component 2 (Medieval Philosophy)

The time scale of medieval philosophy is very long, from Augustine (354-430ce) to William of Ockham (d.1347ce). The philosophers of this period built on and developed the work of ancient philosophy, especially Plato and Aristotle, mediated through later Greek schools, such as Neoplatonism. Many of the major philosophers of the period were concerned with relating philosophy to the Abrahamic religious traditions – Judaism, Christianity and Islam. Given the diversity of figures and strands in this period, the course will begin and end with a survey of main movements, but will focus on two figures in particular. We will begin with Augustine and examine how he brought Greek philosophy into dialogue with Christianity. We examine his great book, the *Confessions*, and look at his rejection of skepticism. We then turn to Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274) and examine his general metaphysical system. Hence this component will examine a major epistemological position and a major metaphysical position from the medieval period.



Recommended Reading List:

The complete reading list, including primary and secondary literature, will be finalized at the beginning of the term. Our central texts for the first component will be **excerpts** from the following:

- Plato, *Symposium*, trans. Benjamin Jowett (Project Gutenberg E-Book, 2013).
- Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, *The Complete Works of Aristotle*, trans. W.D. Ross, ed. Jonathan Barnes (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1984).
- Aristotle, *The Nicomachean Ethics*, trans. D.P. Chase (Project Gutenberg E-Book, 2021).

Assessment:

1 Essay (end of module) 50%: 1 Examination (end of module) 50%. Students choose the component on which to write their essay, and write their exam question on the other one.

The essay should be no more than 1000 words and is due: 29th Nov 2024.

The exam should be no more than 1000 words. Date and time will be announced later in the term.

* Since College requires that all end of term assessment should be submitted within the teaching term, it is inevitable that there will be bunching of deadlines around 29th Nov. As you have been notified of submission deadlines at the start of term you are supposed to plan for this. Bunching of deadlines is not a basis on which extensions will be granted.