

Philosophy Board of Study
SUNY/Purchase
Spring 1991

Philosophy in the World of Language: The Struggle Over the Question of Humanity

TEXTS:

Jason L. Saunders, ed., *Greek and Roman Philosophy after Aristotle*, New York: The Free Press, 1966 [Saunders].

Augustine, *Confessions*, R.S. Pine-Coffin, tr., New York: Penguin, 1961.

Thomas Aquinas, *Treatise on Law*, Benziger Bros., trs., Chicago: Henry Regnery Co., 1964.

Richard H. Popkin, ed., *The Philosophy of the 16th and 17th Centuries*, New York: The Free Press, 1966 [Popkin].

Lewis White Beck, ed., *18th Century Philosophy*, New York: The Free Press, 1966 [Beck].

PREREQUISITES: None. The syllabus may seem complex but most readings are short and the course will tell a relatively simple story, comprehensible to all. Naturally there is some advantage in taking the Purchase History of Philosophy series (I, II, III, & IV) in sequence, but each is designed to be self-contained.

PURPOSE: To facilitate an orientation in the modern world by a study of the emancipation of persons and the degradation of thought during the “middle ages” between the end of classical Greece (the aristocratic *polis* in which thought was discovered) and the beginning of a planetary “civil society” (in which thought is being rediscovered during your lifetimes). It is the thesis of this course that these “middle ages” are best understood as the period when the price of emancipation was the conflation of theory (thought) with logic (formal operations) and when the (actual) nature of things was taken to have the (formal) structure of language. Hence “philosophy in the world of language.” With reference to the Gulf War of 1991, we will pay special attention to the role of Islam in the preservation and development of the Western tradition.

I. HELLENISTIC PHILOSOPHY: THE DISCOVERY OF “HUMANITY”

A. The Formation of a “Portable *Paideia*” in the 5th & 4th Century *Polis*

1/24 Two Concepts of Humanity: The formation of the struggle between (1.) “*Paideia*-Humanity” [Isocrates and Xenophon, bringing the *polis* to the “barbarians”] and (2.) “*Logos*-Humanity” [Stoicism, forging, in the words of Chomsky, “a distinctively human semiotic”]

RECOMMENDED FOR PHILOSOPHY MAJORS:

“The Discovery of *Humanitas*, and Our Attitude Toward the Greeks” [in Snell, 246–63]

“The History of Art as a Humanistic Discipline” [in Panofsky, 1–25]

Thucydides, *The Peloponnesian War*, Pericles’ “Funeral Oration”

Isocrates, *Panegyricus*, 47ff.

Xenophon, *Cyropaideia*, Cyrus’ “Address to his Soldiers”

B. Nature and Human Nature at the End of the Ancient World: The Return to Democritean Atomism; the Epicurean “Swerve”

1/28 Lucretius, from *On the Nature of Things* [in Saunders, 15–46]

Epicurus, Two Letters and Principal Doctrines [in Saunders, 47–57]

C. The Stoic Revolution: Logic is Conflated with Theory and *Logos*-Humanity is Invented

1. The Discovery of Grammar, the Bifurcation of Language [Inner and Outer *Logos*], and the Invention of Truth-functional Logic: The Proposition as Bearer of Truth or Falsity [Binary Logic—The Root of Computer Science]

1/31 Stoic Logic [in Saunders, 60–79]; handout from Benson Mates, *Stoic Logic*, pp. 104–5 [Sextus, *Adv. Math.* VIII, 245ff.]

2. Existence [ti] as a Predicate and the Invention of “Mind” as the Asserter of Propositions: The Advent of an Epoch

2/4 Stoic Physics [in Saunders, 80–110]

3. The Cosmopolitan Morality of *Logos*-Humanity: The Idea of Humans as Ethical Agents via Linguistic Competence

2/7 Stoic Ethics [in Saunders, 111–50]

D. Skepticism: Language, Logic, and the Formalization of non-Assertoric Discourse [later: “You know ... , I mean ... ”]

2/11 Sextus Empiricus, *Outlines of Pyrrhonism* [in Saunders, 152–82]

E. The “Classical” Form of Post-*Politan Paideia* for the European Tradition

Short handout from Cicero

F. The “Alexandrian World View”: *Agape* vs. *Eros*

1. Diaspora Judaism’s Creation of Creation as a Stoic Speech Act and its Creation of “Gnosticism”

2/14 Philo (Judaeus) of Alexandria, from *On the Account of the World’s Creation Given by Moses* [in Saunders, 200–27]

Philo, *Moses*, II, 127–130 [handout]

St. Paul, *Book of Acts* [in Saunders, 290–92]

Clement of Alexandria, *The Stromata* [in Saunders, 305–27]

2. The Last Stand of “Paganism” vs. “Gnosticism”: Rational Mysticism, The One and its Alienations

2/18 Plotinus, *Ennead* I, vi (Beauty); *Ennead* IV, viii (The Soul’s Descent into Body); *Ennead* V, i (The Three Initial Hypostases); *Ennead* VI, ix (On the Good, or the One); *Ennead* I, iii (Dialectic) [in Saunders, 230–75]

RECOMMENDED: Knowles, 16–31

[QUIZ on Hellenistic Philosophy]

3. The Polarization of Two Humanities in the Hellenistic-Roman World: (1.) as Aristocratic *Paideia* (Cicero) vs. (2.) as “*Sapere Aude!*” (Horace)

RECOMMENDED: Knowles, 59–68

II. AUGUSTINE'S "CARITAS": THE MELDING OF *LOGOS*-HUMANITY AND *PAIDEIA*-HUMANITY AND THE SHAPING OF LATIN CHRISTENDOM

A. The Invention of a New Literary Genre and a New "Mental" World: Introspective Autobiography

- 2/21 Augustine, *Confessions*, Bks. I–IV [pp. 21–90*—see NOTE on p. 8]
RECOMMENDED: Peter Brown, *Augustine of Hippo*, Part I
Judith Herrin, *The Formation of Christendom*, Introduction and Part I, Late Antiquity

B. Definition of Medieval Philosophy as a Response to the Gnostic Challenge: "How Evil in a Created World?"

1. The Invention of Radically Free Will as the Origin of Evil

- 2/25 Augustine, *Confessions*, Bks. V–VII [pp. 91–156*]
RECOMMENDED: Knowles, 32–50; Blumenberg, 125–136

2. The Critical Question: Is "Original Sin" [Ultimate Free Will] Erotic or Theoretic? Theoretical "Curiosity" put on Trial

- 2/28 Augustine, *Confessions*, Bks. VIII–X [pp. 157–252*]
RECOMMENDED: Blumenberg, 309–42

3. God the Creator absolved of Evil ["Humanity Did It!"]

- 3/4 Augustine, *Confessions*, Bks. XI–XIII [pp. 253–347*]

C. The Consummation of Latin Christendom: The University, Gothic Architecture, and Scholasticism

1. Philo's Stoic *Logos* of Creation become "Ordinary Language": "The Fool hath said in his Heart, 'There is no God'" or: "Existence is a Predicate"

Anselm, from *Proslogion* & Reply to "the Fool," short handout

2. "Aristotelian" Entities as Analogues of Divine Being

- 3/7 Thomas Aquinas, "Treatise on Law," from *Summa Theologiae*, I, q. 90–93 [of Law and Eternal Law, in Aquinas, pp. 1–54]
RECOMMENDED: Knowles, 206–68; Panofsky, *Gothic Architecture and Scholasticism*.

3. Human *Paideia* as Modeled on Divine *Logos*

- 3/11 Thomas Aquinas, "Treatise on Law," from *Summa Theologiae*, I, q. 94–97 [of Natural Law and Human Law, in Aquinas, pp. 54–116]
RECOMMENDED: Dijksterhuis, 164–240; M.B. Foster, "The Christian Doctrine of Creation and the Rise of Modern Natural Science," in O'Connor & Oakley, 29–53

III. PHILOSOPHY IN RESPONSE TO THE DISCOVERY OF A GLOBAL HUMANITY

A. The "Copernican Revolutions" in Cartography, Faith, and Physics

1. "Worlds Unseen by the Ancient Authority" (Aristotle): The Pleasures of Theory on Trial

- 3/14 a. Europe's Wonder at a Planetary Humanity
Amerigo Vespucci, *Letter on the New World* [in Popkin, 24–30]
b. *Paideia*-Humanity as Urbane Catholicism
Erasmus, from *In Praise of Folly* [in Popkin, 32–36]

c. **Logos-Humanity as Militant Protestantism**

Luther, from *Address to the Nobility* [in Popkin, 38–45]

[First Essay Due]

2. **The Mechanization of Astronomy and the Ideal of Physics as a Mathematical Science: A Triumph for Logos-Cosmology**

3/18 Copernicus, from *The Revolutions of the Heavenly Bodies* [in Popkin, 47–51]

Kepler, from *The Harmonies of the World* [in Popkin, 53–57]

Galileo, from *Letters on Sunspots* and *The Assayer* [in Popkin, 59–68]

RECOMMENDED: Dijksterhuis, 287–323; 333–67

B. **The Rediscovery of Hellenistic Skepticism, The Essay Form of Literature, and the New Rhetoric of Science in Politics and Religion**

1. **CONTRA: “All men by nature desire to know”/Against Scholastic Aristotelianism**

3/21 Montaigne, from *Apology for Raimond Sebond* [in Popkin, 70–81]

Bacon, from *The Great Instauration* [in Popkin, 83–109]

[QUIZ on Pre-Cartesian Philosophy]

[SPRING BREAK: 3/23–31]

2. **PRO: “All men by nature know their ‘Minds’ absolutely”/From Methodic Skepticism to the New Dogmatism**

4/1 Descartes, from *Meditations on First Philosophy*, Letter of Dedication, Synopsis, and I–III [in Popkin, 122–54]

4/4 Descartes, from *Meditations on First Philosophy*, IV–VI and from the Reply to the Second Set of Objections [in Popkin, 154–87]

RECOMMENDED: Dijksterhuis, 386–431

3. **Mental and Verbal Discourse: The Reinvention of Stoic Logic and the Emergence of Probability**

4/8 Hobbes, *Leviathan*, chs. 1–7 [in Popkin, 189–217]

Pascal, *Pensées* [in Popkin, 219–30]

RECOMMENDED: Dijksterhuis, 431–63; Hacking, 1–30 [or browse]

C. **“Modernizations” of Parmenides, Aristotle, and Sextus**

1. **Metaphysics in the Manner of Geometry: Human Self-Emancipation by means of a Deductive Exclusion of God the Creator**

4/11 Spinoza, from *Theologico-Political Treatise* and *The Ethics*, Part I [in Popkin, 232–64]

4/15 Spinoza, from *The Ethics*, Parts II–V [in Popkin, 264–78]

2. **Aristotelian Individuality in Mathematical Dress**

4/18 Leibniz, Letter to Simon Foucher (1675), ‘On True Method in Philosophy and Theology’ (c. 1686), ‘On Some Philosophical Axioms and Mathematical Fictions,’ ‘The Horizon of Human Doctrine’ (after 1690), ‘On Wisdom’ (c. 1693), ‘New System of Nature and of the Communication of Substances, as Well as of the Union of Soul and Body’ (1695), ‘Second Explanation of the System of the Communication of Substances’ (1696), and from *Theodicy* [in Popkin, 306–39]

Bayle, from *Historical and Critical Dictionary* [in Popkin, 341–56]

IV. THE (MOMENTARY) TRIUMPH OF *LOGOS*-HUMANITY

A. The Mechanization of Nature and the Grammar of the “Mind”

1. Matters of Quantitative Association in the Minds of God and Man

4/22 Newton, from the *Principia* [in Beck, 13–21]

Locke, from the *Essay Concerning Human Understanding* [in Beck, 23–61]

RECOMMENDED: Dijksterhuis, 463–91

2. Mental Associations as Matters of Habit

a. A Celebration of British *Paideia*-Humanity

4/25 Hume, from *An Inquiry Concerning Human Understanding* [in Beck, 93–131]

b. A Sincere Swiss Attack on *Paideia*-Humanity

Rousseau, *Discourse on the Arts and Sciences* [in Beck, 153–63]

3. Individual Substances as Pre-Programed Perspectival Atoms: The “Revelation” of Divine *Logos* as the Center of Human *Paideia*

4/29 Leibniz, *Monadology* and from *New Essays Concerning Human Understanding and Correspondence with Samuel Clarke* [in Beck, 194–214]

Wolff, *Reasonable Thoughts on GOD, the WORLD, the SOUL of MAN, and THINGS in GENERAL* [in Beck, 217–222]

Lessing, *The Education of the Human Race* [in Beck, 225–39]

[SECOND ESSAY DUE]

B. Kant’s “Copernican Revolution”: The Reinternalization of Logic (Stoicism) and the Absolutization of Metaphysical Finitude (Philonism)

1. Intuitions and Concepts: The Logical Contrast

5/2 Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, Introduction and Transcendental Aesthetic [in Beck, 242–252]

2. Receptivity and Spontaneity: The Metaphysical Contrast

5/6 Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, Analytic of Concepts and of Principles [in Beck, 252–267]

Dove, “[The Logical Forms of Judgment in Kant](#)” [handout]

3. “Existence is not a Predicate”: The End of an Epoch

5/9 Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, Transcendental Dialectic [in Beck, 267–302]

5/13 FINAL EXAMINATION

TEXTS RECOMMENDED [on reserve; asterisk indicates availability in bookstore]:

* William Strunk, Jr., & E.B. White, *The Elements of Style*, New York: Macmillan, 1979.

Morris, William, ed., *The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language*, Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1969 [every undergraduate—and educated adult—needs to have a good medium-sized dictionary at hand while reading and writing. The best known to your instructor is this one. An abridged paperback edition is available; if you can afford it, get the full-sized first edition. It will serve you well for many years].

W.H. McNeill, *History of Western Civilization: A Handbook*, Chicago: U of Chicago Press, 1986 [the best one-volume history of the West known to your instructor; it will place the readings of this course, and much else, in a helpful context].

Philosophy in the World of Language, 1991

Page 6

G.W.F. Hegel, *Hegel's Lectures on the History of Philosophy*, E.S. Haldane and F.H. Simson, trs., London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1894, Vols. II & III [these lectures marked the beginning of the study of the history of philosophy as a liberal arts discipline].

Bruno Snell, *The Discovery of the Mind in Greek Philosophy and Literature*, T.G. Rosenmeyer, tr., New York: Dover, 1982 [a text for History of Philosophy I]

Benson Mates, *Stoic Logic*, Berkeley: U of California Press, 1961.

Giovanni Reale, *A History of Ancient Philosophy*, Vol. III, *The Systems of the Hellenistic Age* (1985), Vol. IV, *The Schools of the Imperial Age* (1989), J.R. Caton, tr., Albany: SUNY Press.

Brad Inwood and L.P. Gerson, *Hellenistic Philosophy: Introductory Readings*, Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Co., 1988.

A.A. Long & D.N. Sedley, eds., *The Hellenistic Philosophers*, Cambridge: CUP, 1987.

A.A. Long, *Hellenistic Thought: Stoics, Epicureans, Sceptics*, Berkeley: U of California Press, 1986.

Hans Blumenberg, *The Legitimacy of the Modern Age*, R.M. Wallace, tr., Cambridge: MIT Press, 1985 [the best answer yet to the question: "what were 'the middle ages' between?"]

Anders Nygren, *Agape and Eros*, P.S. Watson, tr., New York: Harper & Row, 1969.

Daniel O'Connor & Francis Oakley, eds., *Creation: The Impact of an Idea*, New York: Scribner's, 1969.

Peter Brown, *Augustine of Hippo*, Berkeley: U of California Press, 1969 [**Brown**].

Judith Herrin, *The Formation of Christendom*, Princeton: PUP, 1987.

* David Knowles, *The Evolution of Medieval Thought*, New York: Vintage, 1964 [**Knowles**].

Erwin Panofsky, *Gothic Architecture and Scholasticism*, New York: Meridian, 1976.

Erwin Panofsky, *Meaning in the Visual Arts*, Garden City, Doubleday, 1955.

E.J. Dijksterhuis, *The Mechanization of the World Picture: Pythagoras to Newton*, C. Dikshoorn, tr., Princeton: PUP, 1986 [**Dijksterhuis**].

Ian Hacking, *The Emergence of Probability: A Philosophical Study of Early Ideas about Probability, Induction and Statistical Inference*, Cambridge: CUP, 1975 [**Hacking**].

BASES FOR EVALUATION:

- Regular class attendance (a maximum of 3 unexcused absences). If you cannot assure yourself of attending at least 23 of the 26 class meetings, please withdraw from the course at once.
- Careful reading of all assignments before each class. You will notice that many of the assignments are relatively short. The "recommended" readings are, of course, not required. When the required readings total less than 30 pages for a class, it is expected that they will have been read at least twice. * PLEASE NOTE: The readings are numerous, but the total reading assignments per week are mostly well under 100 pages. Some, especially Augustine's *Confessions*, are longer. Do not panic. It is an important part of your education to learn to browse, skim, or read selectively. You will discover what passages require closer attention. You will also discover that the *Confessions* reads, for the most part, like a novel. (Perhaps it *is*—indeed, the first—novel. Try reading it as such.) In any event, some clues will be given as to the philosophically more pregnant passages.
- Informed participation in *all* class discussions.

Philosophy in the World of Language, 1991

Page 7

- Two quizzes (identification and analysis of short passages from the required readings) and a final in-class examination (including essay questions).
- Two typed essays (a total of 10 double-spaced typewritten pages, at ca. 250 words per page) on assigned or approved topics specifically related to the course. The basic guidelines for both papers are to be had from the handout, “TEN CLUES TO BETTER PAPERS IN PHILOSOPHY.” Be sure you have a copy of this at hand when you write your papers. It will also answer any questions you might have about “extensions.”