

Philosophy Board of Study
SUNY/Purchase
Fall 1990
Philosophy in the Polis

TEXTS:

- Homer, *The Odyssey*, tr. by Robert Fitzgerald, Garden City, NY: Anchor, 1963 [PB].
R.E. Allen, ed., *Greek Philosophy: Thales to Aristotle*, 2nd ed., New York: The Free Press, 1985 [PB].
Bruno Snell, *The Discovery of the Mind in Greek Philosophy and Literature*, tr. by T.G. Rosenmeyer, New York: Dover, 1982 [PB].

I. ORALITY, POETRY, AND CIVILIZED ARGUMENT

- 9/6 From Force to Persuasion: Memorable Stories, Peasant-Citizens, and the Civilization Process
- 9/10 *The Odyssey*, Bks. I–IV
Thales, Anaximander, and Anaximenes (Allen, pp. 27–34)
Snell, *Discovery*, Introduction (pp. v–xii)
- 9/13 *The Odyssey*, Bks. V–VIII
Pythagorean Testimony (Allen, pp. 35–39)
Snell, *Discovery*, “Homer’s View of Man” (pp. 1–22)
- 9/17 *The Odyssey*, Bks. IX–XII
Heraclitus (Allen, pp. 40–42)
Snell, *Discovery*, “The Olympian Gods” (pp. 23–42)
- 9/24 *The Odyssey*, Bks. XIII–XVI
Parmenides and Zeno (Allen, pp. 43–48)
Snell, *Discovery*, “The Rise of the Individual in the Early Greek Lyric” (pp. 43–70)
- 9/27 *The Odyssey*, Bks. XVII–XX
Empedocles, Leucippus, and Democritus (Allen, pp. 49–50, 53–54)
Snell, *Discovery*, “Pindar’s Hymn to Zeus” (pp. 71–89)
- 10/1 *The Odyssey*, Bks. XXI–XXIV
Anaxagoras (Allen, pp. 50–52)
[Quiz on *The Odyssey*, Pre-Socratic Philosophy, & *The Discovery of the Mind*]

II. THE EROS OF PHILOSOPHIC CONVERSATION

- 10/4 Plato, *Euthyphro* (Allen, pp. 57–73)
Snell, *Discovery*, “Myth and Reality in Greek Tragedy” (pp. 90–112)
- 10/8 Plato, *Apology* (Allen, pp. 74–97)
Snell, *Discovery*, “Aristophanes and Aesthetic Criticism” (pp. 113–135)

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- 10/11 Plato, *Crito* (Allen, pp. 98–109)
[Three-page essay on the *Euthyphro* due]
- 10/15 Plato, *Meno* (Allen, pp. 110–141)
- 10/18 Plato, *Symposium* (in part, Allen, pp. 142–154)
- 10/22 Plato, *Phaedo* (in part, Allen, pp. 155–196)
- 10/25 Plato, *Timaeus* (in part, Allen, pp. 270–281)
Snell, *Discovery*, “Human Knowledge and Divine Knowledge among the Early Greeks”
(pp. 136–152)
- 10/29 Plato, *Republic*, Bks. IV–V (in part, Allen, pp. 197–216)
Snell, *Discovery*, “The Call to Virtue” I (pp. 153–168)
- 11/1 Plato, *Republic*, Bks. VI–VII (in part, Allen, pp. 217–245)
Snell, *Discovery*, “The Call to Virtue” II (pp. 169–190)

III. THE EROS OF THINGS AND THE DESIRE TO KNOW

- 11/5 Aristotle, *Categories*, Chs. I–V (Allen, pp. 285–291)
Snell, *Discovery*, “From Myth to Logic: The Role of the Comparison” (pp. 191–226)
- 11/8 Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, Bk. I, Chs. I–VII (Allen, pp. 307–320)
Snell, *Discovery*, “The Origin of Scientific Thought” (pp. 227–245)
- 11/12 Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, Bks. II & IV (Allen, pp. 320–340)
- 11/15 Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, Bks. VI & VII, Chs. I–VII & XVII (Allen, pp. 340–357)
- 11/19 Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, Bk. IX (Allen, pp. 357–369)
[11/22–26, Thanksgiving Recess]
- 11/26 Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, Bk. XII (Allen, pp. 369–383)
- 11/29 Aristotle, *Physics*, Bk. II, (Allen, pp. 413–423)
- 12/3 Aristotle, *On the Soul*, Bk. III Chs. I–IX & XII (Allen, pp. 292–306)
[Seven-page essay on Aristotle’s Theoretical Philosophy due]
- 12/6 Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, Bk. I, Chs. I–VIII (Allen, pp. 384–396)
Snell, *Discovery*, “The Discovery of *Humanitas*, and Our Attitude toward the Greeks”
(pp. 246–263)
- 12/10 Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, Bk. II (Allen, pp. 396–408)
- 12/13 Aristotle, *Politics*, Bk. I, Ch. I (Allen, pp. 409–412)
Snell, *Discovery*, “Arcadia: The Discovery of a Spiritual Landscape” (pp. 281–309)
- 12/17 REVIEW
- 12/20 Final Examination

REQUIREMENTS:

- * Regular preparation, attendance, and informed participation in class discussions.
- * Two essays (due 10/11 & 12/3). Please consult the hand-out “Ten Clues to Better Papers in Philosophy” for questions of style and timeliness.

TEXTS RECOMMENDED:

Eric Havelock, *Preface to Plato*, Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1963 [PB]

J.M. Robinson, *An Introduction to Early Greek Philosophy: The Chief Fragments and Ancient Testimony, With Connecting Commentary*, Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1968 [PB]

A NOTE ON THE READINGS:

You will notice that the philosophical texts in Part I are remarkably short. They will repay rereadings. The assignments from *The Odyssey* represent the six major episodes of the story. Ideally, each would be read aloud—either by yourself or, better, with a group of friends. Read aloud, each needs about four hours. Consider them as entertainments, perhaps as partial alternatives to the tube for three weeks. You might find the scripts better.

Plato, too, can be read as literature. In fact, the Dialogues are great literature. Read them once for pleasure before you turn on your critical faculties.

Aristotle was also a great writer, but his literary works have mostly perished. By luck, we have the texts for his presentations in the Lyceum. Your assignments from these are quite short (10–20 pp.). Some may seem forbidding at first reading. But what they sometimes lack in style they more than make up for in beautiful lucidity.

Bruno Snell essays have won, over the half century since their first publication, a deserved reputation as the most accessible way to suspend modern prejudices that would inhibit our enjoyment and comprehension of Greek literature and philosophy.