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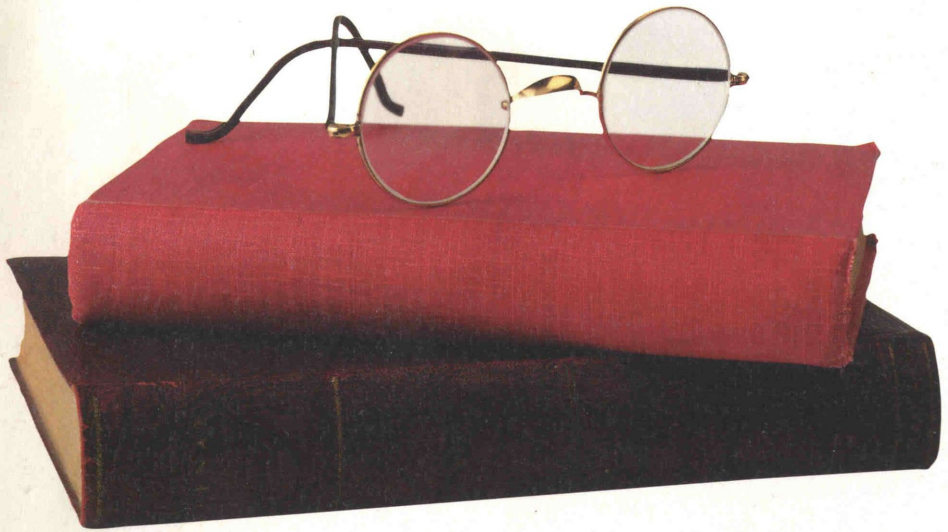
Great Minds of the Western Intellectual Tradition, Part I

Ancient Philosophy and Faith: From Athens to Jerusalem



COURSE GUIDE

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Great Minds of the Western Intellectual Tradition, Part I

Ancient Philosophy and Faith: From Athens to Jerusalem

Scope: These twelve lectures introduce the student to some of the most important concepts, topics, and problems that have shaped the development of the Western philosophical tradition from ancient Greece to the present. The first lecture outlines these concepts and problems, and it distinguishes between the dual philosophical traditions identified with Athens and Jerusalem. Lectures Two through Four deal with the "Jerusalem tradition," as contained in the sacred scriptures of Judaism and Christianity. Next we consider the origins of rational scientific speculation with the Presocratic philosophers, and we examine in-depth Plato's famous dialogue about right conduct and governance, *The Republic*. Lectures Nine and Ten examine the metaphysical and political teachings of Plato's pupil Aristotle, focusing on Aristotle's critique of his teacher's realism—i.e., Plato's conviction that essences have real existence independent of individual sensible objects. In Lecture Eleven we examine the Stoicism of Marcus Aurelius as an offshoot of Socratic thought, and in Lecture Twelve we study St. Augustine's use of Platonic concepts to elucidate the nature of triune God and describe the ultimate purpose of human existence.

Lecture One
Introduction to the Problems and Scope of Philosophy

Michael Sugrue, Ph.D.

Scope: We begin this introductory lecture by defining the key philosophical concepts and topics that will appear throughout this series of lectures. The fundamental philosophical questions that shape this series include the nature of being (i.e., what exists, and in what respects does it exist?); the problem of knowledge (i.e., how do we know what we think that we know?); and problems of ethical conduct and governance. In reference to the question of "what exists?", we will contrast the naturalistic or "one-world" answer offered by the sophists and pre-Socratic metaphysicians with the "two worlds" or "nature-plus" answers offered by Plato and the Judeo-Christian tradition. We will also assess the complementarity in Western thought of the traditions associated with Athens and Jerusalem. Finally, we will consider the contribution of the ancient Greek thinkers to Western civilization, especially regarding scientific and technological development.

Outline

I. This lecture series will focus on the history of Western thought from its origins to the present.

- **A.** The word "philosophy" comes from Greek words which signify the love of wisdom.
- **B.** We will use the following key philosophical concepts in these lectures:
  1. Physics—the "theory of nature"; the study of the material world of space and time.
  2. Metaphysics—"above or beyond nature"; the study of things independent of space and time (e.g., pure ideas and spiritual essences).
  3. Ontology—"speech about beings"; the study of the kind of existence that a thing has.
  4. Logic—a system of rules for deriving true inferences.
  5. Epistemology—"speech about knowledge"; the study of what human beings can know, and what kinds of knowledge they can possess.
- **C.** We will examine the following topics:
  1. Aesthetics—i.e., the reasoned and rigorous examination of beauty and in what beauty consists.
  2. Ethics—the study of moral obligation, which is concerned with the will, judgment, and the evaluation of human behavior. Ethics involves the study of the good at the individual level.
  3. Politics—classical political philosophers drew an analogy between the city and the individual, and thus they perceived a close connection between politics and ethics. Politics involves the study of the good at the social level.

II. What distinguishes "nature" from "nature plus," or ontological naturalism from metaphysical ontology?

- **A.** The Greek intellectual tradition offers two differing approaches to the question, "what is?"
  1. The "one world" approach, characteristic of the sophists and pre-Socratic physicists, holds that the world is essentially natural. All that exists are the objects of sense perception: atoms and void.
  2. The "two worlds" approach, typified by Plato, holds that there also exists a second realm of metaphysical abstractions that transcends space and time.
- **B.** In the Western tradition, Athens represents secular knowledge of a purely natural ontology, while Jerusalem represents divine revelation and a "nature plus" metaphysical ontology.

III. Athens and Jerusalem represent distinct but intertwining strands in the braid of Western philosophy.

- **A.** Jerusalem provides the mythical component of the Western philosophical tradition, while Athens provides the rational element.
- **B.** Athens and Jerusalem understand *logos* in very different terms.
  1. Athens views *logos* as free, unfettered human reason and discourse, without any necessary connection to myth.
  2. Jerusalem understands *logos* as the Word, the divine and authoritative revelation of God.
- **C.** Athens and Jerusalem use myth in different ways to represent the archetypical stance of each tradition toward being.
  1. *Mythos* or "story" refers in this context to universally applicable stories that convey fundamental moral truths, although in an indirect and ambiguous fashion.
  2. For Athens, Prometheus provides the archetype of heroism. He represents defiance of the gods, viewed as anthropomorphized forces of nature. Prometheus embodies the desire to be more than what one is by nature—i.e., to be more than human.
  3. For Jerusalem, Job provides the archetype of faith. He represents resignation to the will of God, viewed as the inscrutable Creator. The story of Job emphasizes the need for faith and for submission to God's will.
- **D.** Much of the Western intellectual tradition is concerned with attempting to reconcile Jerusalem with Athens.

IV. The traditions represented by Athens and Jerusalem are not mutually exclusive.

- **A.** The human psyche or soul is composed of heterogeneous rational and emotional elements which derive different sorts of satisfaction from different philosophical texts.
- **B.** Thinkers with differing assumptions and conclusions offer differing kinds of edifying discourses.
- **C.** Jerusalem and Athens—*mythos* and *logos*—form a kind of braid in Western thought, like the snakes of the caduceus.

V. The ancient Greek philosophers made essential contributions to the rise and flourishing of Western civilization.

- **A.** The pre-Socratic search for secular physical knowledge led ultimately to the modern scientific revolution.
- **B.** The development of Newtonian physics and its application to nature made possible the technology of the industrial revolution.
- **C.** Technology gave the West unprecedented power over nature and other human beings as well.
- **D.** Modern physics was a necessary condition for the rise of the West to global domination during the last five centuries.
- **E.** A vast increase in wealth and global changes in society resulted from the rise of modern science. Social science and the rise of modern political theory are also consequences of physics.

Essential Reading:

Russell, Bertrand. *Introduction to the Problems of Philosophy.* New York: Oxford University Press, 1959.

Supplementary Reading:

Austin, John. *How to Do Things With Words.* New York: Oxford University Press, 1962.

Foucault, Michel. *The Archaeology of Knowledge.* New York: Harper and Row, 1972.

Strauss, Leo. *Natural Right and History.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1965.

Questions to Consider:

1. What is the difference between the "one world" and "two worlds" traditions? Is this distinction equivalent to that between "Athens" and "Jerusalem"?
2. How do Job and Prometheus exemplify the traditions of Jerusalem and Athens, respectively?

Lecture Two
Introduction to the Old Testament

Dr. Robert Oden, Ph.D.

Scope: We examine first the "nature-plus" tradition in Western thought associated with Jerusalem. This lecture will review briefly the political and religious context in which the Jewish religion and the Hebrew Bible emerged, and the various stages of development through which they passed. The Hebrew Bible encompasses an extraordinary number of themes, events, and ideas. It offers an account of the creation of the universe and describes the relationship between man and nature, a theodicy of evil in a monotheistic universe, and a history of the ancient Jewish people. This lecture will conclude with a brief discussion of the authorship, dating, and interpretation of the Hebrew Bible and a capsule history of ancient Israel.

Outline

I. The development of the Jewish religion was shaped by the political and religious context of the ancient Near East.

- **A.** Israel was a minor power surrounded by the great powers of Egypt, Babylonia, and Assyria.
- **B.** Much of the Israelite religion was derivative from the religions of these neighboring states.
- **C.** Poetic techniques of the Phoenicians allow us to date Biblical texts.

II. The religion of Israel and the Hebrew Bible passed through several stages of historical development.

- **A.** An entity called Israel began to emerge during the Tribal League period, although tribal loyalties still predominated.
- **B.** Israel was ruled by kings during the Monarchy period.
- **C.** Israel's "Epic" consists of the Books of Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Deuteronomy, and Numbers.
  1. The Book of Exodus is the heart of the Old Testament.
  2. The role of the prophets in the religion of Israel was to condemn breaches of the Covenant and to exhort the people to behave ethically.
- **D.** The people of Israel responded in various ways to their exile from the Land.
- **E.** The religion of Israel was reconstructed and transformed following the exile.

III. What is the Old Testament (i.e., the Hebrew Bible)?

- **A.** The Old Testament is a collection of once-independent documents written by many hands over a thousand-year span of time (c. 1200 BCE to c 200 BCE).
- **B.** Accurate dating of the individual documents is essential if we are to know when, by whom, and why something was written.
- **C.** What did the religion of Israel mean to the people who experienced it?
- **D.** The growth of the Old Testament is illustrated by the two varying accounts of the Epic in Deuteronomy 26:5-9 and Nehemiah 9:6-37.

IV. The following is an outline history of Israel.

- **A.** During the Patriarchal Period (c.1750-1400 BCE), the Israelites followed a semi-nomadic way of life, wandering from Mesopotamia to Canaan and Egypt.
- **B.** There followed the period of exodus from Egypt and conquest of the land of Canaan (1300-1200 BCE).
- **C.** During the period of the Tribal League/Judges (1200-1022 BCE), Israel was united but had no king.
- **D.** Israel was united under one king between 1022 and 922 BCE. Its first three kings were Saul, David, and Solomon.
- **E.** Formerly united, Israel was divided in two between 922 and 722 BCE. The southern kingdom was called Judah and the northern kingdom was called Israel or Ephraim.
- **F.** The period of exile began in 587/586 BCE.

Essential Reading:

The Holy Bible: Genesis, Exodus, and Isaiah 40-55.

Supplementary Reading:

Russell, Bertrand. *A History of Western Philosophy*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1972 (pp. 308-323).

Albright, William F. *Yahweh and the Gods of Canaan: A Historical Analysis of Two Contrasting Faiths*. Eisenbrauns, 1990.

Grant, Robert M., and David Tracy. *A Short History of the Interpretation of the Bible*. Fortress Press, 1984.

Bowan,Thorleif. *Hebrew Thought Compared with Greek*. New York: Norton, 1970.

Buber, Martin. *On the Bible: Eighteen Studies*. Schocken Books, 1982.

Rad, Gerhard Von. *The Message of the Prophets*. New York: Harper Collins, 1965.

Redford, Donald B. *Egypt, Canaan, and Israel in Ancient Times.* Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992.

Questions to Consider:

1. How does the account of the Jewish "Epic" contained in Deuteronomy differ from that in Nehemiah? What have scripture scholars learned from the differences between these two accounts?
2. Describe the impact of the Babylonian exile upon the development of the religion of Israel.

Lecture Three
The New Testament: The Gospels of Mark and Matthew

Elizabeth McNamer, Ph.D.

Scope: The New Testament is the sacred text of Christianity. It details the life and teachings of Jesus Christ, describing his many miraculous deeds and his doctrines of faith and love. The New Testament consists of 27 books, of which the first three—Matthew, Mark, and Luke—are called the synoptic Gospels. These three Gospels describe in detail the life and teachings of Jesus. This lecture will examine the meaning, purposes, composition, and themes of the Gospels of Mark and Matthew.

Outline

I. The Gospels of Matthew, Mark and Luke are known as the synoptic Gospels.

- **A.** All the Gospels attempt to tell who Jesus is.
- **B.** The word "Gospel" means "good news," and "evangelist" means "one who spreads the good news." The Gospel as a literary narrative seems to have been invented by Mark. Luke and Matthew are believed to have used Mark's gospel as a source.
- **C.** The Gospels were written in the post-Apostolic age to preserve the stories about Jesus that had been circulating orally (although other purported sources such as "Q" and the "sayings of the Lord" written by Matthew may have been written down).

II. The composition and themes of Mark's Gospel.

- **A.** The identity of Mark is not known. He may have been a follower and interpreter of Peter, or the John Mark of Acts 12:12 and 25. Some have suggested that Mark may have been the young man in the garden, described in Mark 14:51.
- **B.** Mark's Gospel dates from c. 70 C.E. Some scholars date it to c. 63 CE, since it alludes to persecutions that occurred in the early 60s CE.
- **C.** The Gospel is addressed to Christians (probably Gentiles) who were being persecuted in Rome. Its purpose is to give these Christians encouragement and a fuller explanation of Jesus.
- **D.** The Gospel's main theme is that Jesus is the expected Messiah of the Jews and the Son of God, and that he is a suffering Messiah.
  1. As described by Mark, Jesus knows that he must suffer and does not relish the prospect. He seeks to hide his messiahship.
  2. Mark's Jesus is misunderstood, rejected, persecuted, unjustly condemned, and executed. He is also authoritative and prevails over evil by the faithful, loving way in which he endures suffering and apparent failure.

3. Mark's Jesus is constantly on the move and intent upon spreading his message.

III. The composition and themes of Matthew's Gospel.

A. The composition, dating, and sources of Matthew's Gospel.

1. The author of Matthew's Gospel was probably a second- or third-generation Christian and not an eyewitness to the events portrayed. It is unlikely that he was an apostle, although he may have used the purported "Sayings of the Lord," written by the apostle Matthew, as a source.
2. Matthew's Gospel is dated in the 80s.
3. Its sources were probably Mark's Gospel, his own particular source ("M"), and a source in common with Luke (the "Q" source).

B. Matthew's Gospel was written largely for Jewish Christians who were ostracized by other Jews and who were having second thoughts about Christianity. Jerusalem and the Temple had been destroyed by the Romans under Titus. Judaism was taking a new direction under the leadership of the Pharisees at Jamnia.

C. The major themes of Matthew's Gospel are that Jesus is the fulfillment of Jewish expectations, and that the Good News must now be offered more earnestly to all Gentiles.

1. "Messiah" means "the anointed one." Jesus combines the anointed offices of king, priest, and prophet.
2. Matthew's Gospel portrays the Gentiles in a more positive light than it does the Pharisees.
3. Matthew presents Jesus as fully rooted in Judaism. Matthew quotes extensively from the Old Testament and he presents a Jesus who reenacts the Jewish experience in his own life. Jesus' genealogy is traced back to Abraham. Jesus is a great teacher in the line of Moses, but one who redefines the law as an internal attitude.

Essential Reading:

The Holy Bible: The Gospels According to Matthew and Mark

Supplementary Reading:

Russell, Bertrand. *A History of Western Philosophy.* New York: Simon and Schuster, 1972 (pp. 324-352).

Bultmann, Rudolf. *Primitive Christianity: In Its Contemporary Setting.* Fortress Press, 1980.

Chadwick, Henry. *Early Christian Thought and the Classical Tradition.* New York: Oxford University Press, 1984.

Jeremias, Joachim. *Jerusalem in the Time of Jesus.* Fortress Press, 1975.

Kee, Howard Clark. *Jesus in History.* Harcourt, 1977.

Koester, Helmut. *History and Literature of Early Christianity.* De Gryter, 1987.

Pagel, Elaine. *The Gnostic Gospels.* New York: Random House, 1989.

Questions to Consider:

1. How do the themes and purposes of the Gospels of Mark and Matthew differ?
2. What can we know—or at least surmise—about the dating and authorship of the Gospel of Mark?

Lecture Four
The New Testament: The World of Paul

Elizabeth McNamer, Ph.D.

Scope: Christianity was founded upon the teachings of Jesus Christ. Like Socrates, however, Jesus never wrote down his teachings. We know Christ's preachings only through the dedicated work of his disciples, the most important of whom was St. Paul. Though he never met Christ, he nevertheless became the premier proselytizer (teacher) of Christianity. Almost half of the books of the New Testament are attributed to St. Paul. This lecture will review the ancient Near East religious context from which Christianity emerged, and it will review the life, ministry, and teachings of St. Paul.

Outline

I. Almost half of the New Testament's 27 books are attributed to Paul or his followers. Paul carried the Gospel to the Roman world.

- **A.** The Roman Empire stretched from the Atlantic to Syria, and from England to upper Egypt. It was effectively governed and administered. The culture was predominantly Greek.
- **B.** Greek philosophies, especially Epicureanism and Stoicism, were popular among intellectuals.
- **C.** Christianity emerged from a diverse religious context.
  1. The official religion of the Roman empire was the worship of the Capitoline gods.
  2. Mystery cults from Greece, Persia, and Egypt had many adherents. These cults stressed resurrection and an afterlife.
  3. All Jews believed in one God–Adonai–and accepted the Torah. Jewish belief in an afterlife arose at the time of the Maccabbean revolt.
  4. Many Romans were attracted to Judaism because of its moral content.

II. Paul's life and thought can be reconstructed from two sources that do not always correspond: the Pauline letters (the primary source) and the Acts of the Apostles, written by Luke towards the end of the first century C.E. Acts is a less reliable source than the letters.

- **A.** Paul was born a Hellenistic Jew and a Roman citizen.
- **B.** He received his education in the law in Jerusalem from Gamaliel. He studied in the Pharisaic school of Hillel (the less strict of the two Pharisaic schools).

- **C.** He began his career "steeped in the tradition of his ancestors," and he persecuted those who were a threat to that tradition.
- **D.** The Damascus experience changed his life. He encountered the risen Christ and became convinced that he was called to be an apostle to the Gentiles.

III. Paul's travels carried him to major cities in the Empire.

- **A.** He established communities of Christians (of both Jewish and Gentile origin) and nurtured them by means of his letters.
- **B.** His first letter was probably sent to the Thessalonians about sixteen years after his conversion.
- **C.** His last letter was probably written in Rome, where he died in 63. These letters are the earliest extant written theology in the Church.
- **D.** His letters generally addressed pastoral concerns.

IV. In accomplishing his mission to the Gentiles, Paul argued against the necessity of circumcision and lesser demands of the Mosaic Law.

- **A.** The Pharisees had "put a fence around the law," extending it far beyond what was contained in Scripture. As a result, it was very hard for Jews to observe the law fully.
- **B.** Paul shifted the focus from punctilious observance of the Mosaic Law to the centrality of faith in Jesus Christ , provided it is accompanied by adherence to the law of Christian love.
- **C.** He substituted baptism for circumcision and connected it with the death and resurrection of Jesus.
- **D.** Paul did not abandon his Jewishness but saw Jesus as its perfect fulfillment and replacement.
- **E.** Christianity was still considered to be a sect within Judaism during Paul's lifetime.

V. Paul's main accomplishments were his adaptation of Jewish theology to a Gentile audience and his establishment of communities out of which Christianity emerged.

Essential Reading:

The New Testament: Romans, Ephesians, 1 and 2 Thessalonians, 1 and 2 Corinthians, Philippians, 1 and 2 Timothy, Colossians, Galatians, Titus, Philemon

Supplementary Reading:

Brandon, S.G. "Paul and His Opponents," in Kevin Reilly, *Readings in World Civilizations*, vol. 1. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1992 (pp. 110-119).

"The Rise of Christianity," in Philip F. Riley, *et al.*, *The Global Experience: Readings in World History to 1500.* New York: Prentice-Hall, 1992 (pp. 139-150).

Bultmann, Rudolph. *Primitive Christianity: In its Contemporary Setting.* Fortress Press, 1980.

Bristow, John Temple. *What Paul Really Said About Women.* New York: Harper Collins, 1991.

Becker, J. Christian. *Paul the Apostle: The Triumph of God in Life and Thought.* Fortress Press, 1980.

Becker, Jurgen. *Paul Apostle to the Gentiles.* John Knox, 1993.

Sanders E. P. *Paul and Palestinian Judaism.* Fortress Press, 1978.

Questions to Consider:

1. What were the chief philosophical and religious currents in the Hellenistic world as Paul began his missionary work? How did this philosphical and religious context contribute to the success of Paul's work?
2. Is it accurate to speak of Paul as the first "reformer" of Christianity?

Lecture Five
The Presocratics: Ionian Speculation and Eleatic Metaphysics

Darren Staloff, Ph.D.

Scope: The Presocratics were Greek philosophers of nature who lived during the two centuries prior to Socrates. Although they disagreed about what constituted the fundamental *Urstuff* of the universe and about the nature of existence and change, they were united in their rejection of mythical explanations, their interest in mechanistic questions of "what" and "how," and their reliance on logic. This lecture examines the opinions and analytical methods of leading Presocratic thinkers and schools, including the Milesian (or Ionian) school of Thales, Anaximander, and Anaximenes; Heraclitus of Ephesus; the Pythagoreans; the Eleatic metaphysicians (Parmenides and Zeno); and the Atomists (Democritus and Leucippus).

Outline

I. Introduction to the Presocratics.
   A. The Greek Presocratic period was an epoch of philosophy running from sixth century BCE to the time of Socrates—hence the expression "Presocratic."
   B. As distinct from their myth-oriented predecessrs, the Presocratics were rational in two different ways.
      1. They used a rational form of analysis. They refused to tell stories, and they used expository prose.
      2. They asked mechanistic questions of "what" and "how."

II. The Ionian cosmologists ask "what" exists in the cosmological sense. What is the world made of? What is its "*Urstuff*?"
   A. Thales posited that water is the source of all things.
      1. All life-forms require water for their survival.
      2. Water is naturally found in all three states of matter (i.e. solid, liquid, and gas).
      3. Thales spoke of "soul" as the cause of motion.
   B. Anaximander posited the fundamental building block of the cosmos as the "unlimited" or undifferentiated.
      1. This was the first articulation of the concept of matter, a substrate capable of containing properties and qualities found in things.
      2. This was also the first articulation of the notion of natural law.
      3. The Earth (a cylinder) does not rest on anything but remains fixed in position on account of its similar distance from all things.

C. Anaximenes posited that air was the ultimate material entity, since it could be condensed and rarefied into all other substances.

III. Heraclitus believed that fire was the fundamental material element.

A. The world is in constant flux. Change is basic to reality; its absence brings stasis and death. The Heraclitean world view included the first expression of the notions of static and dynamic equilibrium.

B. Heraclitus offered the first doctrines on the cultivation of the soul and social criticism.

1. Reason is the same for all human beings.
2. Heraclitus criticized democracy as an imperfect form of government, since the masses are driven more by emotion than by reason.
3. He criticized traditional religious beliefs and practices as irrational.

IV. Pythagoreanism was a quasi-religious philosophical school arguing that numbers and mathematical objects were the fundamental metaphysical entities.

A. The Pythagoreans used the tetraktys as their their religious symbol of cosmic unity.

B. They believed in the transmigration of souls.

V. The Eleatic metaphysicians put forth the first abstract and formal metaphysical arguments or "proofs." The significance of these philosophers lies in their development of logical analysis and the doctrine of static monism.

A. Parmenides argued that Being either is or is not. Of the two options, only the former is possible. Therefore, the apparent changes in the world (things passing into and out of being) were illusory and Being had to be One.

B. Zeno supported Parmenides' static monism and developed the form of logical proof known as *reductio ad absurdum* to prove that both plurality and motion were impossible.

VI. Atomism.

A. This theory, first proffered by Leucippus and Democritus, held that the world was made of atoms (indivisible units of undifferentiated matter) whirling in a void.

B. The purely mathematical properties of the atoms' size, shape, and relative location were then used to explain all the properties of compound entities and the appearance of change.

Essential Reading:

Kirk, G. S., J. E. Raven, and M. Schoenfield. *The Presocratic Philosophers: A Critical History with a Selection of Texts.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983.

Supplementary Reading:

Copleston, Frederick S. J. *A History of Philosophy*, Book I, Vol. I. New York: Doubleday and Company, 1963 (pp. 12-65, 76-80).

Wheelwright, Phillip *The Presocratics.* New York: McMillan, 1966.

Guthrie, William K. *Greek Philosophers: From Thales to Aristotle.* New York: Harper Collins, 1960.

Koyre, Alexander *From the Closed World to the Infinite Universe.* Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1968.

Cornford, F. M. *From Religion to Philosophy: A Study of the Origins of Western Speculation.* Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991.

Jaeger, Werner. *The Theology of The Early Greek Philosophers.* Greenwood Press, 1980.

Questions to Consider:

1. Why are the Ionian cosmologists regarded as the first western philosophers?
2. Compare and contrast the answers of the Pythagoreans, the Eleatics, and Heraclitus to the "Problem of the One and the Many."

Lecture Six
Republic I: Justice, Power, Knowledge

Michael Sugrue, Ph.D.

Scope: This is the first of three lectures on the philosophy of Socrates and Plato, as set forth in Plato's *Republic*. This lecture examines Book I of *The Republic*, which establishes the main themes and problems to be addressed in the dialogue. Socrates asks his interlocutors to explain the meaning of justice. He refutes the arguments of Cephalus that justice consists in telling the truth and returning borrowed property, of Polemarchus that justice consists in giving to every man his due, and of Thrasymachus that might makes right. His refutation of Thrasymachus is less than fully convincing, however, which leads Glaucon to restate the argument, as we shall see in the following lecture.

Outline

I. The main themes of *The Republic* are set forth in the introductory frame scene.
- A. Socrates and Glaucon go down to Piraeus to view a religious procession and are stopped by Polemarchus' slave.
- B. Socrates is "overpowered" by force. A dialectic of force and persuasion emerges in which the philosopher succumbs to the unknowing *demos*. Glaucon decides that Socrates will submit.

II. Socrates and Glaucon go to the house of Polemarchus and Cephalus.
- A. Aged Cephalus is erotic, avaricious, superstitious, philistine, and pious. As an old man, he is more interested in speeches than he had been during his passionate youth. He has just finished sacrificing. He needs wealth to buy off the gods to forgive youthful sins.
- B. Socrates refutes his argument that justice equals truth-telling and the return of property.
- C. Polemarchus inherits the argument when Cephalus returns to the sacrifices. The dialogue moves symbolically from old piety to living philosophy.
  1. Polemarchus tries to justify old piety to living philosophy.
  2. He invokes the authority of Simonides (no further mention of divine retribution is made until the myth of Er in Book X).
  3. Polemarchus asserts that justice is "giving to every man his due," i.e., that justice consists in doing good to one's friends and evil to one's enemies. Socrates responds that justice is incompatible with doing harm to another.

III. Thrasymachus, the beast of discourse, breaks in.
- A. He demands that Socrates define justice, but not abstractly as "the advantageous" or "the needful."
- B. Socrates uses multilevel irony; he cannot answer since Thrasymachus has prohibited abstraction.
- C. Thrasymachus demands money; Glaucon and others guarantee it. (Thrasymachus acts as if reluctant to speak, but he really wants to speak in order to enhance his reputation.)
- D. Narration makes it impossible to enact a Platonic dialogue. Unlike other drama, Platonic drama is a spectacle which appeals to the ear and eye, and perhaps to the brain.
- E. Thrasymachus' argument is as follows.
  1. Justice equals the advantage of the stronger. Thrasymachus is the spokesman for the status quo (all existing regimes formulate the laws according to their own advantage; therefore justice is obeying the law).
  2. Justice equals legality (understood as legal positivism and *Realpolitik*). The tyrant is in the best situation, as he can make laws that gratify his own desires.

V. Socrates engages Thrasymachus in dialogue.
- A. What if the rulers do not know what is good for them and thus make mistakes? Then justice becomes the *dis*advantage of the stronger.
- B. Thrasymachus agrees that really existing rulers make mistakes, but he asserts that the true ruler *qua* ruler is infallible. Thrasymachus thus moves from positive to normative—the rulers *should* rule with perfect knowledge of their interests.
- C. Socrates responds that all arts serve the object of the art, not the interest of the artist. Medicine is to bodies as horsemanship is to horses (342E).
- D. Thrasymachus goes *ad hominem* (343A) "Do you have a wet nurse? She should wipe your nose." He holds that injustice is more profitable than justice on the largest scale—tyranny.
- E. Socrates argues that the artist or technician wants to get the better only of those who do not properly practice the art, while the ignorant man wants to get the better of all others, even if the object suffers harm. The shepherd, for instance, gets paid because he is interested in the good of the flock, not in his own good.
  1. Thrasymachus blushes, then turns petulant, then argues that even unjust men need some justice, in order to be able to act together. Complete injustice would leave them utterly impotent.
  2. Socrates holds that justice is the virtue of the soul, which allows it to perform its *telos*.

F. Thrasymachus has grown gentle; Socrates has silenced but not convincingly refuted him. Socrates wants to draw Adeimantus and Glaucon into the discussion.

Essential Reading:

Bloom, Allan. *The Republic of Plato.* New York: Basic Books, 1968. Book I.

Supplementary Reading:

Strauss, Leo. *The City and the Man.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1964 (pp. 50-101).

Barker, Ernest. *The Political Thought of Plato and Aristotle.* Dover, 1959.

De Romilly, Jaqueline. *The Great Sophists in Periclean Athens.* New York: Oxford University Press, 1992.

Field, G. C. *Plato and his Contemporaries.* Haskell, 1974.

Nichols, Mary. *Socrates and the Political Community: An Ancient Debate.* State University of New York Press, 1987.

Strauss, Leo. *Socrates and Aristophanes.* Midway Reprint, 1980.

Questions to Consider:

1. What basic themes of *The Republic* are presented in the opening scene of the dialogue, and how are they presented?
2. What is Thrasymachus' definition of justice? How does Socrates refute him, and how convincing is his refutation?

Lecture Seven
Republic II-V: Soul and City

Michael Sugrue, Ph.D.

Scope: Our study of Plato's *Republic* continues. Responding to Glaucon's challenge that he defend justice on its own merits rather than any practical consideration, Socrates suggests that the group examine justice in the city as an analogue of justice within the individual human soul. He then describes the educational regimen of the ruling class in his ideal city, and he explains that justice in the individual, as in the city, consists in the proper and harmonious ordering of the parts that constitute the whole. Finally, we examine the three "waves" of revolutionary change that characterize Socrates' ideal city: political equality of women, abolition of private property and the family, and rule by philosophers.

Outline

I. Socrates has silenced but not refuted Thrasymachus. Socrates' arguments offered in Book I are weak, as he realizes. Socrates offers weak arguments in order to provoke Glaucon and Adeimantus to enter the discussion.

II. Book II of *The Republic* examines Socrates' analogy between the just man and the just city.

- **A.** Glaucon asserts a social contract theory—justice is the advantage of the weaker.
  1. He recounts the myth of Gyges to demonstrate that all men will practice injustice if given the chance
  2. He demands that Socrates demonstrate that justice is good as an end, not as a means; i.e., he demands that Socrates remove all accidental considerations and show that justice is essentially good.
- **B.** Adeimantus anticipates Machiavelli in asserting that it is preferable to have a reputation for justice while practicing injustice. He notes that men can be fooled, and the gods either do not exist or can be bribed.
- **C.** Glaucon and Adeimantus want to *seem* just, but they are tempted to *be* unjust; they assert the disclaimer: "I have heard this, but don't believe it."
- **D.** Socrates asserts a parallel between man and city; he suggests that the group seek justice by examining the city.
  1. Socrates and Adeimantus construct a "city of utmost necessity" in which there is a basic division of labor—one job for each man.
  2. The arcadian simplicity of this image leads Glaucon to denigrate it as a "city of pigs."

3. Glaucon prefers a more luxurious city. A philosopher-king and a guardian class are needed to order desires in this "feverish city." The guardians must behave like "philosophical dogs," knowing and loving their own and showing antagonism toward strangers and toward change.
4. The education of the guardian class will consist of music (to soften their hearts and promote harmony in their souls) and gymnastics.

III. Book III of *The Republic* constitutes an attack on Homer.

A. The poets are inspired but ignorant; the apparent beauty of their poems hides moral corruption.

B. Homeric heroes cannot be the ideal of men who would be wise, courageous, moderate, and just.

C. Homer and his ideal, Achilles, must be demoted and censored (in favor of a new poet, Plato, and a new ideal, Socrates—the philosopher-king). This is the point of the myth of metals—the different parts of the soul correspond to gold, silver, and bronze.

D. The education of the guardians harmonizes mind with body, gold with silver, Doric with Ionic.

E. Comedy and tragedy also produce bad (i.e., corrupting) imitations; thus they–like epic–must be censored in favor of the morally good.

F. Truly educational poetry is Platonic dialogue.

IV. As befits one who is oligarchically inclined, Adeimantus objects that rulers will be unhappy if deprived of property.

A. Socrates retorts that a good ruler seeks the good of the whole city. Sharp distinctions between wealth and poverty harm the *polis* by creating faction.

B. Unity of soul implies unity in the city.
1. Different virtues correspond to different parts of the soul, just as they do to different sorts of cities. Justice consists in the harmony that prevails among reason, spirit, and passion in the well-ordered soul.
2. Justice consists in each element pursuing its own *telos* and not trespassing into the sphere of the other elements.
3. Plato uses these logical ideas to distinguish silver from bronze. Only through justice can a city harmonize classes and can a man harmonize his own soul—justice is to the soul as health is to the body. The good ruler resembles a doctor, just as the tyrant resembles a quack doctor.

V. Adeimantus breaks in, demanding that Socrates explain his proposals for eugenic breeding and abolition of the family. Then all chime in, and the framing scene of book I is reprised. Socrates is arrested again by a suddenly bold Adeimantus. Socrates fears being drowned by three "waves" of his argument.

A. The first wave is feminism; women should have the right to rule.
1. Female guardians receive the same gymnastic and musical education as men.
2. Socrates compares the difference between the sexes to accidental differences among men (e.g., long versus short hair). He distinguishes accidental and essential differences (which are analogous to the difference between body and soul).

B. The second wave is communal possession of property and abolition of the family.
1. Sex is a necessity. The rulers will arrange eugenic marriages, by contriving phony lots. Beyond reproduction (461C), the guardians have complete erotic freedom.
2. Children are reared apart from parents, so the parent-child bond is generalized among all the guardians.
3. Guardians are all one family. *Eros* is used in the service of war.

C. The third wave is rule by philosophers, but is such a regime possible? The impracticality of the good city shows that there is something wrong with the world, not with the theory.

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Questions to Consider:

1. Describe the purposes of each of the stages in the education of guardians in Plato's ideal city. What role does education serve in this city's preservation?
2. According to Plato, how is justice different from wisdom, courage, and moderation?

Lecture Eight
Republic VI-X: The Architecture of Reality

Michael Sugrue, Ph.D.

Scope: We end our examination of Plato's *Republic* by considering three of Plato's most famous metaphors: the ship of state, the divided line, and the cave. The first of these depicts the negative consequences of misrule, while the latter two illustrate Plato's ontological and epistemological teaching that with the right education, one possessing the proper constitution can advance from mere opinion of sensible particulars to true knowledge of the eternal, unchanging Forms—i.e., of ultimate reality. Next we consider Plato's theory of the degeneration of good regimes into their vicious counterparts, and we close with the "Myth of Er," intended to encourage just behavior among the unwise *demos*.

Outline

I. Book VI extends the discussion of the third "wave"—rule by philosopher-kings.

- **A.** This discussion foreshadows the epistemological and ontological doctrines to be considered next (light vs. darkness, sight vs. blindness).
- **B.** The philosopher is called the lover of Forms, but Adiemantus is unconvinced.
- **C.** Socrates offers the parable of the state. Only the ignorant and vicious pursue political power. The philosopher's *eros* is for knowledge, not power.
- **D.** The philosopher desires the good, not merely the pleasurable.
  1. It is said that philosophers are corrupt and corrupting, but the opposite is true.
  2. The best natures, when corrupted, become tyrannical. Thrasymachus is thus an inverted philosopher-king who has suffered from a bad education.
  3. The best natures need the best education. They must go beyond mere opinion to knowledge, particularly knowledge of the Form of the Good, which is analogous to the sun.
  4. Plato uses the simile of the divided line to clarify this analogy. The dividing line is a schematic diagram of the progression from apprehension of images and sensible objects, of which one can only have opinion, to the knowledge of intelligible objects and ultimately of the Forms.

II. Book VII includes the Myth of the Cave.

A. Most human beings are "imprisoned" in the realm of sensible particulars, which Plato analogizes to shadows projected upon the wall of a cave. The representations produced by deceptive poets and sophists are regarded as real by most men, when in fact they are illusion.

B. The philosopher uses dialectic to free himself from the sensible realm and to progress upward out of the cave and into to the realm of the sun (i.e., ultimate reality, the Form of the Good).

C. The upward way is painful and difficult; the eyes take time to adjust.

D. Glaucon asks if the philosopher-king will be compelled to go back down into the realm of opinion, for the sake of the general good.

1. The education of the philosopher-king, like other guardians, begins with gymnastic and the muses.
2. The guardians study Pythagorean arithmetic, geometry, astronomy, and harmonics between ages 20 and 30, followed by five years of dialectic. After fifteen years of practical politics, one can become a philosopher-king.

E. Dialectic is an asymptotic journey, the end of which is knowledge of the Form of the Good, which cannot be articulated (532E).

F. The City of Speech can be constructed only if true philosophers come to power and exile all citizens more than 10 years old.

1. Its establishment requires coercive power (the good city is a yardstick, not a practical possibility).
2. It has profoundly conservative and anti-utopian implications.
3. The city of speech illustrates the limits of politics. Our progression toward it, like or movement toward the Form of the Good, is asymptotic.

III. Book VIII examines the degeneration of regimes from rule by philosophers ultimately to tyranny.

A. Having reached the symbolic and conceptual high point with the Form of the Good, we descend through the degenerate regimes. The organic progression downward through the four degenerate regimes parallels that through the degenerate forms of the soul.

B. History (i.e., change) has been abolished in the good city, but it returns as a dialectic of depravity (an inversion of Hegel). This process resembles the Nietzchean genealogy of morals.

C. Good regimes follow a natural course of degeneration.

1. The good city, led by the philosopher, degenerates into the timocratic city as a consequence of bad breeding and disagreement among the guardians. In the timocratic city, the desire for honor supplants desire for knowledge.
2. Disorder in the warlike timocratic soul causes wealth to supplant honor. Thus the timocrat becomes an oligarch, concerned with wealth and necessary desires.
3. The few among the bronze (i.e., the oligarchs) are overthrown by the many, who are unable to discipline their desires, giving rise to democracy.
4. Class conflict between oligarchs and democrats forces the democratic regime to elevate a tyrant to protect the regime. The tyrant eventually undermines the democracy and establishes a tyranny.

D. Symbolically, Socrates represents the philosopher-king, Glaucon the timocrat, Adiemantus the oligarch, Polemarchmus the democrat, and Thrasymachus the tyrant. This decline can be reversed through the journey of dialectic, as all characters rise one level.

1. Thrasymachus the tyrant becomes a democrat; he votes for the re-arrest of Socrates.
2. Polemarchmus as spokesman for *demos* becomes an oligarch; he asks about property.
3. Adiemantus the oligarch suddenly becomes spirited and brave; he arrests Socrates.
4. Erotic Glaucon–"brave in all things"–admits the attractions of tyranny are ridiculous. The unjust man wrongs himself involuntarily, and he learns through education to practice justice for its own sake. Up we go.

IV. Book IX compares the condition of the tyrant and the philosopher.

A. The tyrannical man, a completely heteronomous bundle of insatiable desires, is the most miserable of men.

B. The philosopher, who has the greatest knowledge, knows pleasures best. Pleasures of the soul are greatly superior to pleasures of body; virtue equals knowledge, and virtue is its own reward.

V. Book X discusses the usefulness of poetry and myth in reinforcing the imperative to behave justly.

A. Socrates criticizes epic, tragedy, and comedy as imitations of imitations of Forms.

B. Good poetry must edify with true opinion, if it cannot instruct with true knowledge.

1. The poetry of the good city will not allow epic/comic/tragic heroes to make bad (ignorant) men worse.
2. A new poetry and new hero are needed. Instead of tragic crime, comic foolishness, and epic slaughter, there must be a new poetry of education, with a virtuous (knowledgeable) hero who is a benefactor and educator.

3. The poetry of the good city is Platonic dialogue. Socrates is the new Achilles of reason without *hubris*. He embarks on a spiritual odyssey of dialectic. He is an Oedipus without a tragic flaw in a city in which everyone else is blind; a comic hero where the joke is on everyone else.

C. Since it is clear that justice is an end in itself, let us restore reputation and divine retribution in the Myth of Er. Not all can be wise; Cephalus and the *demos* are deterred from vice only by good myths.

Essential Reading:

Bloom, Allan. *The Republic of Plato.* New York: Basic Books, 1968. Books 6-10.

Supplementary Reading:

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Questions to Consider:

1. How does Plato's simile of the divided line illustrate the relationship between his ontology and epistemology?
2. What causes the degeneration of regimes from aristocracy to tyranny? What sort of desire or *eros* is characteristic of each of the degenerate regimes?

Lecture Nine
Aristotle's Metaphysical Views

Darren Staloff, Ph.D.

Scope: This lecture offers an introduction to Aristotelian metaphysics. It reviews Aristotle's quadripartite theory of causation, his understanding of *being* and its properties; his distinction between matter and form, and his allowance for change by positing a middle ground—potency—between being and non-being. In contrast to the Platonic theory of forms, Aristotle holds that forms do not exist apart from sensible particulars. They are abstractions from particular objects of properties that those objects share. Finally, we examine the implications of Aristotelian metaphysics regarding teleology and the existence of a natural hierarchy of being.

Outline

I. Aristotle tried to solve the "Parmenidean problem" of reconciling being with change.
   A. He retained the concept of essences but sought to rescue it from Plato's transcendental excesses.
   B. His metaphysics sought to explain what sort of entities exist; what causal relations exist among them; and what accounts for change.

II. Aristotle believed that the being of everything in the world can be explained in terms of the following four causal relations.
   A. The "formal cause" defines the "whatness" of a thing, or that form or structure that makes it a particular "this-something."
   B. The "material cause" is what a thing is made of, or that from which a thing's material nature arises.
   C. The "efficient cause" is the agency through which change or action is induced.
   D. The "final cause" is that which is the end of change or development, i.e., the purpose of an action or the final state of a process.

III. Aristotle claimed that the essential property of being is unity (i.e., completeness, wholeness, and self-subsistence).
   A. "Primary beings" are self-subsisting, while accidental beings depend for their being on something else.
   B. Primary beings are characterized by hylomorphism, i.e., they are composed of matter and form. The "form" is the essence of the thing and the object of scientific knowledge, while the material substratum is

what undergoes change from one form to another. Matter changes by taking on a new form.

C. Aristotle criticized Plato's theory of forms on the basis of its lack of parsimony. According to Aristotle, the eternal forms exist only in sensible particulars. If the forms exist apart from material particulars, then change is impossible.

D. Numbers and mathematical entities are abstractions from the mathematical features or magnitudes of sensible primary beings.

IV. Aristotle accounts for change by positing "potentiality," a middle ground between complete being (i.e., "actuality") and non-existence.

A. A thing's potential is that which, given the correct conditions, it will naturally tend to become.

B. A teleological view of the world is implied (i.e., the world has a purpose).

1. Motion in inanimate objects can result either from efficient causation by animate agents or from the object's own final cause (i.e., it can be natural to the object).
2. The principle or cause of change or motion in animate or organic entities is the soul, of which there are four natural kinds that form a hierarchy: nutritive souls (i.e., those of plants); animal souls (which allow for locomotion and sense perception); human souls (characterized by reason); and the intellective soul.
3. God is the only primary Being who is immaterial and is thus Pure Actuality or Pure Essence of soul. He is eternal; He is the prime mover; and He is the final cause of all activity.

C. Aristotle's metaphysics also imply the existence of a hierarchy of being.

1. At the bottom of this hierarchy is prime matter, then the four material elements, then inorganic matter, then plants, then animals, then man.
2. At the top of the scale is God, who is Pure Act and Prime Mover.

V. Aristotle is a realist philosopher, in contrast to Plato's idealism.

A. He classified the properties of existing things into seven categories: substance, quantity, quality, relationship to others of like kind, posture, period, act, recipient of action, and position.

B. Aristotle's realism implies that the universe has an apprehensible structure that is external to the human mind.

Essential Reading:

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Questions to Consider:

1. How does Aristotle attempt to resolve the Eleatic problem of change?
2. Is Aristotle's hylomorphism a refinement or a refutation of Plato's doctrines of the Forms?

Lecture Ten
Aristotle's *Politics*: The Golden Mean and Just Rule

Dennis Dalton, Ph.D.

Scope: This lecture examines Aristotle's political theory, as set forth in *The Politics*. Although Aristotle shared many of Plato's basic assumptions—e.g., regarding the primacy of reason, the intrinsic connection between politics and ethics, and the role of the city in improving individuals through education—his methodology was very different from Plato's, and thus he came to very different conclusions about what constitutes the best political regime. Aristotle criticized Plato's political recommendations primarily on empirical and practical grounds. He rejected Plato's proposals for revolutionary change by observing that they are impracticable—they do not comport with human nature as we know it. Aristotle attempted to correct Plato's excesses by taking the "golden mean" as his touchstone for evaluating political arrangements.

Outline

I. The Golden Mean refers to the Aristotelian principle that, in most forms of human behavior, it is wise to avoid extremes and to aim for moderation.
   - **A.** Plato violates the Golden Mean by going to extremes in his theory of the Forms and his definition of the ideal state.
   - **B.** The Golden Mean is achievable in most areas of life.
   - **C.** Aristotle shares Plato's conviction that the state should promote justice and virtue, but unlike Plato he appeals to empirical observation to validate his assertions.

II. Aristotle addresses Plato's "first wave" of revolutionary change (i.e., political equality of women).
   - **A.** He asserts the need for a union of naturally ruling elements with those that are naturally ruled, for the sake of the preservation of both.
     1. The intelligent element—i.e., that which is capable of exercising forethought—is naturally the ruling element.
     2. The element that has the physical capability to do what the ruling party wants is naturally the ruled element.
   - **B.** The soul has two elements: the ruling (rational) and the ruled (irrational).
   - **C.** Because slaves lack the faculty of reason, they are naturally ruled—i.e., some humans are slaves by nature.
   - **D.** According to Aristotle, women possess the faculty of reason, but in an ineffective form. Therefore, they cannot attain the same heights of moral goodness that men can.
   - **E.** The mean position is for women not to rule. At the extreme, women should be treated like slaves. Aristotle said women should be treated with respect as long as they fulfill their natural roles (which they carry out within the family).

III. Aristotle addressed Plato's "second wave" (abolition of the family and communal possession of property).
   - **A.** Aristotle thought Plato's argument was flawed because the family nurtures people to perform political functions, and it inculcates the habits of duty and loyalty.
   - **B.** Aristotle also addressed issues of private property.
     1. In communal systems, men will neglect their duties.
     2. The propensity to own property is natural to man, and thus Plato's scheme is impractical.
     3. Aristotle suggested a system in which privately-owned property is put to common use.
     4. The mean is not community of goods, but neither is it an endless accumulation by individuals of wealth and property.
     5. Aristotle observed that charity cannot exist in the absence of private property.

IV. Aristotle addressed the "third wave" (rule by philosophers).
   - **A.** He warned that Plato's system of rule by an elite few would breed discontent and dissension
   - **B.** Aristotle advanced the principle of ruling and being ruled in turn.
   - **C** He advocated "polity," i.e., rule by the middle class.
     1. The middle class is more educated than the *demos*, and it possesses property (and thus a personal stake in the polity).
     2. The middle class represents the mean between the extremes of oligarchy and democracy. It is the most rational of the three constituent classes that compose the state.
     3. Polity has the estimable virtue of being practicable.

Essential Reading:

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Supplementary Reading:

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Questions to Consider:

1. Discuss the main similarities and differences in Plato's and Aristotle's views of the city.
2. What classificatory principle underlies Aristotle's taxonomy of regimes? Which does he regard as the best regime, and why?

Lecture Eleven
Marcus Aurelius' *Meditations*: The Stoic Ideal

Michael Sugrue, Ph.D.

Scope: This lecture examines Stoicism as the main Hellenistic outgrowth of Socratic philosophy, and it focuses on Marcus Aurelius' *Meditations* as a premier expression of Roman Stoicism. Marcus Aurelius exemplified the Socratic virtue of rational self-control, and his introspection presaged the emergence of the Western conception of the autonomous ego.

Outline

I. Stoicism is a Hellenistic outgrowth of Socratic philosophy.
   - **A.** Stoicism, Epicureanism, and Skepticism are all fragments of Socratic philosophy, and all influenced Roman thinking.
     1. Stoicism is a philosophy of moral duty which counsels us as rational creatures to harmonize our actions with nature. The rational man fears only the abdication of his own moral responsibility.
     2. Epicureanism and hedonism regard pleasure as the only good. Happiness consists in maximizing pleasure and minimizing pain.
     3. Skepticism is a disbelief in all philosophical dogmas.
   - **B.** Marcus Aurelius is replete with Socratic elements such as self-control, moral duty, and disdain for mere physical pleasure.

II. Marcus Aurelius wrote the *Meditations* to himself. What sort of man would do this, and why?
   - **A.** He was a conscientious, ruthless, and introspective man of limitless power and exceptional piety. Despite tremendous temptations to abuse his power, he practiced virtue consistently.
   - **B.** He was unimaginably lonely. He had no equals and thus no friends.
   - **C.** Marcus Aurelius lived modestly, like a Platonic philosopher-king. He concerned himself only with what he had control over—the condition of his own soul—and he feared only the prospect that his behavior might not reflect his rational ideals.

III. The Stoic ideal is reflected in Marcus Aurelius's *Meditations*.
   - **A.** The Stoic man knows himself and lives according to nature.
   - **B.** The rational soul is the autonomous ego; nature has a moral order in which the wise man can discern his own *telos*.
   - **C.** Stoicism is an important step in the historical construction of the ego in the West.

1. "I am in complete control over my will and I am indifferent to all that is not under my control."
2. " I am responsible only for meeting my moral obligations."

D. Marcus Aurelius offers a cosmopolitan political philosophy.
1. The *cosmos* is the *polis* of the Stoic.
2. Universal moral and political order is natural.
3. Stoicism is a perfect philosophy for those who ruled the Roman Empire with its heterogeneous mix of people, languages, and religions.

E. Marcus Aurelius holds essentially that virtue is its own reward.
1. He is agnostic regarding the existence of the gods, but he urges people to act as though the gods really exist. Whether or not the gods exist, the good man has nothing to fear.
2. The Stoic conception of virtue as sufficient in itself anticipates Kantian morality.

F. In his concern about the condition of his own soul, Marcus Aurelius marks an important point in the developing Western conception of the self.

V. Stoicism represents the true philosophical heritage of Socratic thought.

Essential Reading:

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Supplementary Reading:

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Questions to Consider:

1. To what extent is Marcus Aurelius a materialist?
2. Does the rigid determinism of Stoicism make it ultimately a doctrine of despair?

Lecture Twelve
Augustine's *City of God*: Grace, Original Sin, and Theodicy

Darren Staloff, Ph.D.

Scope: This lecture examines the life and teachings of St. Augustine of Hippo, an early Christian bishop and philosopher who attempted to fuse the traditions of Athens and Jerusalem. We will consider Augustine's appropriation of key Platonic concepts—especially that of the Form of the Good, which Augustine identified as God—and his differences from Plato. Augustine departed from Plato in holding that God created the material world *ex nihilo* and that ultimate happiness for man comes with the Beatific Vision. Finally, we examine Augustine's understanding of evil as privation, his understanding of belief as the free gift of God, and his answer to the problem of theodicy—i.e., how to justify God's ways to man.

Outline

I. St. Augustine of Hippo gave the first abstract theological expression to Christian doctrine.
   - A. Augustine is one of the most important and profound Christian thinkers.
   - B. Why did Christianity rise to prominence in the Empire?
     1. The emperor Constantine converted to Christianity in large measure to seal the loyalty of his troops, who were increasingly Christian.
     2. Christianity offered attractive answers to some of the basic questions of human existence. As interpreted by St. Augustine, Christianity attempts to fuse the spiritual insight of Jerusalem with the philosophical wisdom of Athens.

II. Augustine was a self-professed Platonist.
   - A. A philosophical syncretist, he identified Plato's architectonic Form, the Idea of the Good, as the Judeo-Christian God.
   - B. Augustine located all of the Platonic forms or essences in the Mind of God; Plato did not locate these forms but viewed them as emanations from the Form of the Good.
   - C. Augustine differed from Plato in holding that the material principle is not eternal but created from nothing, as told in Genesis. Unlike Plato, Augustine claimed that both form and matter emanate from God.
   - D. Augustine's ethical theory, like Plato's and Aristotle's, is *eudamonic*, i.e., it is based on the goal of happiness.
     1. Like Plato, Augustine believed that happiness is a consequence of the cultivation (i.e., proper ordering) of the soul.
     2. Unlike Plato, he identified true happiness as the Beatific Vision of God, the *summum bonum*, which the just behold in the next life.

III. St. Augustine believed that God and His creation (the universe) are inherently good. Evil, therefore, is not a thing in itself, but only the absence of good. Since the ultimate good is God himself, evil is the absence or denial of God.
   - A. The origin of evil—the first and archetypal turning away from God—was Adam's original sin, as recounted in Genesis.
     1. Original sin is the selfish pride of humanism. Evil is the consequence of free human choice.
     2. St. Paul developed the concept of original sin to explain the origin of evil.
   - B. Adam's sin opened a wide breach between God and man.
     1. It debased human nature such that our free will naturally tends toward self-centeredness.
     2. A mediator sharing both the divine and human natures—Christ—was needed to repair this breach.
   - C. Fallen man is so self-absorbed in sinful pride that he cannot have true faith in God. Genuine belief is thus the result of God's saving grace rather than the result of man's own efforts.
   - D. God is omnipotent and omniscient. He sustains the being of the world and is the source of all that is good. He also knows everything in an eternal present.

IV. St. Augustine's theodicy (the effort to justify God's ways to man) resembled that of Job in the Old Testament.
   - A. The human mind cannot understand God's reasons for tolerating the world's apparent injustices.
   - B. Human beings must simply accept God's will without attempting to understand or justify it. God does not have to justify himself to His creatures. The theodicic impulse—i.e., the attempt to hold God in judgment—exemplifies selfish, humanistic pride.
   - C. God's justice is fulfilled by the eternal punishment of sinners who transgress His laws and obstinately refuse to believe through their own free will.
   - D. God's mercy is exemplified by His gracious infusion of faith in otherwise undeserving sinners.
   - E. St. Augustine's teachings have enduring influence.
     1. His pessimistic view of human nature informs both Protestantism and the U.S. political system, with its emphasis on checks and balances to counter the vicious tendencies to which human nature is prone.

2. The Augustinian perspective supports the liberal tradition in Western thought by counselling prudence and casting doubt on the claims of some to have special insight into the truth.

Essential Reading:

St. Augustine. *The Essential Augustine.* Hackett, 1974.

Supplementary Reading:

Copleston, Frederick S.J. *A History of Philosophy*, Book I, Vol. II. New York: Doubleday & Co., 1985 (pp. 40-90).

Russell, Bertrand. *A History of Western Philosophy.* New York: Simon and Schuster, 1972 (pp. 352-366).

O'Connell, Robert J. *Saint Augustine's Platonism.* Augustinian Institute, 1984.

Marrou, H. I. *Augustine and His Influence throught the Ages.* New York: Harper-Collins, 1954.

Markus, Robert A. *Saeculum: History and Society in the Theology of St. Augustine.* Books on Demand, 1970.

Kirwan, Christopher. *Augustine.* Routledge, 1989.

Questions to Consider:

1. St. Augustine has been characterized as a sort of neo-Platonist. To what extent are his ethical and political teachings consistent with those of Plato and Aristotle?
2. St. Augustine affirms that God is omnipotent and omniscient, and that His creation is perfect. How, then, does St. Augustine account for the presence of evil in the world? Why does God's omniscience not make Him ultimately responsible for that evil?

Glossary

aesthetics: the branch of philosophy that studies the feelings, concepts, and judgements that arise from our appreciation of art or other objects considered sublime or beautiful.

apeiron (Greek): "the boundless"; in Greek philosophy, the infinite or formless.

arete (Greek): virtue or excellence.

asceticism: the practice of self-denial or "mortification of the flesh" for the sake of virtue or God. The practice is widel associated with certain strands of Christian theology that preached the sinful or fallen nature of the body, but it has been practiced within a variety of religious and philosophical traditions.

demos (Greek): people. Root of the word "democracy."

efficient cause: according to Aristotle, the agency that induces a change or action.

Epicureanism: according to Epicurus, the pursuit of pleasures that can be controlled and enjoyed in moderation, especially those of friendship and aesthetic contemplation.

epistemology: the study or theory of the nature, sources, and limits of knowledge.

eschatology: the notion of or orientation toward the end of time, conceived by Christians to be the judgment day, and by Hegel as the coming to fruition of the self-consciousness of *Geist* or the world-spirit.

ethics: the study of standards of conduct and moral judgment, and their application to practical reasoning.

eudaimonia (Greek)**:** happiness, well-being, or success; the central goal of all systems of ancient ethics. According to Aristotle, *eudaimonia* consists in the active exercise of the powers of the soul in accordance with reason.

final cause: according to Aristotle, the end or purpose of an ation, or the final state of a process.

Form: in Plato's philosophy, the idea, essence, or perhaps definition of a thing (as of man or justice); also conceived to be the most real ontological level.

formal cause: according to Aristotle, the pattern or blueprint determining the form or structure of a thing.

hubris (Greek): pride, usually coming before a fall.

hylomorphism: the ontological doctrine, associated with Aristotle, that everything is composed of matter and form.

logic: the system of rules for deriving true inferences.

***logos*:** in Greek, statement, principle, law, reason, or proportion. In Stoicism, *logos* is the cosmic source of order.

material cause: the substance or material of which a thing is made or from which its material nature arises.

metaphysics: the branch of philosophy that examines first principles and seeks to explain the nature of being or reality.

mythos (Greek): myth, story.

nomos (Greek): political law.

ontology: the branch of metaphysics that studies the nature of being, reality, or ultimate substance.

Pentateuch: the first five books of the Hebrew Bible.

philosophy: the love of, or the search for, wisdom and knowledge.

physics: the branch of philosophy that studies the material world of space and time.

physis (Greek): natural law or, simply, nature: what spontaneously produces itself or acts from within itself.

polis (Greek): city. Root of the word "politics."

polity: rule by the middle class, which Aristotle recommends as the most rational and moderate form of regime.

realism: in the context of these lectures, the belief that essences, such as Plato's forms, have real existence independent of sensible particulars.

Skepticism: the philosophical doctrine that denies the possibility of any certain knowledge and thus affirms that inquiry must be a process of doubting.

Stoicism: Greek school of philosophy, founded by Zeno about 308 BC, holding that all things, properties, and relations are governed by unvarying natural laws, and that the wise man should follow virtue alone, obtained through reason, and remain indifferent to the external world, passion, and emotion.

techne (Greek): art, skill, craft; most generally, rule-governed activity. Root of the word "technology." The concept is central to both Plato and Aristotle.

***telos*:** in Greek, the purpose or end-state of a thing or action.

theodicy: a system of natural theology that seeks to vindicate God's justice in allowing evil to exist.

Biographical Notes

Anaximander of Miletus (c. 610-c.547/6 BC). The first Greek philosopher whose thought we know in any detail. He held that the ultimate reality is the *apeiron*—the boundless, limitless, imperishable, and eternal surrounding. Anaximander went beyond Thales in perceiving that the ultimate matter of the universe must be independent of the structure and form of particular kinds of matter.

Anaximenes of Miletus (fl. c. 546 BC). The junior member of the Miletian school, and probably Anaximander's pupil. He held that one primary substance—air—produces all the others, either through rarefaction or condensation. He offers the first physical accont in western philosophy of particular substances as modifications of one primary substance.

Aristotle (384-322 BCE). Born in Stagira in northern Greece, the son of Nicomachus, a physician in the Macedonian court. Aristotle studied at Plato's Academy in Athens between 367 and 347 BCE. From 342 until 339, he tutored the young heir to the Macedonian throne, later known as Alexander the Great. Aristotle later returned to Athens, where in 355 he opened his own school—the Lyceum. He engaged in wide-ranging intellectual pursuits while in Athens, lecturing or writing on physics, metaphysics, logic, ethics, biology, politics, rhetoric, and the arts. An upsurge in anti-Macedonian sentiment following Alexander's death in 323 forced Aristotle to flee to Chalcis in Euboea, where he died in 322.

Augustine, St. (354-430). Bishop of Hippo in Africa from 395 until his death; the premier theologian of early Christianity and the most influential of the western Church Fathers. Raised as a Christian by his mother, St. Monica, Augustine fell away from the faith in his youth and became a Manichean. While in Milan, he came under the influence of St. Ambrose and soon found his way back to the Christian faith. While visiting the town of Hippo in 391, he was chosen against his own will to become a priest. Four years later he became bishop of Hippo, where he died in 430 during a siege by the Vandals.

Democritus of Abdera (c. 460-c. 370 BC). Along with Leucippus, the founder of classical atomism. Democritus held that ultimate reality consists of atoms—indivisible, homogeneous, solid, and unchanging units. These atoms are in eternal motion and combine in various ways to form all material things.

Heraclitus of Ephesus (d. after 480 BC). Held that *logos* governs all things and is somehow associated with fire, which is pre-eminent among the four elements. Heraclitus is principally remembered for the doctrine of the "flux" of all things.

Marcus Aurelius (121-180 CE). Roman emperor of the late second century A.D., Stoic philosopher, and author of The Meditations. He was adopted at age seventeen by his uncle, the Roman emperor Antonius Pius, and married Antonius's daughter, Faustina. Marcus became emperor upon his uncle's death in 161 and

voluntarily shared rule with his adoptive brother Lucius Aurelius Verus. Marcus spent much of his time defending the empire against Britons, Parthians, and Germans—considered by the cultivated Romans to be barbarians. He wrote the *Meditations* while commanding Roman troops north of the Danube. He curbed the gladiatorial games, mitigated some of the worst injustices against slaves, and placed the security and welfare of the empire before his own. He nevertheless persecuted Christians, fearing that they would weaken the empire.

Parmenides of Elea (b. c. 515 BC). Probably the most important Presocratic philosopher, he held that what is real must be ungenerated, imperishable, indivisible, perfect, and motionless.

Paul of Tarsus (d. 63 A.D). A Jew and a Roman citizen, born in the city of Tarsus in Asia Minor. After completing his studies in the Jewish religion, Paul was commissioned to suppress Christianity in the town of Damascus. While travelling there, he was blinded by a brilliant light, and he heard Jesus ask him: "Why persecutest thou me?" With this revelation, Paul converted to Christianity, was baptized, and immediately began preaching. He travelled to many cities throughout the Roman Empire, preaching to and instructing the Christian communities. Paul was arrested by the Roman authorities sometime after 57 A.D. on the charge of provoking a riot. According to tradition, he was beheaded in Rome during the 60s A.D.

Plato (c.427-347 BCE). Student of Socrates and a leading philosopher of fourth-century B.C. Athens. In about 385, Plato established his famous Academy in Athens, where he lectured and wrote. In 367 and again in 361 he travelled to Syracuse (in Sicily) in the unsuccessful effort to develop an ideal government.

Pythagoras (b. c. 570 BC). Founder of a quasi-religious society in Crotona in southern Italy. He taught the doctrine of reincarnation and held that the *cosmos* is explicable in terms of harmony or number.

Socrates (469-399 BCE). Late fifth-century Athenian philosopher and teacher of Plato. In his youth, he probably practiced stone sculpture. Socrates fought as a hoplite for Athens during the Peloponnesian War. Famous for his view that "the unexamined life is not worth living," Socrates combined skepticism and logic in his resolute pursuit of wisdom. His technique of questioning others in pursuit of the consequences of statements is often referred to as the "dialectical" or Socratic method. Socrates was tried for corrupting the youth of Athens and not believing in the gods of the city, and he was found guilty and executed.

Thales of Miletus (fl. 585 BC). The first Greek to search for the ultimate substance of things, which he identified with water.

Zeno of Citium (c. 334.-c. 262 BCE). Founder of Stoicism. After turning from Cynicism to Socratic philosophy, he gradually developed the metaphysics, epistemology, and ethics that compose the Stoical system.