

BASIC PROGRAM of LIBERAL EDUCATION for ADULTS

Fall Quarter 2024

Foundations of Western Metaphysics: Unity and Change— Parmenides, Heraclitus, and Aristotle

INSTRUCTOR	DATES AND TIMES	LOCATION
Clare Pearson	COURSE LENGTH: Ten Weeks DATES: Oct. 3 to Dec. 12	zoom
EMAIL: pearson5478@comcast.net Instructor can be contacted through Canvas message	DAY OF THE WEEK: Thursday TIMES: 6:00pm to 9:15pm	COURSE CODE and SECTION: BASC 70266 24A1 PREREQUISITES: None

Remote courses require you to login to Canvas to access the Zoom Classroom. **You will receive an invitation to join Canvas about a week before your course begins.** Please visit <https://grahamschool.uchicago.edu/academic-programs/online/learning-resources/liberal-arts> to find Canvas login instructions, Zoom instructions, and student training sessions.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

What are the roots of the philosophical development of Western science and philosophy? This class will take up a reading of Aristotle's *Metaphysics*, the first work of western philosophy to lay out a critical list of foundational questions about the nature of reality and to provide argument backed answers for questions such as what is the nature of the physical world? How can we understand that world? What is truth and what are the necessary principles of good reasoning? What is ultimate reality? What are cause and effect and how are change and movement possible? What is time? What is power? How can the world have come to be, or why is it the way it is? We will read and discuss this work against the background of the questions that were very much alive in Aristotle's day, including short writings Parmenides and Heraclitus. Aristotle's work is thought provoking and rewards the effort. We will use the New Hackett Aristotle edition.

Please read the Parmenides and Heraclitus fragments (Canvas pdfs) and Metaphysics Bk A (Alpha) for the first class.

REQUIRED TEXTS

1. Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, tr. CDC Reeve, The New Hackett Aristotle, ISBN 978-1624664397

Students can purchase books at the Gleacher Center Bookstore online at <https://chicagobooth.bncollege.com/shop/chicagobooth/page/find-textbooks> using the Textbook order form, or by using the ISBN number to order the correct edition elsewhere.

WEEKLY READING SCHEDULE

DAY	AUTHOR	READING ASSIGNMENT
WEEK 1	Aristotle, Parmenides, Heraclitus	Handouts: Parmenides, Heraclitus Metaphysics Book A (pp. 2-26) Principles or Causes (Starting Points) and Other Philosophical Approaches Book Δ definitions 1 & 2: Principle & Cause
WEEK 2	Aristotle	Metaphysics Book α, B (pp. 27-47) Puzzles about Principles/Causes Book Δ definitions 3-12: Element - Potentiality
WEEK 3	Aristotle	Metaphysics Book Γ (pp. 48-68) Introduction to the study of Being. Axioms and arguments. Book Δ definitions 13-17, 25, 26 (Quantity-Limit)
WEEK 4	Aristotle	Metaphysics Book E (pp. 98-103), Math, Science, & Theology; Accidents and Luck Metaphysics Book Δ definitions 19-30 (Disposition-Coincident) Book Z z1-z6 (104-111) Substance & Essence
WEEK 5	Aristotle	Metaphysics Book Z z7-z15 (pp. 112-133) Form and matter—what are they? Refutation of Platonic forms Metaphysics Book H (pp. 134-142) Substance and actuality (“activation”)
WEEK 6	Aristotle	Book θ (pp. 143-157): Potentiality and actuality (how to explain how changing things are real) Handout: Heidegger, from lecture course on Aristotle Book Θ
WEEK 7	Aristotle	Book I (pp. 158-174) Unity, opposition, and otherness, with puzzles
WEEK 8	Aristotle	Book K (pp. 175-197) More puzzles, with review of G & E and review of causality from the Physics Book L 1-6 (pp. 198-202) Change and eternity
WEEK 9	Aristotle	Book L 7-10 (pp. 203-214) The “unmoved mover” & the divine Book M 1-7 (pp. 215-228) More arguments with Plato
WEEK 10	Aristotle	Book M 8-10 (pp. 229-238) Number, causes of substances Book N (pp. 239-252) The nature of the eternal; the relation between math and the good Concluding discussion

Students will receive an invitation to join the Graham School Student Community Canvas Site, a place to read announcements, have discussions, ask questions, and find resources.

DISABILITY INFORMATION

Student Disability Services (SDS) works to provide resources, support and accommodations for all students with disabilities and works to remove physical and attitudinal barriers, which may prevent their full participation in the University community. Students that would like to request accommodations should contact SDS in advance of the first class meeting at 773.702.6000 or disabilities@uchicago.edu.