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

INSTRUCTOR: Clare Pearson

DATES AND TIMES: COURSE LENGTH: Ten Weeks
DATES: Oct. 3 to Dec. 12
TIMES: 6:00pm to 9:15pm

LOCATION: zoom

EMAIL: pearson5478@comcast.net
Instructor can be contacted through Canvas message

DAY OF THE WEEK: Thursday

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](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
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DAY</th>
<th>AUTHOR</th>
<th>READING ASSIGNMENT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| WEEK 1 | Aristotle, Parmenides,    | 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 |
|        | Heraclitus                |                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| 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.