

# VICTOR VALLEY COLLEGE SYLLABUS

## FALL 2009

Course No.: Phil 120                      Course Title: Ancient Philosophy                      Units: 3.0  
Section No.: 27389                      Class Hours: 9:35 - 11:am                      Days: MW                      Room No.: 30-14  
Instructor Name: John Wehrle, MA Phil.                      Email: [jwehrle@charter.net](mailto:jwehrle@charter.net) or [wehrlej@vvc.edu](mailto:wehrlej@vvc.edu)  
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### FALL CALENDAR

Veteran's Day Holiday                      November 9  
Thanksgiving Day Holidays                      November 26 - 27  
Fall Semester Ends                      December 12

**NOTE** – CLASSES WILL NOT BE HELD ON THE FOLLOWING DATE: Monday, November 9.

Note: I reserve the right to alter this Syllabus. If I do so, I will provide written alterations in class.

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**Prerequisite:** None, except eligibility for Eng 101.

(GC) The Great Conversation: Volume I: Pre-Socratics Through Descartes 5<sup>th</sup> Ed. by Norman Melchert

### **Course Description:**

Introduction to the major movements and figures of Western Philosophy in the ancient and medieval periods: the Pre-Socratics, Socrates, the Sophists, Plato, Aristotle, Augustine, Anselm, and Aquinas. CSU,UC

### **Course Objectives:**

The student will be able to:

1. Define Philosophy as an academic discipline.
  - Describe the subject matter of philosophy by distinguishing and illustrating the sub-fields of epistemology, metaphysics, and axiology.
  - Distinguish the questions and methods of philosophy from those of the natural sciences, the social sciences, and other disciplines within the Humanities.
  - Discuss the positive role of philosophy in higher education and in personal and social life.
2. Describe, discuss the significance of, and evaluate the primary movements and figures in classical European philosophy.
  - Identify, compare and contrast, and assess the philosophical contributions of such pre-Socratic figures as Thales, Pythagoras, Empedocles, and Heraclitus.
  - Describe the values and philosophical method of Socrates.
  - Compare, contrast, and evaluate the metaphysical, epistemological, and ethical views of Plato and Aristotle.
  - Identify, compare, and contrast the main themes and issues in post-Aristotelian thought as expressed in the positions of the Stoics, Sceptics, Epicureans, and neo-Platonists.
3. Describe, discuss the significance of, and evaluate the primary movements and figures in medieval European and Arabic philosophy.
  - Discuss and evaluate philosophically the original contributions of Augustine on the subjects of God, human nature, and history.
  - Summarize the positions of Ibn Sina and Ibn Rushd on the relation of philosophy and theology, the nature of God, and human nature.
  - Describe and evaluate the positions of Thomas Aquinas, John Duns Scotus, and William of Ockham on the nature and existence of God, the nature of knowledge, and ethics.
4. Describe, discuss the significance of, and evaluate the primary movements and figures in classical Indian philosophy.
  - Distinguish between the metaphysical and epistemological positions of the Samkhya and Vedanta schools of Indian philosophy.
  - Discuss the metaphysics and psychology of Theravada Buddhist philosophy.
  - Compare and contrast the positions of Madhyamika and Yogacara philosophy on metaphysics and the possibility of knowledge.
5. Describe, discuss the significance of, and evaluate the primary movements and figures in classical and medieval Chinese philosophy.

- Trace the development of Confucian thought regarding ethics, psychology, and social philosophy from Kongzi through Mengzi to Zhu Xi.
  - Discuss the metaphysical, moral, and social-political philosophies express in the *Dao De Jing* and the *Zhuangzi*
6. Reason philosophically about a wide variety of classical and contemporary issues.
- Identify and clarify philosophical issues and impartially evaluate the evidence for alternative positions on these issues.
  - Formulate and defend historically informed positions on major philosophical issues that display independent and self-critical thought, sound inferences, and commitment to rational belief.
  - Recognize the specific ways in which philosophy contributes to fulfillment of the obligations of effective citizenship.

**Outlines:** Instead of answering the study questions in the text book students will outline the selected chapters. Outlines are due as per the Course Calendar. Each chapter outline is worth 50 points.

**Paper:** An argumentative essay will be due to Turnitin.com by midnight Saturday, December 13<sup>th</sup>. A paper topics list will be handed out at a later date with more details on this assignment. The paper is worth 500 points.

**Online Forums:** Each week students will post a question by Wednesday of that week relevant to the week's readings and (hopefully) to the student as well. In addition, students will post answers to at least three (3) other student's questions by Saturday of that week. Each question post is worth 15 points while each answer post is worth 20 points. Each additional answer, above the three mandatory, will receive 10 points. Note, this is effectively a weekly opportunity for Extra Credit just for communicating philosophically with your classmates!

**Class Participation:** The temptation in a hybrid class is to avoid going to class. To give you an incentive to come to class, Outlines will only be accepted in person in class. In addition, I will be offering 5 points per class for participating in discussion.

**Assessments:**

Final Exam: On the last day of class there will be a final exam made up of short essay questions. The final examination will be worth 500 points.

**Grading Policy:**

|  |             |
|--|-------------|
| Outlines                                   | 500         |
| Paper                                      | 500         |
| Forums (8 questions @15 + 24 answers @ 20) | 600         |
| Class Participation (15 class @ 5)         | 75          |
| <u>Final Exam</u>                          | <u>1000</u> |
| Total:                                     | 2675        |

|     |           |                    |
|-----|-----------|--------------------|
| A = | 90 - 100% | 2408 – 2675 points |
| B = | 80 - 89%  | 2140 – 2407 points |
| C = | 70 - 79%  | 1873 – 2139 points |
| D = | 60 - 69%  | 1605 – 1872 points |
| F = | 0 - 59%   | 0 – 1604 points    |

**Academic Integrity:**

**Classroom Behavior:** Class time will consist of informal lectures and class discussions. These discussions may be on topics that some students feel very strongly about. I welcome everyone to voice their opinions respectfully. Students who are not respectful of others will be asked to refrain from such behavior. If that warning is not heeded, the student will be asked to leave the classroom. If the behavior continues at another class session the issue will be referred to Department Chair Lisa Ellis and the student will not be allowed to return until all issues have been resolved with his help.

**Plagiarism Policy:** Plagiarism is a serious abuse of my trust and counter to the entire purpose of the educational system. Unfortunately, cases of plagiarism are on the rise so I must make my policy on the matter clear. Turnitin.com results will determine if plagiarism has occurred. If plagiarism has occurred, the paper assignment will receive zero credit and the student may be failed from the course depending upon the seriousness of the case. To avoid plagiarism, always use quotation marks for any sequence of words more than seven words long. Always cite what you have quoted and what you have paraphrased or summarized. Always give credit to others for their ideas, never make it appear that another person's ideas are your own. If you have any specific questions you may ask my advice prior to turning in your paper. Innocent technical citation mistakes are not instances of plagiarism.

