



Teacher(s)	Klimis Sophie ;
Language :	French
Place of the course	Bruxelles Saint-Louis
Learning outcomes	<p>At the end of this learning unit, the student is able to :</p> <p>This course aims at providing students with the skills necessary to an interactive mode with the whole Greek thinking in order to understand how the Greeks set up the various forms of thinking in the Western world whose development must be perpetuated, as Castoriadis said.</p> <p>In view of this main purpose, students have to acquire significant knowledge in Ancient philosophy, which contains a large range of Greek texts. The course aims at understanding the thinking process, problems and underlying concepts of these founding texts which philosophical history has left as a legacy.</p> <p>A second learning outcome consists on making students aware of how philosophy became a specific human science on building critical relationships with other instituting discourses (Mainguenau, Cossutta). The latter were indeed significant as to the evolution of the Greek society through the poets', rhetoricians' and historians' speeches. That's why we are also going to study poetics –Homer and Sophocles- and historians as Thucydides and try to unveil their visions of the world and their values, as well as the way philosophers tried to distance themselves or lean on them.</p> <p>A third outcome aims at providing students with skills necessary to understand the problems interpretation and translation have been provoking throughout the centuries; Most of the Greek texts are 'patchworks' which come from a patient and comparative philological work on different sources as papiri and other manuscripts, of which the oldest date back to the Middle-Ages or even the Modern Times.</p> <p>Moreover, some works of thinkers as Heraclitus, the Sophists or the Stoics were found incomplete and some even fragmentary ; As a result, we know them through a critical and indirect witness. At last some medieval comments of these Greek texts reached the Christian Western world before the original texts!</p>
Evaluation methods	Oral examination + Oral presentation + Essay
Teaching methods	The course is a lecture that includes at the end of the course a moment of dialogue, to ask questions and exchange ideas.
Content	<p>The Greeks are those 'untimely thinkers' constantly imitated and reinvented by subsequent philosophers. When we limite ourselves to the twentieth century alone, we could mention for example the importance of the study of the pre-Socratics for the last Heidegger; Hannah Arendt's reworking of the Aristotelian distinction between "active life" and "contemplative life"; the rebirth with Perelman of the theory of argumentation from a rereading of Aristotle's Rhetoric; the constant rereading of poets, historians and Greek philosophers throughout the works of Foucault, from his analysis of "the Greek use of pleasures" to the "government of self and others"; until today when Alain Badiou asserts his Platonism and proposes a "hyper-translation" of the Republic.</p> <p>But it is mostly to the rereading of the Greeks by Cornelius Castoriadis that we will pay attention, by studying what he calls "the Greek creation", i.e. the joint invention of democracy (understood as a project of social autonomy) and philosophy (understood as unlimited questioning), in the period included between Homer and the end of the 5th century. We will thus consider the two major figures of Greek philosophy, Plato and Aristotle, as they emerged "after" this intense period of political and philosophical creation, and as their whole work has to be approached according to this.</p> <p>The ex-cathedra course is composed of five major parts:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. we are going to start studying the poetic texts that constitute the fundamental references of Greek culture: Homer's 'Iliad and Odyssey', as well as 'Theogony' and 'Works and Days' by Hesiod. If Socrates of 'The Republic' called Homer the "educator of the whole Greece" and so vigorously fought the representation of gods and heroes of epic poetry, it was because Homer provided the entire Greek world -at least until the 5th century- with the frame of its values, his representation of what makes the essence of the human being, the cosmos, gods, justice and the common world. <p>Studying tragic texts such as 'Prometheus bound' by Aeschylus or 'Antigone' by Sophocles is a significant part of the course, because it takes into account the importance of tragedy in the self-institution of the Athenian democratic city, and the importance of the criticism that Plato addresses to it –remembering first the incredible affirmation according to which, it is the exclusion of tragic and comic poets that justifies that the ideal city of the Republic is "the best possible". Finally, we are going to focus particularly on Thucydides to understand history with the functioning and political institutions of the democratic Athens, which is indispensable to understand the political philosophy of Plato and Aristotle.</p>

	<p>2. The Greek thinkers of the sixth and fifth centuries BC, well-known as "pre-Socratic thinkers" constitute the second part of this course with the analysis of the development of this "category" in the 19th century, when Socrates arises as the pivot of ancient philosophy history. We are going to study why some "pre-Socratics", such as Heraclitus, who preferred the designation "wise men" rejected the term "philosopher", derived from Pythagoreanism; as well as the different lines of thought included under the term "pre-Socratics": the cosmologies proposed by the thinkers of the Milesian School (Thales, Anaximander, Anaximenes); the status of fire - logos, One - All in the excerpts of Heraclitus; the poem by Parmenides; which institutes the logical principle of identity and proposes a new cosmology; the atomism of Leucippus and Democritus, etc. Part of the course is also the study of these strange "pre-Socratics" contemporary of Socrates: the Sophists. We will focus on Protagoras, whose thinking reveals the deep values of Athenian democracy.</p> <p>3. the third part of the course will be devoted to Plato's dialogues and it is in this context that we will consider Socrates as a "conceptual character" (using an expression borrowed from Gilles Deleuze), by confronting him with the enigma of the "historical" Socrates. We will study the specificity of the choice of the dialogue-form, which "shows the thought at work" according to an expression of Cornelius Castoriadis, by showing how the creation of a form of orality specific to writing counterbalances Plato's theory of "oral and esoteric doctrines", developed by contemporary interpreters, from the Tübingen School. Through the analysis of excerpts of several dialogues, we are going to focus on the central themes of the Platonic thought: the invention of the "philosophical difference" in regards to politicians, sophists, rhetoricians and poets; the issues of soul, justice, Eros, virtue, etc. We will also study the creation of thought specific to Plato: the institution of the dialectic method, the main Genres of the Sophist; Ideas considered as "figures of the thinkable".</p> <p>4. we will then focus on Aristotle's thought. He is indeed the inventor of philosophy as we still practice it today, implementing a form of argumentation that does not resort to myth as Plato did. Philosophy as Aristotle conceives it uses a dialectic method, which, starting from a state of the question, extracts the "aporias" and tries to find solutions to them. Aristotle is also the one who instituted a clear delimitation of the different "regions of being", of which he began to identify specific principles.</p> <p>We will therefore particularly focus on the study of "becoming" such as it is thematised in Physics, at the intersection of ontology, ontology and theology in Metaphysics, and on the specificity of theorisation of the "human things" in ethico-political treatises. We will pay special attention to theorisation of Aristotle's human language, from the study of its anatomic conditions in biological treatises, to the differentiation between apophantic, rhetoric and poetic languages.</p> <p>5. The fifth and last part of the course will study the main currents of Hellenistic philosophy, i.e. Stoicism, Epicureanism and Scepticism. We will study these three currents from a theoretical point of view (logic, physics, ethics) but also as life practices, "spiritual exercises" whose importance has been highlighted by Pierre Hadot.</p> <p>The seminar will focus on one single work of significant importance for the history of thought. That is why it will be either a dialogue from Plato or a work of Aristotle. This year, we will read Plato's Republic.</p>
Bibliography	Une bibliographie sélective et commentée pour chaque partie du cours est disponible sur Moodle.
Faculty or entity in charge	PHLB

Programmes containing this learning unit (UE)				
Program title	Acronym	Credits	Prerequisite	Learning outcomes
Bachelor in Philosophy	FILB1BA	6		
Bachelor in French and Romance Languages and Letters	ROMB1BA	6		
Bachelor in Modern Languages and Literatures : General	ROGB1BA	6		