

Ancient Philosophies of Soul

Level: MA

Course Status: Elective

CEU credits: 2

Academic year: 2018/2019

Semester: Winter

Host Unit: Department of Philosophy

Co-hosting Unit(s) [if applicable]:

CEU Instructor(s): István Bodnár

Time:

Course description:

The primary aim of this course is a philosophical discussion of different philosophies of soul in ancient philosophy, starting from the Presocratics, and turning to an in-depth discussion of Plato's critical assessment of these theories, and then Aristotle's criticism on Plato. We will put special emphasis on setting out how these different philosophies of soul mesh with the metaphysics, and with the natural philosophy of these philosophers, and as a result what kind of causal role can be attributed to the soul on these different accounts.

We will read these texts in English translation, knowledge of Greek is not presupposed. Students will be acquainted with the relevant Greek terminologies of the different authors during the discussions in class. Key texts to discuss, among the Presocratics are selected fragments and testimonies of Pythagoras and the Pythagoreans, Heraclitus, Empedocles and Democritus, this will be followed by Plato's *Phaedo*, *Phaedrus* and *Timaeus* and Aristotle's *De anima*.

Course goal:

The primary goal of the course is to enhance students' understanding of issues of philosophy of soul in antiquity, with special emphasis on comparison to problems of contemporary philosophy of mind.

Learning outcomes:

By the end of the course students will be expected to have made progress in understanding the way ancient philosophies of soul are connected to key discussions in ancient metaphysics and natural philosophy. They will also be expected to broaden their knowledge of the philosophy of Aristotle and his predecessors, and Aristotle's critical stance of earlier philosophers.

Schedule

Requirements:

- regular attendance
- regular preparation
- active participation in discussions

- Presentation of papers from the secondary literature throughout the term
- 2000–2500-word term paper (topic to be chosen by March 15, upon consultation with the teacher of the course)

Assessment:

- 25% class participation (discussions); 25% presentations; 50% term paper

Students are encouraged to submit position papers to complement the discussion element of their class participation.