**COURSE OUTLINE**

**(1) GENERAL**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **UNIVERSITY / Department** | * NATIONAL AND KAPODISTRIAN UNIVERSITY OF ATHENS / Department of History and Philosophy of Science

in collaboration with:* UNIVERSITY OF PATRAS / Department of Philosophy
* UNIVERSITY OF CRETE / Department of Philosophy and Social Studies
 |
| **STUDY LEVEL** | Postgraduate |
| **COURSE CODE** | 105 | **SEMESTER OF STUDY** | 2nd |
| **COURSE TITLE**  | PHILOSOPHY OF LATE ANTIQUITY |
| **INSTRUCTOR(S)** | PANTELIS GOLITSIS |
| **TEACHING ACTIVITIES** | **TEACHING HOURS PER WEEK** | **ECTS** |
| Seminars | 3 | 10 |
| **COURSE TYPE** | specialization, skills development |
| **PREREQUISITE COURSES** | – |
| **LANGUAGE OF INSTRUCTION and EXAMINATIONS** | English |
| **COURSE OFFERED TO ERASMUS STUDENTS** | No |
| **COURSE WEBSITE (URL)** | https://eclass.uoa.gr/courses/... |

**(2) LEARNING OUTCOMES**

|  |
| --- |
| **Learning Outcomes** |
| The topic of this course is the philosophy of Late Antiquity (roughly 3rd–6th centuries AD). The course will provide an overview of this intellectual movement, focusing on the key distinctions that define it.Upon successful completion of the course, students:* will have gained familiarity with close reading and interpretation of important philosophical texts;
* will be able to apply their knowledge and understanding within the broader context of ancient philosophy;
* will learn how to develop scholarly arguments in written and oral form;
* will be familiar with translation theory and practice;
* will be able to communicate clearly their conclusions and the reasoning and logical assumptions on which they are based to both specialist and non-specialist audiences;
* will have strengthened the necessary skills to continue their studies independently.
 |
| **General Skills** |
| * Independent work
* Teamwork
* Work in an international environment
* Work in an interdisciplinary environment
* Generating new research ideas
* Exercise criticism and self-criticism
* Promotion of free, creative and inductive thinking
 |

**(3) COURSE CONTENT**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Week** | **Topic** |
| **1** | The historiography of the philosophy of Late Antiquity |
| **2** | The schools of philosophy in Late Antiquity and the development of philosophy  |
| **3** | Plotinian metaphysics I |
| **4** | Plotinian metaphysics II |
| **5** | Plotinian cosmology and physics |
| **6** | The interpretation of Plato’s *Parmenides* I |
| **7** | Philosophy and religion in Late Antiquity |
| **8** | The metaphysics of Proclus |
| **9** | The metaphysics of Damascius |
| **10** | The interpretation of Plato’s *Parmenides* II |
| **11** | Ethics and Politics |
| **12** | Philosophy of language |

**Week 1: The historiography of the philosophy of Late Antiquity**The philosophy of Late Antiquity has been variously interpreted and appreciated throughout the modern era. Although the philosophers of Late Antiquity were self-consciously related to Plato, their philosophy was labelled “eclectic” in the eighteenth century and associated with irrationalism due to its syncretism and emphasis on religion. In the nineteenth century, historians of philosophy characterized it as “Neoplatonism”, a term used pejoratively to distinguish it from the genuine, purportedly purely rational Hellenic spirit and the true teachings of Plato. This view gradually shifted in the twentieth century, leading to a more rationalistic interpretation of Neoplatonism, which is currently undergoing reevaluation. We will read and discuss representative texts from the historiography of philosophy.**Week 2: The schools of philosophy in Late Antiquity and the development of philosophy**The philosophy of Late Antiquity is often associated with Neoplatonism (3rd–6th/7th century AD), as if it represented a single, unified school of thought. However, this is a simplistic view, undermined by the diversity of schools and institutions during that period. Plotinus, who is regarded by modern scholars as the founder of ‘Neoplatonism’, was not seen as a foundational figure by the ‘Neoplatonists’ themselves. He established a school in Rome, which was further developed by later philosophers in Apamea, Athens, and Alexandria. We will explore the distinctive characteristics of the various schools of philosophy in Late Antiquity and trace the evolution of the so-called Neoplatonism.**Weeks 3 and 4:** **Plotinian metaphysics I and II**The metaphysics of Plotinus (204–270) represent a distinct phase in the development of Platonic philosophy in Antiquity. We will study select texts that present the fundamentals of his metaphysical system, particularly his interpretation of Plato’s *Parmenides* and his doctrine that the Intelligibles are not external to the Intellect — a key departure from the preceding metaphysics of ‘Middle Platonism’.**Week 5:** **Plotinian cosmology and physics**Plotinus offers a comprehensive philosophy rooted in his metaphysical doctrine of the three ‘hypostases’ (the One, Intellect, and Soul). We will read and discuss selected texts from the third and the fourth *Enneads*, which are essential for understanding how the realms of nature and the heavens are wholly dependent on the Word-Soul, the Intellect, and the Good.**Week 6: The interpretation of Plato’s *Parmenides* I**‘Neoplatonism’ stands apart from other currents in the development of Platonic philosophy through its metaphysical/theological interpretation of the *Parmenides*. Rather than viewing the dialogue as merely a logical exercise or a display of Plato’s dialectical skill, Neoplatonists consider the hypotheses presented by Parmenides in the second part of the dialogue as cryptic references to the fundamental principles of reality. We will examine the various Neoplatonic interpretations of the *Parmenides* from the disciples of Plotinus to Syrianus.**Week 7: Philosophy and religion in Late Antiquity**The metaphysical interpretation of Plato’s *Parmenides* reached its height with Syrianus (d. 437), head of the Platonic School of Athens. Syrianus interpreted the various conclusions drawn from the second hypothesis/deduction as corresponding to the gods of both the Chaldean and traditional Greek pantheons. We will explore how the Platonic metaphysics in Late Antiquity cannot be fully understood without considering its religious context.**Week 8:** **The metaphysics of Proclus**Proclus (412–485) continued the philosophy of his master Syrianus, offering his disciples and later philosophers a comprehensive philosophical system. We will read passages from Proclus’ Commentary on Plato’s *Timaeus*, which Proclus considered as his most perfect philosophical work, and his *Elements of Theology*, which structure the principles of reality *more geometrico*.**Week 9: The metaphysics of Damascius**Damascius (*c*. 460–538), last head of the Platonic School of Athens, brought Neoplatonic metaphysics to its culmination — or perhaps to its dissolution — by positing a principle that transcends the First Principle accepted by Proclus and Damascius’ contemporary philosophers in Alexandria. He posited an overarching principle beyond the One, which he regards as the fundamental source of all things, unrelated to all things of which it is the principle. We will read and discuss texts that illustrate Damascius’ conception of this “Ineffable”. **Week 10: The interpretation of Plato’s *Parmenides* II**We will examine Damascius’ interpretation of the principles associated with the hypotheses beyond the first three.**Week 11: Ethics and Politics**Philosophers of Late Antiquity were deeply committed to ethics. We will explain the hierarchy of virtues from Plotinus’ disciple Porphyry through the late Alexandrian philosopher Olympiodorus and explore how these virtues relate to social life and politics. **Week 12:** **Philosophy of language**We will discuss the Neoplatonic interpretation of Aristotle’s *Categories*, illustrating how Neoplatonists conceived the function and scope of human language. |

**(4) TEACHING AND LEARNING METHODS – ASSESSMENT**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **TEACHING FORMAT**  | Face to face, in classroom. |
| **USE OF INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGIES** | Learning process support through the e-class online platform. |
| **TEACHING STRUCTURE** |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| ***Activity*** | ***Semester Workload*** |
| Lectures, Seminars | 36 |
| Independent study | 124 |
| Project (paper preparation and submission) | 140 |
| **Total**(30 hours of work per credit unit) | ***300*** |

 |
| **STUDENT EVALUATION***.* | 1. Active participation in the course (40%).2. Final essay (60%)Assessment for the course will be based on performance throughout the semester, including participation, as well as a final essay. The essay is expected to be 6,000-9,000 words in length (including notes, but not the bibliography). |

**(5) RECOMMENDED BIBLIOGRAPHY**

|  |
| --- |
| **Α. Primary Sources:**1. E. Diehl (ed.), *Procli Diadochi in Platonis Timaeum commentaria* [Bibliotheca scriptorum Graecorum et Romanorum Teubneriana], 3 vols. Leipzig: Teubner, 1903-1906.
2. E. R. Dodds, *Proclus. The elements of theology*, 2nd edn., Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1963 (repr. 1977).
3. P. Henry/H.-R. Schwyzer (eds.), *Plotini opera* [Museum Lessianum. Series philosophica 33-35], 3 vols. Leiden: Brill, 1951-1973.
4. K. Kalbfleisch (ed.), *Simplicii in Aristotelis Categorias commentarium* [Commentaria in Aristotelem Graeca, 8], Berlin: Georg Reimer, 1907.
5. E. Lamberz (ed.), *Porphyrii Sententiae ad intelligibilia ducentes* [Bibliotheca scriptorum Graecorum et Romanorum Teubneriana]. Leipzig: Teubner, 1975.
6. H. D. Saffrey/L. G. Westerink (eds.), *Proclus. Théologie platonicienne* [Collection des Universités de France], 6 vols. Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1968-1997.
7. C. Steel (ed.),*Procli in Platonis Parmenidem Commentaria*, Vol. I-III, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007-2009.
8. C. Luna/A.-Ph. Segonds (eds.), *Proclus. Commentaire sur le* Parménide *de Platon*, 7 vols. Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 2007-2021.
9. L. G. Westerink, *Olympiodori in Platonis Gorgiam commentaria*, Leipzig: Teubner, 1970.
10. L. G. Westerink/J. Combès (eds.), *Damascius. Traité des Premiers Principes* [Collection des Universités de France], 3 vols. Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1986-1991.
11. L. G. Westerink/J. Combès (eds.), *Damascius. Commentaire du* Parménide *de Platon* [Collection des Universités de France], 4 vols. Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1997-2003.

**Β. Secondary Bibliography:**:1. L. P. Gerson (ed.), The Cambridge History of Philosophy in Late Antiquity, 2 vols., Cambridge (England) and New York, NY: Cambridge University Press. 2010.
2. D. J. O’Meara, Plotinus: An Introduction to the Enneads, Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1993.
3. P. Remes/S. Slaveva-Griffin (eds.), The Routledge Handbook of Neoplatonism, London and New York: Routledge, 2014.
4. A. Smith, Philosophy in Late Antiquity, London and New York: Routledge, 2004.
5. R. T. Wallis, Neoplatonism, with a foreword and bibliography by Lloyd P. Gerson, 2nd edition, London: Duckworth and Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 1995.
6. J. Wilberding and C. Horn (eds.), Neoplatonism and the Philosophy of Nature, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012.

**C. Resources on the Web:**1. Wildberg, Christian, "Neoplatonism", *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*(Winter 2021 Edition), Edward N. Zalta (ed.)

URL = <https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/win2021/entries/neoplatonism/>. |