

Course description

Title of course:	An Interactive Introduction into the History of Greek Philosophy
Course code:	BSB9443
Mode of completion:	practical mark (home-written essay, ca. 6000 chars)
Scheduled time:	Friday 10:00–11:30
Venue:	
Weekly lectures:	2
No. of ECTS:	6
Instructor's name:	István Pásztori-Kupán, MTh, PhD, dr. habil.
Instructor's email address:	mcpasztori@yahoo.com

Brief description of the course:

The course aims to offer a brief introduction into the history of ancient Greek philosophy from the Presocratic philosophers (6th century – mid-5th century BC) until the age of the Neoplatonists of the 5th century AD. The interactive lectures and seminars will include a selection of texts and excerpts from various ancient thinkers like Thales, Heraclitus, Empedocles, Plato, Aristotle, Plotinus, Epictetus, Marcus Aurelius and others. The analysis of selected and previously read passages will be followed by discussion.

Classes during the semester

Class No:	Date:	Theme:
1.	13 Feb. 2026	Presocratics: The school of Miletus, Thales, Anaximander, Anaximenes, Pythagoras and Pythagoreans Kirk-Raven: <i>The Presocratic Philosophers</i> (selections from Thales and Pythagoras)
2.	20 Feb. 2026	Heraclitus The Eleatic school: Xenophanes, Parmenides, Zeno and Melissus Kirk-Raven: <i>The Presocratic Philosophers</i> (selections from Heraclitus and Zeno)
3.	27 Feb 2026	Empedocles, Anaxagoras and the Atomists: Leucippus and Democritus Selected fragments by Presocratics https://www.mnsu.edu/philosophy/Presocratic%20fragments.pdf
4.	6 March 2026	Socrates: his life, teaching and his reprehension of the Sophists Plato: <i>The Apology of Socrates</i> http://classics.mit.edu/Plato/apology.html
5.	13 March 2026	Plato: his life, works and the teaching concerning the ideas; the allegory of the cave Plato: <i>Republic</i> , Book VII http://classics.mit.edu/Plato/republic.8.vii.html
6.	20 March 2026	Plato's concept of anamnesis and his teaching on the soul. Plato's ethics Plato: <i>Phaedrus</i> , the analogy of the charioteer http://classics.mit.edu/Plato/phaedrus.html
7.	27 March 2026	Aristotle: his life and criticism of Plato's concept of ideas; Aristotle's logic and ethics Aristotle: <i>Nicomachean Ethics</i> http://classics.mit.edu/Aristotle/nicomachaen.1.i.html
8.	17 April 2026	Cynicism: Antisthenes and Diogenes Diogenes Laertius: <i>Lives of Eminent Philosophers</i> http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=D.+L.+6.2&fromdoc=Perseus%3Atext%3A1999.01.0258
9.	8 May 2026	Hellenistic philosophy: Epicurus and Epicureanism Epicurus: <i>Letter to Menoeceus</i> http://classics.mit.edu/Epicurus/menoec.html

10.	15 May 2026	The early Stoa: Zeno of Citium, Cleanthes and Chrysippus Cleanthes: <i>Hymn to Zeus</i> https://salemmc.instructure.com/courses/121/pages/cleanthes-hymn-to-zeus-c-3rd-century-b-dot-c-e Late Stoic philosophers and their ethics: Seneca, Epictetus and Marcus Aurelius Seneca, <i>Of Clemency</i>, Book I, Ch. 1–14 Epictetus: <i>Enchiridion</i> http://classics.mit.edu/Epictetus/epicench.html Marcus Aurelius: <i>Meditations</i> http://classics.mit.edu/Antoninus/meditations.1.one.html
11.	22 May 2026	Scepticism: Pyrrho of Elis; Neo-Platonism: Plotinus and Porphyry Plotinus: <i>Enneads</i> VI, 1: On the kinds of being http://classics.mit.edu/Plotinus/enneads.6.sixth.html

Recommended Bibliography

G. S. Kirk – J. F. Raven: *The Presocratic Philosophers. A Critical History with a Selection of Texts* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1957)
<https://archive.org/details/presocraticphil033229mbp>

The Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy: <http://www.iep.utm.edu/>

Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy: <http://plato.stanford.edu/>

Heraclitus' fragments: <http://www.heraclitusfragments.com/index.html>

Selected fragments by Presocratics (including Thales, Anaximander, Anaximenes, Pythagoras, Heraclitus, Parmenides, Zeno of Elea, Anaxagoras, Empedocles, Leucippus and Democritus): <https://www.mnsu.edu/philosophy/Presocratic%20fragments.pdf>

Plato: *The Apology of Socrates* <http://classics.mit.edu/Plato/apology.html>

Plato: *Republic*, Book VII <http://classics.mit.edu/Plato/republic.8.vii.html>

Plato: *Phaedrus* <http://classics.mit.edu/Plato/phaedrus.html>

Aristotle: *Nicomachean Ethics* <http://classics.mit.edu/Aristotle/nicomachaen.1.i.html>

Epicurus: *Letter to Menoeceus* <http://classics.mit.edu/Epicurus/menoec.html>

Cleanthes: *Hymn to Zeus* <https://salemmc.instructure.com/courses/121/pages/cleanthes-hymn-to-zeus-c-3rd-century-b-dot-c-e>

Epictetus: *Enchiridion* <http://classics.mit.edu/Epictetus/epicench.html>

Marcus Aurelius: *Meditations* <http://classics.mit.edu/Antoninus/meditations.1.one.html>

Diogenes Laertius, *Lives of Eminent Philosophers*
<http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus%3Atext%3A1999.01.0258%3Abook%3D1%3Achapter%3Dprologue>

Plotinus: *Enneads* <http://classics.mit.edu/Plotinus/enneads.html>

Socrates Scholasticus, *Church History* Book VII, Chapter 15
<http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/26017.htm> (on Hypatia of Alexandria)

Sources on Hypatia:
http://plato2051.tripod.com/hypatia_of_alexandria.htm

Rankin, H.D., *Sophists, Socratics and Cynics* (New Jersey: Barnes & Noble, 1983)