

**CLST 211 = PHIL 211A**  
**GREEK PHILOSOPHY I**  
MWF 1-2PM — HENNINGS 202

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“The unexamined life is not worth living”: this is how the seminal Athenian philosopher Socrates explained his way of life to the jury that sentenced him. How did this attitude – and with it the complex of Western philosophy, medicine and science – first emerge in ancient Greece? In this course, we will piece together fragmentary evidence for the birth of rational speculation between the poets Homer and Hesiod (8th century BC) and Plato and Aristotle (4th century BC). Through the origin story of Western philosophy, we will encounter the original articulations of Greece’s most enduring and provocative ideas, among them atomism, materialism, the dialogue of science and religion, the notion of a universe governed by regular mathematical laws, the possibility of knowledge, and the goals of human life.

**REQUIRED TEXTS**

1. *PW* = Cooper, *Pursuits of Wisdom* • UBC BOOKSTORE
  2. *AT* = Griffin, *Athenian Thought: A Reader* • ONLINE
  3. *HT* = Griffin, *A History of Theōria: The Presocratics* • ONLINE
  4. **Ricken** = F. Ricken, *Philosophy of the Ancients* • ONLINE
- Further readings circulated online: see instructor for password.

👂 Focus on passages discussed in class.

**COURSE WEBPAGE** [socrates.arts.ubc.ca/211](http://socrates.arts.ubc.ca/211)

**INSTRUCTOR**

Michael Griffin  
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**Office Hour: Friday 2pm**

**TA** Amer Amer

Please read the required text before each lecture, and bring the text with you to class.

Students must adhere to the University’s standards for academic integrity.

(For guidance, visit [learningcommons.ubc.ca/resource-guides](http://learningcommons.ubc.ca/resource-guides)).

Students with special needs are encouraged to contact the instructor as soon as possible.

**EVALUATION**

(See detailed Evaluation Structure on final page of syllabus)

<b>2 Question Papers (Connect, Open-Book)</b>	<b>30%</b>
<b>Essay 1</b>	<b>25%</b>
<b>Essay 2</b>	<b>25%</b>
<b>Philosophical Journal</b>	<b>10%</b>
<b>Ethical case study (e-portfolio)</b>	<b>10%</b>

*There is no final examination for CLST/PHIL 211.*

**A message from your AMS: The UBC AMS Speakeasy**

Speakeasy is a free, confidential student service offering one-on-one peer support, information and referrals to the UBC community, in a non-judgmental safe space. No issue is too big or too small, and the service operates on a drop-in basis.

**Mon-Fri 9 a.m. to 5.30 p.m. – AMS Nest 1314 or [speak@ams.ubc.ca](mailto:speak@ams.ubc.ca) or 604.822.9246**

**Assignments will be submitted via [Turnitin.com](https://www.turnitin.com). See course webpage for details.**

	Date	Topic	Readings
<b>Introduction</b>			
1	Sep Wed 7	Introductory discussion. Handout: Syllabus. Online download: "Bird's Eye View."	
<b>The code of the poets: What is a hero?</b>			
2	Fri 9	Homer's <i>Iliad</i>	AT 1: Homer, Hesiod & Pindar Nussbaum, "Luck and Ethics" (online)
3	Mon 12	Homer's <i>Odyssey</i>	
4	Wed 14	Hesiod's <i>Theogony</i> and <i>Works &amp; Days</i>	
5	Fri 16	Pindar's <i>Odes</i>	
<b>Athens' new teachers</b>			
6	Mon 19	Greek Tragedy	Nussbaum, "Aeschylus" (online)
7	Wed 21	The sophists: Thucydides' Melian Dialogue	AT 2: Athens' new teachers Ricken 54-57 [NB: pars not pp.]
8	Fri 23	The sophists: Plato's challenge <i>e-portfolios</i> : Letitia Henville visit	
<b>Socrates: The dawn of philosophy</b>			
9	Mon 26	Introducing Socrates	AT 3: Socrates Ricken 54-60
10	Wed 28		
<b>Sep 30: Question Paper 1 Due (Connect)</b>			
11	Fri 30	Philosophy as a way of life <i>e-portfolios</i> : Arts ISIT visit	Cooper, ch. 1
12	Oct Mon 3	The Socratic Life (I)	Cooper, ch. 2
13	Wed 5	The Socratic Life (II)	
14	Fri 7	The Socratic Life (III) and <b>Journal Review in Class</b>	
<b>Plato and Aristotle: The Academy</b>			
15	Mon 10	<b>Thanksgiving Day: No Class</b>	
16	Wed 12	Plato	AT 4: Plato & Aristotle Ricken 61-68, 130
17	Fri 14	<b>Guest lecture: Amer Amer</b>	
18	Mon 17	Plato (cont'd) and Aristotle	
<b>Oct 17: Essay 1 Due (TurnItIn)</b>			
19	Wed 19	Aristotle (cont'd)	Cooper, ch. 3 Ricken 180-208
20	Fri 21	Aristotle (cont'd)	

	Date	Topic	Readings
21	Mon 24	Practicing the Academic Life: Discussion & Presentations	
<b>A History of <i>Theōria</i></b>			
22	Wed 26	The Presocratics: The quest for <i>aitia</i> Sources of Presocratic Thought	Ricken 1-4 HT 1
23	Fri 28	The Milesian Physicists: Thales, Anaximander, & Anaximenes	Ricken 5-23 HT 2
24	Mon 31	Xenophanes & Heraclitus: Who are we to know?	Ricken 20-23, 29-33 HT 3
25	Nov Wed 2	Heraclitus: The <i>Logos</i>	
26	Fri 4	Heraclitus & Parmenides	Ricken 34-43 HT 4
27	Mon 7	Parmenides (cont'd)	
28	Wed 9	Parmenides (cont'd) Zeno's paradoxes	Ricken 44 HT 4
29	Fri 11	<b>Remembrance Day: No class</b>	
<b>Nov 14: Question Paper 2 Due (TurnItIn)</b>			
30	Mon 14	Pythagoras: Number holds sway Orphism	Ricken 23-28 HT 5
31	Wed 16	Empedocles: Love and Strife	Ricken 45-48 HT 6
32	Fri 18	Anaxagoras and the Atomists	Ricken 49-50, 51-53 HT 7
33	Mon 21	Plato's synthesis	Ricken 69-114 (optional) HT 8
34	Wed 23		
35	Fri 25	Aristotle's synthesis	Ricken 147-179 (optional) HT 9
<b>The Age of the Schools: A Preview</b>			
36	Mon 28	The Hellenistic Schools: The Stoa and the Garden	Cooper chs. 4-5 (optional) Ricken 124-129, 209-236 (optional)
37	Wed 30	E-Portfolio Work, Support & Q&A in Class (Arts Co-Op and Arts ISIT)	
38	Fri 2	Review and Final Journaling Assignments	
<b>Dec 2: Journals Due (In person, or in instructor's mailbox, or by email)</b>			
<b>Dec 4: Essay 2 Due (TurnItIn)</b>			
<b>Dec 7: E-Portfolios Due (Your portfolio web address to be emailed to instructor)</b>			

## Evaluation Structure

☞ **2 Question Papers.** Take-home open-book tests; mostly multiple-choice. [15% each] [30% total]

**Due via Connect: Sep 30 • Nov 14**

### STRUCTURE

**25 factual questions (25 points, multiple choice)**

*Example:* According to Socrates, who does wrong intentionally?

(a) Everyone (b) No one (c) Only morally bad people (d) None of the above

**1 paragraph question (5 points, 300-500 words)**

*Example:* Briefly describe Aristotle's account of four causes, or kinds of explanation. Do you think that this account is accurate and comprehensive? Why, or why not?

☞ **2 Essays.** Thesis-based writing assignments, approximately 1500 words. [25% each] [50% total]

**Due via TurnItIn.com: Oct 17 • Dec 4**

Suggested topics and guidelines will be posted online; you may also select your own topic.

### STRUCTURE

Articulate and argue for a creative *thesis* in answer to a *question*. Your question should relate to the course material. Your question may be drawn from the topics posted in the official guidelines, or you may formulate your own question; if you're in any doubt, feel free to contact the instructor. You should directly reference and engage with primary (ancient) philosophical texts. You are also encouraged to research and engage with modern scholarship in the area.

Example *question*: Could Socrates fall in love?

Example *thesis*: Socrates could fall in love, provided that "love" is understood as an emotion fully beneficial to the lover and beloved.

☞ **Philosophical Journal** [10% total]

**Due in person, or in instructor's mailbox, or via email: Dec 2**

- For this component of your participation, you're invited to develop and maintain a **philosophical journal with weekly entries**. See the course webpage for a full description of this assignment.

☞ **Ethical Case Study / E-Portfolio Project** [10% total]

**Due by submitting e-portfolio web address to instructor: Dec 7**

- In this project, you will write a philosophical response to an ethical case study drawn from a real-world situation, using your knowledge of values and ideas drawn from this course. You will then post your response on a website called an e-portfolio, and send the address to the instructor by December 7. You'll receive support from Arts ISIT and Arts Co-Op over the course of the term in preparing the project.

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**If you anticipate difficulties in submitting any component of the coursework by the date listed, please contact the instructor by email; extensions can be discussed on a case-by-case basis.**