TOPIC: PRESOCRATICS

Course Description:
We will focus on reading fragments from Anaximander of Miles (585-525 BC), Heraclitus of Ephesus (535-475 BC), Parmenides of Elea (510-440 BC), and Empedocles of Agrigentum (490-430). Each of these philosophers come from or formed different schools: the Milesian School, the Ephesian School (the latter two schools are also grouped together under the name “Ionian” school), the Eleatic School, and the Pluralist School. The fragments of the Presocratics have inspired philosophers in all epochs of Western thought. We will look at these fragments in a historical context, looking at some of the influences they have had and trying to see what they can tell us today; all this while keeping in mind the difficulties and obstacles that may interfere with our access to these fragments.
Class time will consist in close reading and interpretations of texts and fragments as well as in discussions emerging from the readings.

Required Texts:
• Additional fragments and testimonies will be made available on Blackboard.

Recommended Readings:
• A good online source for more general views on the Presocratics is the Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (http://plato.stanford.edu/).
• An excellent online research tool to find cross-references in Ancient philosophy is the Perseus Project, which contains a digital library of many Ancient texts (www. Perseus.tufts.edu/).
If you are interested in Nietzsche’s, Heidegger’s, or Gadamer’s take on the Presocratics you may look at the following books:
Requirements:

1. One short paper and presentation of one fragment of Heraclitus 20%

Each paper needs to be about 2 pages long; it should begin with the quotation of a fragment of Heraclitus and then give a close interpretation of the fragment. You need to do some research regarding different translations and interpretations of the fragment, you will be asked to discuss these differences and you need to be explicit about the sources (translations, commentaries) you draw from. You will be asked to give me a detailed outline of your presentation prior to class (preferably between 2:00 and 3:00 pm on Monday or Wednesday, which are my regular office hours – email is o.k.) the day of the class in which it is due so that I may make copies of your outline for the rest of the class. You then will present your interpretation in class and hand in the written paper (with complete bibliography) within one week.

2. Annotated glossary of Greek terms 20%

Over the course of the term, you will be asked to familiarize yourself with basic Greek concepts (graduate students need to be able to write the words using the Ancient Greek alphabet) and give an explanation of each concept in the context of each philosopher we discuss. The glossary should contain not only (a) an explanation of the term but also (b) one or two quotations from Ancient texts or fragments addressing the meaning or usage of the concept. Concepts you need to address will be announced in class. The glossary will be collected twice in the term (once in the middle and then at the end of the term).

3. Final paper 50%

The final paper needs to be 6 (undergrads) or 9 (grads) pages long, excluding the cover page and bibliography that should be added. It should be based on the work we did in class and demonstrate your capacity to work closely with the primary texts. You can choose your own topic or ask me for possible topics. Graduate students need to integrate at least two secondary sources. Additionally, you need to submit a final paper proposal before the last week of class. The final paper proposal should consist in an introductory paragraph that exposes the philosopher(s) you will discuss, the problems, questions, or concepts you wish to address, and include a rough outline as well as an indication of the main text passages (fragments) you wish to discuss. You will have a chance to present your final paper proposal in the last week of classes. Your paper should demonstrate your ability to work with primary texts and sensitivity to the problems of translation and interpretation of the texts (fragments) you deal with. The paper should also demonstrate you thoughtful engagement with the texts you discuss.

4. Participation, short writing assignments 10%

You will receive participation points for valuable contributions to class discussion, for completion of short writing assignments and for fulfilling requirements in a timely fashion, such as submitting a final paper proposal. Participation points will be converted into grades at the end of the term.

Formal Requirements for all papers:

All papers as well as the glossary need to be typed, double-spaced, standard margins, font Times New Roman 12.
Further policies:

1. If you need a special learning assistance, (for example, use of electronic devices, extended time in exams) please contact the Accessible Education Center (http://aec.uoregon.edu/ Email: uoaec@uoregon.edu Phone: 541-346-1155) and provide your instructors with a written notification regarding the kind of assistance you require.

2. Handing in homework late will lower your grade. Homework that is more than a week late will not be accepted, unless this was for demonstrable reasons beyond your control.

3. In order to avoid disruptions in class you are asked to avoid exiting and entering the classroom while lectures and discussions are going on and do not pack your things until the class is officially over.

4. If you miss a class it is your responsibility to keep up with the course material.

5. Please retain the original copy of all work returned to you during the term until the final course grade has been posted. In the event of any question concerning whether grades have been accurately recorded, it is your responsibility to provide these original copies as documentation.

6. You are expected to follow the rules of academic honesty. Failure to do so will result in failure of the whole course (“F”).

*Plagiarism:* Plagiarism is the inclusion of someone else’s product, words, ideas, or data as one’s own work. When a student submits work for credit that includes the product, words, ideas, or data of others, the source must be acknowledged by the use of complete, accurate, and specific references, such as footnotes. By placing one’s name on work submitted for credit, one certifies the originality of all work not otherwise identified by appropriate acknowledgements. Verbatim statements by others must be enclosed by quotation marks or set off from the regular text as indented extracts.

In order to find out how to avoid plagiarism, see http://libweb.uoregon.edu/guides/plagiarism/students/

*Fabrication:* Fabrication is the intentional use of information that the author has invented when he or she states or implies otherwise, or the falsification of research or other findings with the intent to deceive.

*Cheating:* Cheating is an act of deception by which a student misrepresents or misleadingly demonstrates that he or she has mastered information on an academic exercise that he or she has not mastered, including the giving or receiving of unauthorized help in an academic exercise.

**Grading Rubric**

A = excellent. No mistakes, well written, and distinctive in some way or other.
B = good. No significant mistakes, well written, but not distinctive in any way.
C = OK. Some errors, but a basic grasp of the material.
D = poor. Several errors. A tenuous grasp of the material.
F = failing. Problematic on all fronts indicating either no real grasp of the material or a complete lack of effort.
COURSE SCHEDULE

Week 1
M, Jan. 7: Introduction to the course.
W, Jan. 9: Forerunners of Philosophical Cosmology. Hesiod and Homer. (*The Presocratic Philosophers*, pp. 7-74 [PP, 7-74])

Week 2
M, Jan. 14: Anaximander of Miletus. (PP, 100-142)

Week 3
M, Jan. 21: NO CLASS
W, Jan. 23: Heraclitus of Ephesus. (PP, 181-212)

Week 4:
W, Jan. 30: Heraclitus. Continuation.

Week 5:

Week 6:
M, Feb. 11: Parmenides of Elea. (PP, 239-262) [*Annotated glossaries due.*]

Week 7:

Week 8:

Week 9:
W, March 6: Empedocles. Continuation.

Week 10:
M, March 11: Discussion of final paper proposals.
W, March 13: Discussion of final paper proposals. [*Annotated glossaries due. (Expand the glossary you turned in earlier.*)*]

**Final paper due:** **Wednesday, March 20** before 4:00 pm in the Philosophy Department PLC 338