

### COURSE DESCRIPTION AND EXPECTED LEARNING OUTCOMES:

This course traces the origin of western philosophy in Ancient Greece through selected works from the Pre-Socratic philosophers, and from Plato and Aristotle. The course is divided into three parts:

1. We begin with the earliest western philosophers, the Pre-Socratics, and their search for principles to explain the world around them, in particular their treatment of the problems of understanding how it is that things in the world can change while remaining the same, and how there can be many things which are all the same.
2. Plato's theory of Forms is introduced as his solution to the problems of preserving identity in the face of change, and of reconciling unity and multiplicity. We examine the presentation of this theory in Socrates' arguments for the immortality of the soul, and the criticisms of it by Parmenides and Aristotle. Here we read closely a single work by Plato, the *Phaedo*.
3. We investigate Aristotle's rejection of Platonism and his development of a comprehensive philosophical system, embracing logic, natural science, philosophical psychology, metaphysics, ethics and politics. In this section the readings are taken from a selection of Aristotle's writings which illustrate the enormous range and power of his philosophical theories.

By the end of this course you should have acquired an appreciation of how philosophy emerged in ancient Greece and of some important philosophical theories that have shaped the development of western thought and continue to influence us today. You should have gained an understanding of some basic philosophical concepts and principles, in particular those having to do with importance of reason and argument, and you should have developed some of the skills required for analysing and evaluating the complex and sophisticated arguments employed by the authors we have read and other philosophers.

### TEACHING FORMAT AND EXPECTATIONS OF STUDENTS:

The course is taught through lectures and an optional discussion meeting. In line with the university expectation, this course should require on average 10 hours of work per week, including attendance at the lectures and discussion, preparation for them, completing the weekly readings, and preparing work for assessment.